

Temple construction in real sense began south of the Vindhyas where stones were used as principle building material. These temples have survived till date, which has enabled scholars to understand the religious and political conditions of South India. The most significant contribution given in this direction was by CHOLA rulers in the 11<sup>th</sup> century AD.

These rulers constructed several temples among which the most prominent is BRIHADESWARA temple in TANJAVUR devoted to Lord Shiva. From the angle of historiography, this temple is imp. because along with the image of god, the image of king — RAJARAJA is also placed in the temple premises. This indicates that chola rulers were highly respected and even