

Post Vardhan Era

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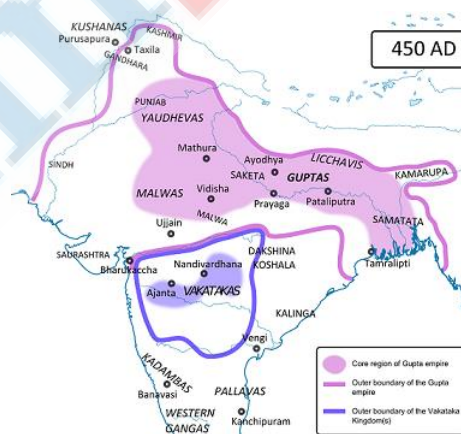
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INTRODUCTION:

- After the fall of **Guptas and Vardhans**, north India plunged into chaos and various local rulers and chieftains assumed power.
- After the 6th century AD, the focus of political power shifted south of Vindhya where powerful dynasties such as **Chalukyas, Pallavas, Rashtrakutas, and Cholas emerged.**
- In this chapter, we will study the important aspects of these dynasties along with other important factors of the contemporary era.

VAKATAKAS (250-500AD):

- The Vakataka dynasty was **successor of Satvahanas** in deccan ruled parts of South-Central India from 250 AD to 500 AD
- The Vakataka kingdom extended from the southern extremities of Malwa and Gujarat in the north to the Tungabhadra River in the south, and from the Arabian Sea in the west to the edges of Chhattisgarh in the east.



They were **contemporaries of Guptas** in Deccan.

- They are also referred as **Vindhyakas.**
- The Vakataka dynasty was a **Brahmin** dynasty.

Link with Guptas:

- **Prabhavati Gupta** of Gupta empire was married to King Rudrasena II of Vakataka dynasty.
- She took over as queen after the sudden death of her husband. She ruled for about 10 years until her son **Pravarasena II** succeeded.

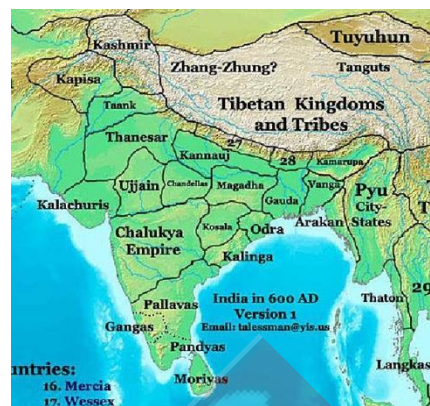
Vakataka art:

- the rock-cut Buddhist **Viharas and Chaityas of the Ajanta caves** (World Heritage Site) were built.
- Vakataka had excellence in the field of painting, in particular the painting titled **Mahabhinishkramana.**

CHALUKYAS

- Founded by **Pulakesin I** and reached its climax during the reign of Pulakesin II.
- Capital was **Vatapi or Badami.**
- The Chalukyas ruled parts of Southern and Central India between the **6th century and the 12th century.**

- The Chalukyas, address themselves as **Haritha Putras of Manavya Gotra** in their inscription.
- The Chalukyas seem to be a race of **Rajputs** from North who imposed their rule upon the Dravidian inhabitants of the Deccan tableland.
- The Royal Emblem of Chalukyas of Badami was “**Varaha**”.



Chalukya contribution in art and architecture:

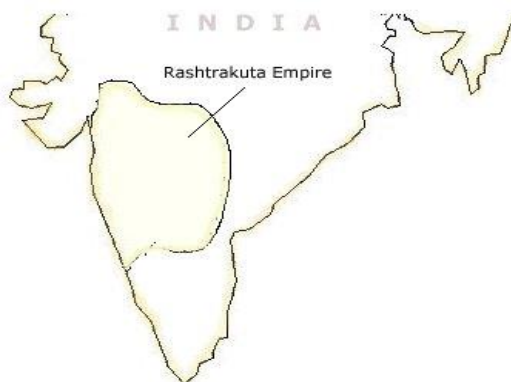
- Though the Chalukya kings were Hindus, they were tolerant of Buddhism and Jainism.
- Saw great developments in **Kannada and Telugu literature**.
- They built cave temples depicting both religious and secular themes.
- The temples had beautiful mural paintings also.
- The temples under the Chalukyas are a good example of the Vesara style of architecture. This is also called the Deccan style or Karnataka Dravida or Chalukyan style. It is a combination of Dravida and Nagara styles.
- **Aihole temples:** Ladh Khan temple (Surya Temple), Durga temple, Huchimalligudi temple, Jain temple at Meguti by Ravikirti.
- **Pattadakal Temples:** It is well known for rock-cut temples and UNESCO World Heritage site.
- There are ten temples here - 4 in Nagar style and 6 in Dravida style. Virupaksha temple and Sangameshwara Temple are in Dravida style.

Reign of Pulkesin II (609 AD – 642 AD):

- Aihole inscription dated 634. This poetic inscription was written by his court poet Ravikirti in Sanskrit language using the Kannada script.
- Xuanzang visited his kingdom.
- Patronized Buddhism and Jainism and followed Hinduism.
- Defeated Harshvardhan and Mahendravarman I, but was defeated and killed by Mahendravarman's son and successor Narasimhavarman I in a series of battles he had with the Pallavas.

RASHTRAKUTAS (750-900 AD)

- Ruled large parts of the Indian subcontinent between the sixth and 10th centuries.
- The term 'Rashtrakutas' literally means officers-in-charge of territorial divisions (known as Rashtra).
- The Rashtrakuts were the officers of Rashtra (province) under the early Chalukyas of Badami.
- This dynasty was also a great patronizer of architecture.
- **Ellora caves and Kanheri caves** in modern-day Maharashtra were developed by this dynasty.



Famous Rastrakuta rulers:

- **Dantivarman or Dantidurga.**
- founder of the Rashtrakutas dynasty.
- Occupied Maharashtra by **defeating Chalukya King Kirtivarman** and he took the titles **Rajadhiraja and Parameshvara**.
- He made his capital at **Manyakheta or Malkhed** near modern Sholapur in Maharashtra.

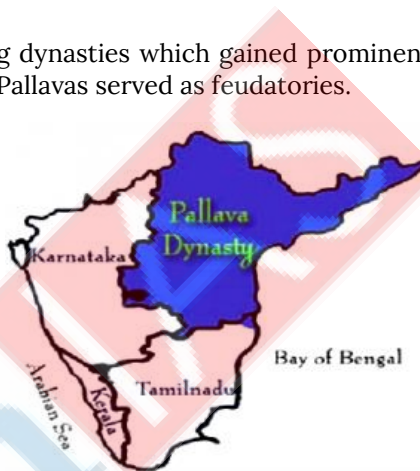
Amoghavarsha I or Sarva (814-878 AD):

- He was one of the greatest rulers of the Rashtrakuta tradition.

- **His rule of 64 years** is one of the longest unequivocally dated monarchical rules on record.
- Amoghavarsha I was an expert **writer and researcher**.
- He composed the **Kavirajamarga**, the most punctual surviving abstract work in Kannada, and **Prasnottara Ratna Malika**, religious work in Sanskrit.
- Amoghavarsha was converted into **Jainism** by Jinasena.
- For his religious temperament, his interest in the fine arts and literature and his peace-loving nature he is also called 'Ashoka of the south'.
- The **Jain Narayana temple of Pattadakal**, (a UNESCO World Heritage Site) a basadi at Konnur and the Neminatha Basadi at Manyakheta were built during his rule.

Pallavas:

- The Pallava Dynasty was one of the South Indian ruling dynasties which gained prominence after the eclipse of the Satavahanas dynasty, whom the Pallavas served as feudatories.
- Pallavas became a major power during the reign of **Mahendravarman I** (571– 630 CE) and **Narasimhavarman I** (630–668 CE) and dominated the Andhra and northern parts of the Tamil region for about 600 years until the end of the 9th century.
- Their capital was **Kanchipuram**.
- They developed the **Pallava script** which gave birth to Grantha script.
- Pallavas were in constant **conflict with Chalukyas, Pandyas and Cholas**.
- Finally, Pallavas were replaced by **Cholas**.



