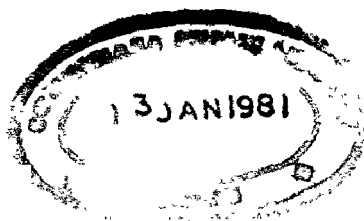


**TAMILS
OF THE SANGAM AGE**

DR. M. MANICKAM

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Dr. M MANICKAM, M. A. Ph. D., Dip. in French.,
Professor of Tamil
Arulmigu Palaniandavar Arts College
PALANI - 624602

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Prof. G. SUBBARAYALU M. A.,
A. P. A. Arts College, Palni.

Dr. M. Manickam, Professor of Tamil has made a commendable work on the "Tamils of the Sangam Age" to be published during the 5th World Tamil Conference.

It is an undeniable fact that ours is a very ancient land and that the Tamils are a mighty race who could boast of a culture and civilization exclusively their own, and of great antiquity. The original abode of the Tamils is none other than the time honoured Tamilakam in south India. Even after centuries of contact with the Aryans, the Tamils maintain to a considerate extent their independent culture. This is strongly borne out by the Sangam literature. The very fact that the Tamil language and culture did not lose their individuality in spite of their close association with Sanskrit and north Indian culture through the Ages shows that the Tamils had a virile language and culture even prior to their association with the Aryans. These facts are clearly portrayed in this book.

It is therefore needless to say that this book will be of considerable value to those who are really interested in this field.

PREFACE

Dr. M Manickam M. A., Ph. D., Dip. in French ,

I am very glad to bring out this book in print at the time of the World Tamil Meet at Madurai. I hope, this small book will enlighten the readers about the greatness and origin of the Tamils. The purpose of this book is to give the true picture of the Sangam Age and the origin of the Tamils

My thanks are due to Prof G. Subbarayalu M. A., Professor of History, Arulmigu Palaniandavar Arts College, Palni, for his foreword of highly repute. I record my thanks to Mr. Kannan of Tamil Puthakalayam for his acceptance of the sales rights of this book.

I thank the Secretary of our college for the permission given to me to publish this book. With great regard I extend my gratitude to our Principal Prof. K. Arunachalam, M. A. who helps and encourages me in this field.

13 JAN 1981

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1. TAMIL NADU

Tamil Nadu was called Tamilaham in Sangam Literature. Generally, the land where Tamil Language was spoken was called Tamilaham. Which area was called Tamilaham? The land that lies between the Tirupati hills in the north and Cape Comorin in the south has the Bay of Bengal in the east and Arabian Sea in the west. This area was called Tamilaham during the later half of the Sangam Age. This was not the original area of ancient Tamilaham. In Tolkaappiam, the oldest Tamil grammar now extant, Panamparanar in his preface says the boundaries of Tamilaham as given below :

“வடவேங்கடம் தென்குமரி
ஆயிடைத்
தமிழ்கூறு நல்லுலகத்து” (1)

Here Tenkumari (தென்குமரி) means Kumari river that was watering the far south. Even in Purananuru தென்குமரி is mentioned as a river (2).

While the Kumari river was watering the southern Pandyan territory, the river Pahruli (பஹீருளி) was watering the northern part of the Pandyan country. Between these two rivers there were 49 major divisions according to

(1) Tol. Preface

(2) Purananuru, 17.

Adiarkkunallar, the commentator to Silappadikaaram. What happened to all these divisions or Nadus ?

A major deluge destroyed the vast area and the fertile land watered by the rivers of Kumari and Pahruli submerged into the sea. Now the sea was called 'Kumarikadal' (குமரிக்கடல்). The First Tamil Sangam was in Ten Madurai (தென்மதுரை) which also submerged in the first deluge.

After the first deluge was over the Pandyan and the people went northward and Kapaadapuram was their second capital. The Second Tamil Sangam was patronised by the Pandyas at Kapaadapuram. It is said that Tolkaappiam was written by Tolkaappiar during this Second Tamil Sangam.

After some time the second deluge occurred and Kapaadapuram was destroyed. The king and the people came towards north and settled in the north Madurai where they started Third Tamil Sangam. Now the southern boundary of Tamil Nadu was Kanyakumari or Cape Comorin and not Kumari river or Kumari Mountains.

Now the western part of ancient Tamil Nadu is called Kerala. Beyond Tirupati hills is Andhra. Thus the area of Tamil Nadu has become very narrow.

