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## Historical significance of tamil nadu

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The region of Tamil Nadu in the southeast of modern India, shows evidence of having had continuous human habitation from 15,000 BCE to 10,000 BCE.[1][2] Throughout its history, spanning the early Upper Palaeolithic age to modern times, this region has coexisted with various external cultures.



The three ancient Tamil dynasties namely Chera, Chola, and Pandya were of ancient origins. Together they ruled over this land with a unique culture and language, contributing to the growth of some of the oldest extant literature in the world.[citation needed] These three dynasties were in constant struggle with each other vying for hegemony over the land. Invasion by the Kalabhras during the 3rd century disturbed the traditional order of the land, displacing the three ruling kingdoms. These occupiers were overthrown by the resurgence of the Pandyas and the Pallavas, who restored the traditional kingdoms. The Cholas who re-emerged from obscurity in the 9th century by defeating the Pallavas and the Pandyas rose to become a great power and extended their empire over the entire southern peninsula.[citation needed] At its height the Chola empire spanned almost 3,600,000 km² (1,389,968 sq mi) straddling the Bay of Bengal.[citation needed] The Chola navy held sway over the Sri Vijaya kingdom in Southeast Asia. Rapid changes in the political situation of the rest of India occurred due to incursions of Muslim armies from the northwest and the decline of the three ancient dynasties during the 14th century. Despite this, the Vijayanagara Empire gained a foothold in the region from the late 14th century until the 16th century. In the 17th and 18th centuries, the Maratha Empire expanded its territories into the northern regions of present-day Tamil Nadu. The Madras Presidency, comprising most of southern India, was created in the late 18th century and was ruled directly by the British.

After the independence of India, after the Telugu and Malayalam parts of Madras state were separated from Tamilagam state in 1956, it was renamed as Tamil Nadu on January 14, 1969 by the state government.
Prehistoric period
Further information: Prehistoric South India, Prehistory of Sri Lanka, South Asian Stone Age, Bronze Age India, and Iron Age India
Palaeolithic
For most of the Lower Palaeolithic stage, pre-modern humans lived close to river valleys with sparse forest cover or in grassland environments. The population density was very low and so far only two localities of this lower Palaeolithic culture have been found in south India.[3] Pre-modern humans in South India, belonging to the species of *Homo erectus*, lived in this primitive 'old stone age' (Palaeolithic) for quite a long time, using only crude implements such as hand axes and choppers and subsisting as hunter-gatherers.[4] In Attirampakkam, archaeologists from the Sharma Centre for Heritage Education excavated ancient stone tools which suggests that a humanlike population existed in the Tamil Nadu region somewhere around 300,000 years before homo sapiens arrived from Africa.[5][6] A discovery of a rare fossilized baby brain in Viluppuram district, by a team of archaeologists was reported in April 2003. It is estimated to be about 187,000 years - 200,000 years or older.[7][8][9][10] The ancestor of modern humans (*Homo sapiens*) who appeared around 50,000 years ago was more developed and could make thinner flake tools and blade-like tools using a variety of stones. From about 10,000 years ago, humans made still smaller tools called Microlithic tools. The material used by the early humans to make these tools were jasper, agate, flint, quartz, etc. In 1949, researchers found such microliths in Tirunelveli district.[11] Archaeological evidence suggests that the microlithic period lasted between 6000–3000 BCE.[12] Neolithic
In Tamil Nadu, the Neolithic period had its advent around 2500 BCE. Humans of the Neolithic period made their stone tools in finer shapes by grinding and polishing. A Neolithic axe head with ancient writing on it has been found in North Tamil Nadu Near Palar river.[13] The Neolithic humans lived mostly on small flat hills or on the foothills in small, more or less permanent settlements but for periodical migration for grazing purposes. They gave the dead proper burials within urns or pits. They were also starting to use copper for making certain tools or weapons. Iron Age
During the Iron Age humans started using iron for making tools and weapons. The Iron Age culture in peninsular India is marked by Megalithic burial sites, which are found in several hundreds of places.[14] On the basis of both some excavations and the typology of the burial monuments, it has been suggested that there was a gradual spread of the Iron Age sites from the north to the south.