Famous Pallava rulers

Mahendravarman I (600–630 AD):

- He was known by various titles like **Vichitra Chitta** (curious mind), **Chaityakari** (builder of Chaityas and temples), **Chitrakar Puli** (tiger among painters).
- He was a dramatist and poet and composed play called **Bhagvatijulkiyam** and **Mattavilasa Prahasana** (the delight of the drunkard).
- Mahendravarman was initially a patron of the Jain faith, but he converted into the Saiva faith under the influence of the Saiva saint Appar.
- He was defeated and killed by Pulakesin II in a battle.

Narasimhavarman I (630 AD – 668 AD)

- Son and successor of Mahendravarman.
- Considered the greatest of the Pallavas. Also called **Narasimhavarman Mahamalla/Mamalla**.
- **Defeated and killed Pulakesin II** in 642 AD.
- He took control of Vatapi, the Chalukya capital and assumed the title '**Vatapikonda**'.
- He founded the city of **Mamallapuram or Mahabalipuram** which is named after him.
- Great Nayannar saints like Appar, Tirugnanasambandar and Siruthondar lived during his reign.
- During his reign famous Panch Pandav **Rath Temple** was constructed which is Rock Cut Temple, a UNESCO World Heritage site.
- Apart from Ratha temple Pallavas are also credited for building **shore temple in Mahabalipuram**
- **Cholas defeated Pallavas** and founded Chola empire.

CHOLA DYNASTY:

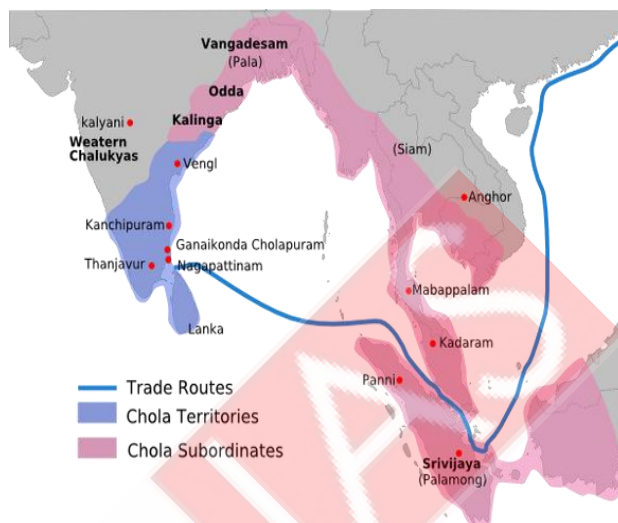
- During 9th century Chola regained their prominence in south Indian political history.
- Their main capital was **Tanjore**. They also extended their **reign Sri Lanka and the Malay Peninsula**. Therefore, they are called as the Imperial Cholas.
- Despite these ancient origins, the period when it is appropriate to speak of a "Chola Empire" only begins with the medieval **Cholas in the mid-9th century CE**.

- The whole country south of the Tungabhadra was united and held as one state for a period of three centuries and more between 907 and 1215 AD.

Famous chola rulers:

Rajaraja I (985 – 1014 AD)

- It was under Rajaraja I and his son Rajendra I that the Chola power reached its highest point of glory.
- He attacked and annexed entire **Sri Lanka**.
- Rajaraja's last military achievement was a naval expedition against the **Maldives Islands** which were conquered.
- He completed the construction of the famous **Rajarajeswara temple or Brihadeeswara temple at Tanjore** in 1010 AD.
- He also helped in the construction of a **Buddhist monastery at Nagapattinam**.