Kaviri, Vaigai, Amaravathi, Bavani, Tambraparani are the principal rivers of present day Tamil Nadu. On the west there lies the western ghats with very few gaps. This western ghats separates Kerala and Tamil Nadu. In the east also there lies the Eastern Ghats with so many breaks. In the north, Tirupati is not our boundary but Tiruttani is the northern limit of present Tamil Nadu.

2. THE ORIGIN OF THE TAMILS

Who are the Tamils? Are they indogenous or foreigners? There are so many theories about the origin of the Tamils. We can divide the theories into two- indogeneous and foreign.

Dr Caldwell says the Tamils were mostly related to the people who spoke Scythian languages. According to Dr Caldwell the Tamils might have come from foreign countries through Baluchistan where the Brahui language is being spoken. That Brahui language is mostly connected with the Dravidian languages and the people resemble the South Indians in day today affairs.

Mr Kanagasabai Pillai holds the Mongol-Tibetan origin to the Tamils. Elamite origin to the Tamils is also expounded by some other scholars. Dr. N. Subramanian says "There is good reason to believe that the arrival of the Dravidians in South India preceded the advent of Aryans in India, and that since their arrival they have had continuous maritime contact with the countries of the middle east, their erstwhile homeland" (3). K. K. Pillay in his book "A Social History of The Tamils" part I, holds the same view that the Tamils came from outside India

(3) N. Subramaniam M. A., Ph. D.,
History of Tamilnad (to A. D. 1565) P. 31

probably from the Mediterranean region. He says as given below : "The Lemurian theory relates to a far distant past as seen earlier, and there is no basis for connecting it with the origin of the Tamils. On the other hand, several writers, European and Indian, have held that the Tamils of the Dravidians stock were later immigrants, probably from Western Asia. The bases on which this view is held seem to be sound." (4).

These two historians of Tamil Nadu most probably hold the same idea about the origin of the Tamils. There are still others who share this view. But let us discuss first the foreign origin to Tamils. Firstly P. T. Srinivasa Iyengar does not have the same idea as these two people have. He says the Tamils are indigeneous. He believes in the theory of Lemuria-a land that submerged into sea.

The scholars who say that the Tamils came to South India from Sumeria or Palestine through Baluchistan hold the view that the Brahui language which is in resemblance to Tamil is itself a proof to indicate the possible route adopted by the Dravidians in their trek from Western Asia to India. "Moreover, the striking similarity of the Adichchanallur finds and the relics unearthed at Cyprus and Palestine, as will be shown presently, support the hypothesis of affinity between the Dravidians and the people of Western Asia." (5)

Why should we not think in the other way? The Tamils or the Dravidians might have gone to Western Asia

(4) K. K. Pillay, A Social History of The Tamils, Part I P. 48

(5) Ibid, P. 49.

① This Contention is refuted, it is evident
that Philistines a primitive clan of near
Isrealites used Iron in their warfare

through Baluchistan. But K. K. Pillay refutes this idea by saying that the people of Western Asia had not used any iron implement whereas the people of Adichchanallur used many iron implements. According to him this use of iron belongs to later age and "The movement of Dravidians must have, therefore, started from Western Asia and not from South India" (6). This reason does not seem sound. The people of Adichchanallur had Muruga worship unlike the people of Western Asia.

The Tamils had maritime contact with Sumeria, Mesopotamia and other Mediterranean countries. This contact was the reason for the similarities in the tools excavated at Adichchanallur and the Western Asian countries. Whatever affinity we come across between these people the reason might be the close trade contact between the Tamils and the Sumerians, Mesopotamians etc. We need not try to find the foreign home for the Tamils. We must believe the Lemurian theory. There are ample evidence in Tamil literature about the submerged region in the far south.

Kumari river, Pahruli river, Kumari mountains, 49 Nadus or regional divisions, South Madurai, Kapaadapuram etc. were swallowed by the sea more than twice. We have so many evidences for the existence of land in the Indian Ocean and disappearance because of deluges.

There is no single evidence in Tamil literature to say that the Tamils came from outside. The Tamils spread from the far south to the north. They were the original inhabitants of the Lost Lemuria and the present South India. Before the Aryans came to India as nomads, the ancestors of the Tamils lived all over India.

