

Explanation of some important terms

1. **Brahmadeya:** This is a Sanskrit term which used to denote the grant of tax free lands to *brahmans*.
2. **Prashasti:** It is a Sanskrit word which literally means ‘in praise of’. This term was used for a kind of eulogistic inscriptions usually composed by court poets in praise of patrons in general and rulers in particular. Prashastis included the genealogy of the ruler or patron, his physical attributes, praise of his political successes and details of his social and cultural activities and piety. Prashastis naturally tend to exaggerate the achievements of the ruler yet they remain an important source of information. Some well known examples of this kind of inscriptions are the Allahabad prashasti of the 4th century CE Gupta emperor Samudragupta and Aihole Prashasti of Chalukya ruler Pulakeshin.
3. **Vellala:** It is a Tamil term which refers to agriculturists who commanded a respectable social position during the age of the Sangam and after in Tamilham, roughly corresponding to modern Tamilnadu. The richer among them usually employed labourers to cultivate their lands whereas the poorer vellalar cultivated their own fields. Other than owning land the richer vellalar also held important positions in both the civil and military branches of administration. Under the Cholas they were invested with the titles vel and arashu. In the Pandya kingdom they enjoyed the title of kavidi. Often enough these vellalar pertook of the royal feasts and also shared with the kings in their duties of war.
4. **Sabha:** In the Vedic texts the term has been mentioned in the sense of an assembly which had the elders or great men of the tribe as its members. As a constant body where political affairs were freely discussed, it exercised considerable checks on the powers of the king and influenced decision making on important issues. That the sabha enjoyed a position of high esteem during the Vedic age is made out from its description as one of the twin daughters of prajapati, the creator.

Source: NCERT (2017) *Dictionary of History for School Children (Trilingual)*, National Council of Educational Research & Training, New Delhi.