Comparative excavations carried out in Adichanallur in Tirunelveli District and in Northern India have provided evidence of a southward migration of the Megalithic culture.[15] The earliest clear evidence of the presence of the megalithic urn burials are those dating from around 1800 BCE, which have been discovered at various places in Tamil Nadu, notably at Adichanallur, 24 km from Tirunelveli, where archaeologists from the Archaeological Survey of India unearthed 157 urns, including 15 containing human skulls, skeletons and bones, plus husks, grains of rice, charred rice and Neolithic Celts.



One urn has writing inside, which, according to archaeologists from the Archaeological Survey of India, resembles early Tamil-Brahmi script, confirming it of the Neolithic period 2800 years ago.[16] Adhichanallur has been announced as an archaeological site for further excavation and studies.[17][18]
Mentions of the political situation of Tamil Nadu before the common era are found in Ashoka's edicts dated c.3rd century BCE and, vaguely, in the Hathigumpha inscription dated c.2nd century BCE. Early history
Main article: Sangam period
See also: Tamil history from Sangam literature
Ancient Tamil Nadu contained three monarchical states, headed by kings called Vendhar and several tribal chieftaincies, headed by the chiefs called by the general denomination Vel or Velir.[19][20] Still lower at the local level there were clan chiefs called kizhar or mannar.[21] During the 3rd century BCE, the Deccan was part of the Maurya Empire, and from the middle of the 1st century BCE to 2nd century CE the same area was ruled by the Satavahana dynasty. The Tamil area had an independent existence outside the control of these northern empires. The Tamil kings and chiefs were always in conflict with each other mostly over the property. The royal courts were mostly places of social gathering rather than places of dispensation of authority; they were centres for distribution of resources. Tamil literature
Tolkappiyam sheds some light on early religion.[22] Gradually the rulers came under the influence of Vedic beliefs, which encouraged performance of sacrifices to enhance the status of the ruler.[23]
Buddhism, Jainism and Ajivika co-existed with early Shaivite, Vaishnavism and Shaktism during the first five centuries. The names of the three dynasties, Cholas, Pandyas, and Cheras, are mentioned in the Pillars of Ashoka (inscribed 273–232 BCE) inscriptions, among the kingdoms, which though not subject to Ashoka, were on friendly terms with him.[24][25] The king of Kalinga, Kharavela, who ruled around 150 BCE, mentioned in the famous Hathigumpha inscription of the confederacy of the Tamil kingdoms that had existed for over 100 years.[26]
Karikala Chola was the most famous early Chola. He is mentioned in a number of poems in the Sangam poetry.[27] In later times Karikala was the subject of many legends found in the Cilappatikaram and in inscriptions and literary works of the 11th and 12th centuries. They attribute to him the conquest of the whole of India up to the Himalayas and the construction of the flood banks of the river Kaveri with the aid of his feudatories.[28] These legends, however, are conspicuous by their absence in the Sangam poetry. Kocengannan was another famous early Chola king who has been extolled in a number of poems of the Sangam period. He was even made a Saiva saint during the medieval period.[29] Pandyas ruled initially from Korkal, a seaport on the southernmost tip of the Indian peninsula, and in later times moved to Madurai. Pandyas are also mentioned in Sangam Literature, as well as by Greek and Roman sources during this period. Megasthenes in his Indika mentions the Pandyan kingdom.[30] The Pandyas controlled the present districts of Madurai, Tirunelveli, and parts of south Kerala.