(6) K. K. Pillay, A Social History of The Tamils, Part I, P. 50

← Sam 13:14, Job 13:1

The Indus Valley Civilization is believed to be of the Tamils. It was an urban civilization. The Aryan civilization was only a rural one. The Aryans learned to live in a particular place and cultivated what they wanted only in later period. Then only they became civilised. They absorbed many customs and beliefs of the indigenous people. Their language was much influenced by the native languages. They perfected their language after having contact with the indigenous people who spoke more cultured languages.

The Indus Valley people were not Aryans. They are believed, by most of the research scholars as the non-Aryans. They might be the ancestors of the Tamils or the Dravidians. Fr. Heras says that the culture and the language of the Indus Valley people are of the Tamils, The present South Indians or the Tamils are the descendants of the people of the Indus Valley civilization. Like N. Subramanian some modern historians try to twist the truth about the culture and language of the Indus Valley people. But most of the foreign scholars hold the view that the people of the Indus Valley were the forefathers of the Tamils or the Dravidians.

Let us end with the words of Dr. Navalar Somasundara Bharathiar : "In short, the original abode of the Tamils was none other than the time-honoured Tamilakam in South India, part of which, with all its gems and gem-like treasures, the Indian Ocean has hidden in her vast bosom and which she is not willing to part with or reveal though centuries upon centuries have rolled silently away". (7)

(7) Dr. Navalar Somasundara Bharathiar, The papers of Dr. Navalar Somasundara Bharathiar, P. 24.

3. TOLKAAPPIAM AND ITS IMPORTANCE

Tolkaappiam is a Tamil grammar dealing with letters (எழுத்து), words (சொல்) and human life (பொருள்). This is a peculiar type of a grammar because in no other language we can see a grammar for human life along with the grammar of letters and words and syntax. This grammatical work is the oldest book now extant in Tamil.

To know about the content and the date of this book is very important for the cultural history of the Tamils. Therefore, we have to know the historicity of this grammar.

According to the commentary to Irayanaar Ahapporul Tolkaappiam belonged to the Second Tamil Academy. Adiyarkkunallar also holds the same view. In short this book is anterior to all the Third Tamil Sangam works - Ettuttogai (Eight Anthologies), and Pattuppattu (Ten Idylls). Eighteen Minor Works and Twin Epics—Silappadikaaram and Manimekalai belong to the later age—Sangam Maruvia Kaalam.

According to Nakkirar the three Sangams existed for 9990 years. In the First Sangam Siva, Murugan, Agathian, Mudinagarayan etc. were the members. The members of the Sangam were 549. Agathiam was the grammar for the poets of the First Sangam.

Madurai was the seat of the First Tamil Sangam and when it submerged into the sea the people moved

northward and made Kapaadapuram their capital. This Kapaadapuram was the seat for the Second Tamil Sangam. This Kapaadapuram has been mentioned in Valmiki Ramayana. In this Second Sangam Agathian and Tolkaappian were the grammarians along with the other poets. Agathiam, Tolkaappiam, Mapuranam, Budapuram etc. were the grammars for the poets. Tolkaapiam only is surviving in full form. No other book survived the time

About the date of the Tolkaappiam there are so many differences among the scholars. Prof. Vaiyapuri Pillai, K. A. Nilakanta Sastri, K. N. Sivaraja Pillai—all the three scholars hold the view that Tolkaappiam should have been written after the Sangam works. The date may be fixed during the 4th or 5th century A. D. To support this view they point out the word Hora (ஓரை). The word ஓரை occurs in Tolkaappiam in more than one place. They think that this ஓரை might have been borrowed from Sanskrit which got this word from Greek during 3rd or 4th century A. D. This need not be true because the meaning they give to this word is not correct. They give astronomical meaning to this word but Dr. Navalar Somasundara Bharathiar gives a different meaning. According to him ஓரை means game played by the maidens. Mayilai Seeni Venkatasami says that Greeks should have borrowed this word from Tamil (1). So on this basis one cannot drag the date back to 4th or 5th century A. D.

P. S. Subramanya Sastry says that seven 'sutrams' in Meippattiyal of Tolkaappiam are the translations of

1 Mayilai Seeni Venkatasami, Sanga Kaala Tamilaha Varalarril Sila Seithigal, P. 29

Natya Sastra of Bharata Munivar. Bharata's Natya Sastram does not belong to the date earlier to the 3rd century A. D. But P. S. S. Sastry holds the view that that Natya Sastram belongs to 3rd century B. C. and so Tolkaappiam belongs to 2nd century B. C.