Rajendra I (1014-1044 AD)

- He continued his father's policy of aggressive conquests and expansion. His most **famous military enterprise was his expedition to north India**.
- The Chola army crossed the **Ganges** by defeating a number of rulers on its way to commemorate this **successful north-Indian campaign** Rajendra founded the city of **Gangaikondacholapuram** and constructed the famous Rajesvaram temple in that city.
- In 1025 he launched naval raids on **ports of Srivijaya** in maritime Southeast Asia which was a unique event in India's history and its otherwise peaceful relations with the states of Southeast Asia.
- Conducted conquest of the island of Sri Lanka in 1017 AD and took the **Sinhala king Mahinda V as a prisoner**.
- Several places in **Malaysia and Indonesia** were invaded by Rajendra Chola.
- He is known as **Napoleon of the South** for his successful military campaigns.
- He cultivated **friendly relations with the emperor of China** and sent ambassadors there in 1016 and 1033 AD.



Decline of Chola empire:

The rise of the feudatories like the **Hoysalas** and the emergence of the Pandya power as a challenge to Chola supremacy contributed to the ultimate downfall of the Chola Empire. The Chola country was ultimately **absorbed into the Pandya Empire**.

Military

The Chola **navy** was formidable one in South India. With the help of their navy the Cholas controlled **Coromandal and Malabar coasts**.

Administrative division of Chola empire:

- Empire was divided into provinces called **Mandalam**.
- Mandalam was divided into **Nadus**.
- Nadu was divided into villages called **Ur**.
- **Kaverippattinam** (Puhar) on the coast near the Kaveri delta constituted a major port town.
- **Nagappattinam** as the most important centres of Cholas.

Local Self Government

- The most striking feature of the Chola period was the unusual vigour and efficiency that characterized the functioning of the autonomous rural institutions.
- **Uttaramerur** inscriptions speak much about the Chola administration.
- There were two types of villages in the Chola empire.

1. **Non Brahmadeya village (Vellanvagai villages)**
2. **Brahmadeya village or Agrahara village.**

Ur:

- In **Non-brahmadeya village**, people from different caste and the assembly which ran this type of village was called 'ur'.
- Village assembly had the **power to impose and collect taxes** for developmental activities in village.
- The members of the executive committee of 'Ur' were called **Shashak Gana** or '**Ganam**'.

Sabha:

- The second type of village was '**agrahara**' types of village which were settled by Brahmins in which most of the land was rent-free.
- The assembly of this agrahara type of village was a gathering of the adult men in **brahmana villages called 'Sabha' or 'Mahasabha'**.
- **rent-free Brahmadeya villages** which enjoyed more autonomy than **Vellangai villages**.

Chola Society and Economy:

- The **caste system** was prevalent in the society and the condition of the Paraiyar (untouchables) was miserable.
- The higher orders like the Brahmins and Kshatriyas enjoyed special privileges.
- The Chola inscriptions mention the major divisions among the other castes:
 1. Valangai - mainly agricultural groups.
 2. Idangai - mainly artisans and trading class.
- Practice of **sati** became sacred.
- A new social evil **Devadasi** system came into practice.
- In Chola society there was constant tussle between **Vaishnavite and Shaivite sects of Hinduism**.

Chola religion:

- With the rise of devotional cults such as **Shaivite and Vaishnavite cults** from the 6th to 9th centuries A.D, Buddhism practically disappeared from Tamil country, but Jainism managed to survive.
- The Chola ruler were patrons of **Shaivism**. Raja Raja I assumed the title of **Shivapada Shekhara** and built the Raja Rajeswara temple. (Brihadeeswarar temple) at Tanjore and dedicated it to Lord Shiva.
- In the Chola period, **Suddashaiva** order appeared and the Vellala community supported this order. **Kapalikas and Kalamukhas** which were Shaivite orders also influenced the people.
- The Chola rulers such as Kulottunga I resented **Ramunuja** who was a Vaishnavite Saint who propounded the concept of **Vishistadvaita**. Ramanuja was though, successful in broadening the social base of the Vaishnavite Cults.
- **Kamban Ramayan (Tamil Ramayan)** was written by Kamban during Cholas.