They had trading contacts with Greece and Rome.[31] With the other kingdoms of Tamilakam, they maintained trading contacts and marital relationships with Tamil merchants from Eelam. Various Pandya kings find mention in a number of poems in the Sangam literature. Among them, Nedunjeliani, 'the victor of Talaiyalanganam' deserves a special mention. Besides several short poems found in the Akananuru and the Purananuru collections, there are two major works—Mathuraikkanci and the Netunalvatai (in the collection of Pattupattu) that give a glimpse into the society and commercial activities in the Pandyan kingdom during the Sangam age. The early Pandyas went into obscurity at the end of the 3rd century CE during the incursion of the Kalabhras. The kingdom of the Cheras comprised the modern Western Tamil Nadu and Kerala, along the western or Malabar Coast of southern India. Their proximity to the sea favoured trade with Africa.[32][33] Chera rulers dated to the first few centuries AD. It records the names of the kings, the princes, and the court poets who extolled them.



The internal chronology of this literature is still far from settled, and at present, a connected account of the history of the period cannot be derived. Uthiyar Cheralthan, Nedum Cheralthan and Senguttuvan Chera are some of the rulers referred to in the Sangam poems. Senguttuvan Chera, the most celebrated Chera king, is famous for the legends surrounding Kannagi, the heroine of the Tamil epic Silappatikaram.[34] These early kingdoms sponsored the growth of some of the oldest extant literature in Tamil. The classical Tamil literature, referred to as Sangam literature is attributed to the period between 500 BCE and 300 CE.[35][36] The poems of Sangam literature, which deal with emotional and material topics, were categorised and collected into various anthologies during the medieval period. These Sangam poems paint the picture of a fertile land and of a people who were organised into various occupational groups. The governance of the land was through hereditary monarchies, although the sphere of the state's activities and the extent of the ruler's powers were limited through the adherence to the established order (dharma).[37] The people were loyal to their kings and roving bards and musicians and danseuse gathered at the royal courts of the generous kings. The arts of music and dancing were highly developed and popular. Musical instruments of various types find mention in the Sangam poems. The amalgamation of the southern and the northern styles of dancing started during this period and is reflected fully in the epic Cilappatikaram.[38] Internal and external trade was well organised and active.

Buddhist scholars by the Kalabhra kings influenced the nature of the literature of the period, and most of the works that can be attributed to this period were written by the Jain and Buddhist authors. In the field of dance and music, the elite started patronising new polished styles, partly influenced by northern ideas, in the place of the folk styles. A few of the earliest rock-cut temples belong to this period. Brick temples (known as kottam, devakulam, and palli) dedicated to various deities are referred to in literary works. Kalabhras were displaced around the 7th century by the revival of Pallava and Pandya power.[47] Even with the exit of the Kalabhras, the Jain and Buddhist influence still remained in Tamil Nadu, the early Pandya and the Pallava kings were followers of these faiths. The Hindu reaction to this apparent decline of their religion was growing and reached its peak during the later part of the 7th century.[48] There was a widespread Hindu revival during which a huge body of Saiva and Vaishnava literature was created. Many Saiva Nayanmars and Vaishnava Alvars provided a great stimulus to the growth of popular devotional literature. Karaikkal Ammaiyar who lived in the 6th century CE was the earliest of these Nayanmars. The celebrated Saiva hymnists Sundaramurthi, Thirugnana Sambanthar and Thirunavukkarasar were of this period. Vaishnava Alvars such as Poigai Alvar, Bhoothathalvar and Peyalvar produced devotional hymns for their faith and their songs were collected later into the four thousand poems of Naalayira Divyap Prabandham.[49] Age of empires (600–1300)
The medieval period of the history of the Tamil country saw the rise and fall of many kingdoms, some of whom went on to the extent of empires, exhorting influences both in India and overseas. The Cholas who were very active during the Sangam age were entirely absent during the first few centuries.[50] The period started with the rivalry between the Pandyas and the Pallavas, which in turn caused the revival of the Cholas. The Cholas went on to becoming a great power. Their decline saw the brief resurgence of the Pandyas. This period was also that of the re-invigorated Hinduism during which temple building and religious literature were at their best.[51] The Hindu sects Saivism and Vaishnavism became dominant, replacing the prevalence of Jainism and Buddhism of the previous era. Saivism was patronised more by the