But this theory is not acceptable to many scholars. Panamparanar in his preface to Tolkaappiam says that Tolkaappiar was well versed in Aiyindhiram, a Sanskrit grammar that was very popular among the Sanskrit people. This Aiyindhiram grammar was popular and read by many only before the coming of the later grammarian Panini. After the emergence of Paniniam, Aiyindhiram was forgotten. So during the time of Tolkaappiar, Panini was not born. Panini's period is said to be 5th century B. C. or before. If we accept this date to Panini, Tolkaappiar might have existed one or two centuries earlier. That is why Mayilai. Seeni. Venkatasami says the 8th or 9th century B. C. to Tolkaappiar (2).

Prof. N. Subramanian says that "Panini and his predecessors seem to have been unaware of the land to the south of the Vindhya and the Dandakaranya" (3). Some scholars like N. Subramanian assigns 10th century B. C. to Panini. Panini did not know or mention about Tamil Nadu. This does not mean Tamil Nadu did not exist during his time. In fact Tolkaappiam belongs to the age prior to Panini.

(2) Mayilai. Seeni. Venkatasami, Sanga Kaala Tamilaha Varalaarril Sila Seithigal, P. 84.

(3) N. Subramanian, History of Tamilnad, P. 26.

There is a legend that Tolkaappiar was the son of Jamadagni Munivar and so the brother of Parasuraman. M. Ragava Iyengar believes this legend as history. He wants to say Tolkaappiar was a Brahmin. To support his wish he says this story. Nobody can believe this story. If we accept this story Tolkaappiar becomes the contemporary of Rama, the hero of Ramayana.

Tolkaappiar was not a Brahmin. He belonged to a family called Kaappiarkudi which was very ancient. His proper name is not known. We can get the support to this idea from the preface of Tolkaappiam. He was not the disciple of Agattiar. If he were the disciple of Agathiar, Tolkaappiar might have told about him atleast in one place in his great grammar. In so many places, he ends the sutrams as என்பு, என்மஞர் புலவர் etc.

We can finish this chapter by saying that Tolkaappiam existed even before Panini and therefore it may be assigned to the date not later than 7th or 8th century B. C.

This Tolkaappiam disproves the statement of the historians that the Tamils history begins only from the 4th century B. C.

4. SANGAM LITERATURE

Pandya patronised Tamil by forming Academies in their capitals to improve the Tamil Language and Literature. We have historical materials about three Tamil sangams which existed before 3rd century A. D. Though most of the scholars do not accept the years and personages of the Sangam as given in the commentary to Irayanar Ahapporul or that of Adiarkkunallar, neutral minded scholars accept that there was a form of organisation to improve Tamil Language and Literature which might have been in existence for five hundred or six hundred years beginning from 3rd century B. C. to the end of 3rd century A. D. Tolkaappiam preceded the so-called Tamil Literature now extant.

Dr. C. E. Ramachandran in his book "Sanga Kaala Varalaaru" says that the poem sung by Mudinagarayan in praise of Udiyan Cheralaathan was sung during the period of the Krukchetra War. The war between the Pandavas and Kauravas is believed to have fought about 1000 B. C. according to some scholars and between 1400—800 B. C. according to some other scholars. Any how the war should have been fought on or before 1000 B. C. Many historians are ready to believe this war and the time ascribed to it. But including K. A. Nilakanta Sastry, the so-called historians do not come forward to accept that the song in Puranaanuru by Mudinagarayan was sung in the time of Mahabharata war. But like Dr. C. E. Ramachandran some modern historians come forward

to accept the historicity of the song. He says that verses in Puranaanuru were sung between 1000 B. C. and 300 A. D. (1). Moreover a poet has praised a patron to live many more years than the number of sands of the river Pahruli (பஹுலி) (2).

எங்கோ வாழிய குடுமி தங்கோச்
செந்நீர்ப் பசும்பொன் வயிரியர்க் கீத்த
முந்நீர் விழுவின் நெடியோய்
நன்னீர்ப் பஹுலி மணலினும் பலவே

(புறம் 9)

This praise should have been extended only when the river was in existence. During the Third Sangam this river was not in existence. Because of deluge it disappeared in the sea like Kumari river and a vast area in the far south. There are so many references about the Pahruli river, Kumari river and the land in the far south in Sangam Literature.

Sangam Literature is the main source for the Tamil history. Though there are some exaggerations and unbelievable things we must be prepared to accept the historical facts without hesitation. We cannot accept the statement of K. A. Nilakanta Sastry that the history of the Tamils begins only after the advent of the Aryans into South India.

