

4. Project Digital Poompuhar

Prelims Level: Heritage Tourism

Mains Level: GS-I Indian culture will cover the salient aspects of Art Forms, Literature and Architecture from ancient to modern times.

Why in News?

- The **Department of Science and Technology (DST)** has launched ‘**Project Digital Poompuhar**’ to recreate the Chola Dynasty port city (**Poompuhar**) in Tamil Nadu.

About Poompuhar:

- The **Poompuhar** is mentioned in works of **Sangam Tamil literature** which refers to the city located 30 km from the existing Poompuhar town in **southern Tamil Nadu**.
- The port city flourished in inter-continental trade but shifted with time. Finally, it was re-established at the present location at the mouth of the river Cauvery around 3,000 years ago.
- The shifts took place due to the continuous “**kadalkol**” or **rising sea levels** and the submergence of the deltas.



What does the Researches on Poompuhar says?

- The Indian Remote Sensing Satellites showed that the city was established initially in the Cauvery Delta about 30km away from the present Poompuhar town around 15,000 years ago.
- It had discovered a harbor like structure as well as sea walls and probably a bridge in the region.
- The study also provided insights about the life history and the social, cultural as well as technological evolution of Poompuhar. It also revealed the age of Poompuhar from 3000 years to 15,000 to 20,000 years.
- Despite several studies on Tamil literature, archaeology, underwater exploration and geosciences, the exact location of initial establishment of Poompuhar, its age, later shifts and the reasons and periods of its extinction, remained unresolved.

About Cholas:

- The Cholas controlled the **central and Northern Parts of Tamil Nadu**.
- Their core area of the rule was the Kaveri delta, later known as Cholamandalam. Their capital was Uraiyur (near Tiruchirapalli town) and Puhar or Kaviripattinam was an alternative royal residence and chief port town.
- Tiger was their emblem. The Cholas also maintained an efficient navy.
- King Karikala was a famous king of the Sangam Cholas.
- Many Sangam poems mention the Battle of Venni where he defeated the confederacy of Cheras, Pandyas and eleven minor chieftains.
- Trade and commerce flourished during his reign.
- He founded the port city of Puhar (identical with Kaviripattinam) and constructed 160 km of an embankment along the Kaveri River.

About Project Digital Poompuhar:

- The project involves **Underwater Surveys and photography** by remotely operated vehicles and remote sensing-based geodynamic studies to bring out comprehensive information on the **time series evolution and extinction**.
- It also involves the **visualisation of geodynamic processes of the last 20,000 years** like land subsidence, sea-level rise, Cauvery's migration, floods, tsunami, cyclones and Erosion.

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- The study is also expected to **provide Scientific Information not only on the life history of Poompuhar and the socio-cultural evolution** but also the science and technological evolution and the disaster history of this region.

Is there Any Other Initiative to Revamp the Heritage Sites?

- **India Digital Heritage** is an initiative by the **Department of Science and Technology** in the areas of technology and humanities for digital documentation and interpretation of our tangible and intangible heritage.
- The project highlights art, architecture and cultural legacy of the world heritage site Hampi in Karnataka, the medieval capital of the Vijayanagara dynasty.

