

The History of the Chola Trade Hubs in the Indian Ocean – Tracing Its Tides

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Abstract

The tracing of the tides of the History of Chola Maritime power helps us to understand the early maritime activities, trade route and the spread of culture of the Chola who had participated in these activities. Tamil Nadu boasts a long coastline with numerous ancient ports like Kaverippattinam (Poompuhar), Nagappattinam, Korkai, Alagankulam, Gulf of Mannar and Periyapattinam, which were critical hubs for transoceanic trade and commerce for their path to become a Great Empire. The Cholas gave priority to gain control over critical trade routes and straits, specially the strait of Malakka and Palk Strait. The main objective of this research is to analyze the trade expansion of the Cholas through these Ports and Straits. The Cholas were well aware of their strategic importance for their economic expansion. These routes were significant as merchant guilds and ships from Arabia, Europe and America frequently past through them. The Cholas also sought to impose taxes on ships passing though these straits. Further, these ports were not only used for the trade activities, but also for the war with other states. To write this article, I have followed the historical and descriptive methodology. I have consulted mainly the secondary sources from books, journals and other articles.

Keywords: Chola, maritime, coastline, ancient, hubs, trade