The Sangam Literary works are Eight Anthologies (Ettuttogai) and Ten Idyls (Pattuppattu). The Eight Anthologies are 1) Narrinai 2) Kuruntogai 3) Aingurunuru

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- (1) Dr. C. E. Ramachandran, *Sanga Kaala Varalaru*, P. 38.
(2) *Puzananuru* St 9.

4) Padiruppattu 5) Paripaatal 6) Kalittogai 7) Ahanaa-nuru and 8) Puranaanuru. An ancient verse says thus :

நற்றிணை நல்ல குறுந்தொகை ஐங்குறுநூ
ரெத்த பதிற்றுப்பத் தோங்கு பரிபாடல்
கற்றறிந்தார் ஏத்தும் கலியோ டகம்புறமென்
றித்திறத்த எட்டுத் தொகை.

The ten long poems are Ten Idylls. They are also revealed in another verse as follows :

முருகு பொருநாறு பாணிரண்டு முல்லை
பெருகு வளமதுரைக் காஞ்சி-மருவினிய
கோலநெடு நல் வாடை கோல்குறிஞ்சி பட்டினப்
பாலை கடாத்தொடும் பத்து.

The Ten Long poems are 1) Tirumurugarruppadai 2) Porunararruppadai 3) Sirupaanaarruppadi 4) Permpa-narruppadai 5) Mullaippattu 6) Maduraikkanji 7) Nedu-nalvaadai 8) Kurunjippattu 9) Pattinappaalai and 10) Malaipadu Kadaam.

The verses which have been compiled in the anthologies were written by various authors at various places on various dates. The Sangam verses have been compiled together only in later times not later than 4th or 5th century A. D.

“Cankam poetry divides its literature into two great major heads of Akam and Puram. Akam means something internal whilst Puram means something external. Generally these are interpreted as meaning love and war. Though taken as a rough and ready explanation, this will not be sufficient; then subtle aspects could not be grasped, if we restrict to this surface explanation. Puram deals

with exterior aspects. The emphasis is here on the phenomenon, the outward appearances, actions and statements. You can date the event; the personalities may be historical or quasi-historical. Anachronism will be a literary blemish in Puram. Akam poetry is something different. It cannot be dated; the outer aspects, appearances are not material for its appreciation. It will be against the spirit of the Akam poetry to refer to any particular individual, historical or imaginary. Here the emphasis is on the noumenon. There is no emphasis on the exterior personality; the inspiration is, for these poets, the fundamental basis of all universe viz, Love. It is the various expressions of this Love, in its multifarious aspects, that is attempted to be described in Akam. It is true that the men and women who take part in this drama of the innermind, act in this world and their beauty and adornments are sometimes spoken of. That is because you could not speak of human-beings without their external aspects. These, however, are not the important revelations of Akam poetry as much as the inner vision of the soul or love or the urge-divine. So also in Puram there will be the inner motives revealed through the actions and speeches of the historical and quasi historical personalities. This is but natural; for one cannot describe the outer aspect without making one understand the spirit behind it. Therefore, it is only the difference in emphasis that we have to recognise. It is in view of this importance that Tolkappiyam asserts that in Akam poetry the hero's name is never given out. Here again we realise the idealism of Cankam poetry. But within this situation of idealism, the poetry tries to be real". (1)

(1) Prof. T. P. Meenakshisundaram. The Pageant of Tamil Literature Pp. 10, 11.

Further Prof. T. P. M. says "In Cankam literature one has the glorious expressions of the ideals of the heroes and heroines, the kings and the chieftains, the patrons and their poets. These form the only source for a history of the Cankam age, but with the fuller description of the social, political and cultural atmosphere of the age". (2)

If we carefully study the Sangam works we can come to the conclusion as Dr. K. K. Pillay says in his "A Social History of the Tamils". He says "The very fact that the Tamil Language and culture did not lose their individuality in spite of their close association with Sanskrit and North Indian Culture through the ages shows that the Tamils had a virile language and culture, even prior to their association with the Aryans". (3)

The political history of Tamil Nadu during Sangam Age can be constructed only with the help of the Sangam works. The Cheras, Cholas, Pandyas—the crowned princes—ruled the major divisions—Chera Nadu, Chola Nadu and Pandi Nadu. There were so many small Chieftains who ruled their respective regions under the powerful kings. Besides these powerful monarchs and chieftains there were seven famous patrons of bards and people. They were called the "Last Seven Vallals".

Purananuru is really a history of the Tamils of the Sangam Age. We can see political, social and cultural history of the Tamils in a vivid manner. There is not much poetic exaggeration in the Puram verses. It is a mine for the

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- (2) Prof. T. P. Meenakshisundaram The Pageant of Tamil Literature P. 15
- (3) K. K. Pillay, M. A., D. Litt., D. Phil. (Oxon) A Social History of the Tamils, P. 12

historians who wants to know the culture and other aspects of the Tamils. The Padiruppattu (Ten Tens) is an another history in verse. It is also an anthology dealing with the history of ten Chera kings. It is full of historical facts.

Even in Aham poems we can get historical information. In Ahanaanuru and Narrinai there are so many historical facts mixed with the events of love.

In the Ten Idylls also the poets sang their songs with historical sense. We can get the history of Karikala Chola, Talaiyalan-Kaanathu Pandiyan Nedunjezhian, Tondaman Ilanthiraiyan and some other chieftains.

Some historians really took pains to interpret the Tamil verses in the right spirit and constructed the history of the Tamils who were the original inhabitants of the present Indian peninsula and the Lemuria.

5. FOREIGN REFERENCES

In this chapter let us see the references made by the foreign writers about Tamil Nadu and its people during Sangam Age. This chapter is meant that Tamil Nadu was not a secluded one in the past but a wellknown country to all over the world then.

First let us see the North Indian sources. Kapaadapuram which is considered the seat of the Second Tamil Sangam and the Second Pandyan Capital is mentioned both in the Ramayana and Mahabharata. While the Ramayana and Mahabharata were written Kapaadapuram was in existence. The Ramayana of Vaalmiki was prior to Mahabharata of Vyaasa. Both the Indian Epics were written before the emergence of the New Religions—Jainism and Buddhism. Kautilya was the minister to Chandragupta Maurya who ruled the Magatha Empire during 324 to 300 B. C. Kautilya in his Arthasastra speaks of the pearls of Pandya Nadu. Kautilya himself is believed by some writers that he went to north from Tamil Nadu. In Arthasastra he mentions about 32 techniques (உத்திகள்). Though some historians hold the view that the portion about 32 techniques in Tolkaappiam was the translation into Tamil it is not true. Because Tolkaappiam must have been written some centuries prior to Arthasastra. So the fact may be otherwise.

Asokan edicts mention about Tamil Nadu. They speak of Chera, Chola, Pandya and Chatyaputra During the period of Asoka in the 3rd century B. C. Tamil Nadu was ruled by Chera, Chola, Pandya and Chatyaputras. Though the whole of India was under his rule Tamil Nadu was not under his rule. The Tamil kings were friends to him and the Dharma Mahamatras came to Tamil Nadu and spread Buddhism there with the permission of the Tamil kings. The Mauryan invasion of Tamil Nadu is mentioned in Tamil literature also. The Mauryas are referred as Vambamoriyar (வம்பமோரியர்) This invasion was made during Bindusara, the father of Asoka. The Mauryas were defeated.

Kharavela of Kalinga in his Hathigumpha inscription mentions that a confederacy of Tamil kings was defeated. Whether he defeated the Tamils or not his inscription is a source for us to know about the unity of the Tamil kings during the Sangam Age. The matter of unity in Tamil Literature is a different one. The Tamils praised love and heroism and so the Tamils were at war often. Though they were quarrelling with each other at home they became united against an external enemy.

Katyayana of 4th century mentions about Tamil Nadu but Panini did not say anything about Tamil Nadu. So, Prof. A. Ramasamy in his book "Tamilnaattu Varalaaru" holds the view that the Aryans should have come to Tamil Nadu only after 6th century B. C (1). He adds that the Aryans might have entered Tamil Nadu as the Jains and Buddhists entered into Tamil Nadu to preach their religions. This can not be taken as correct because we see many references to the Aryan fusion with the Tamils even in the days of Tolkaappiam.

(1) A. Ramasamy M. A., Tamilnaattu Varalaaru, P. 22

Agathiya and Parasurama are said to have been the leaders of the Aryan people who came to the South to preach Vedic Religion. The historians say that the Aryanisation began from the time of Agathiya and Parasurama. These two persons lived in the time of Rama. One Agathiya is mentioned in the Rigveda. An Agathiya is said to have Ashram at Podiya Hills and developed Tamil. He had written a Tamil grammar called Agathiyam which is extinct. He is also believed to be the teacher of Tolkaappiar. But he is not mentioned by his disciple in Tolkaappiam. In Tamil Literature Agathiya is not mentioned before Manimekalai, a post-Sangam epic. Taking all the points in mind Dr. Navalar Somasundara Bharathiar states thus :

“.....the Agathiyam cult was deliberately started in comparatively recent times only as a counterblast to belittle the fame of the great Brahman author of the classic Tamil grammar, *Tolkaappiam*. But this conjecture has not been proved to be, and I think it need not necessarily be, the only possible conclusion. It is equally probable to argue that the apotheosis of ‘Agathiyar’ into almost a deity, and canonising him as the star Canopus on the one hand; and ascribing to him all and sundry fabulous and irreconcilable incidents relating to different legendary personages in the lores of the Aryan mythology on the other, might have been the work of men whose object was to bury the prehistoric Tamilian precursor and pioneer in the field of Tamil Literature with a view to resurrect him as a great Aryan saint, who alone could shed lustre and light in the dim twilight on the horizon of Tamil Culture” (2).

(2) Dr. Navalar Somasundara Bharathiar. The papers of Dr. Navalar Somasundara Bharathiar, P. 52.

A. Ramasamy says that all the stories woven around Agathiar in connection with Tamil and Tamil Nadu are mere invented stories but not historical facts. (3)

Mahavamsa and Dipavamsa of Ceylon mention about South India or Tamil Nadu. Vijaya the, prince of Ceylon married the Pandyan princess. The marriage contact between the Ceylonese and the Tamil Pandyan family happened before the birth of Christ. Kajibahu who ruled Ceylon during the first half of the 2nd century A. D. came to Tamil Nadu in the time of Chera Senguttuvan. During his reign the relationship between the Cheras and Ceylonese was cordial. Tamils and Ceylonese also fought with each other at times.

During the reign of Augustus Ceazer, the Roman Emperor, the Tamil Pandyan king sent an embassy to Rome to improve the commercial activities.

Megasthenese who came to India during the reign of Chandragupta Maurya writes about Pandya Nadu in his book Indika. According to him Pandya Nadu was being ruled by a princess. This statement is not accepted by the historians. The Greek historian Herodotus was interested in India and wrote clearly about Tamil Nadu. Ptolemy, the Greek geographer and the anonymous author of the 'Periplus of Erythraean Sea' give us valuable information regarding the ports and other trading centres together with accounts of the commodities they traded in with Damirike (the Greek form of Tamil Nadu).

(3) A. Ramasamy M. A., Tamilnadu Varalaaru, P. 21

Pliny the Elder and Livy did refer to Tamil Nadu in their histories. Strabo also wrote about Tamil Nadu.

These Greek and Roman references corroborate the Tamil Sangam literature. The Greeks and Romans were called Yavanas (யவனர்) in Tamil Literature.

யவனர் தந்த தண்கமழ் தேறல்

(புறம் 56)

மெய்ப்பை புக்க வெருவருந் தோற்றத்து
வலிபுணர் யாக்கை வன்கண் யவனர்

(முல்லைப்பாட்டு)

யவனர் தந்த வினைமான் நன்கலம்,
பொன்னெடு வந்து கறியொடு பெயரும்.

(அகம் 149)

Greek words like mattigai, surungai, kalam, kannal were used in Tamil language according to Mayilai. Seeni Venkatasamy (4).

Musiri, Tondi, Korkai, Kavirippoompattinam were the sea ports mentioned by the Greek writers. Tamils also traded with China, and Kanchi is referred as 'Houangtche' in the 2nd century B. C. according to Dr. N Subramanian (5).

(4) Mayilai. Seeni Venkatasamy, Sanga Kaala Tamilaha Varalaarril Sila Seithigal, P. 21

(5) N. Subramanian, M. A., Ph. D., History of Tamilnad (to A. D. 1565) P. 10

Tuki is a word which has been used in the Hebrew Bible. (Tokai) Tuki is a Tamil word which means a peacock. This Tamil word shows the contact between the Greeks and the Tamils even in the very ancient time.

Bruse Foote made excavations at Adichchanallur and Sir Mortimer Wheeler at Arikamedu near Pondicherry. Adichchanallur people lived before the Indus Valley people and they had contact with Sumeria, Babylonia and other West Asian countries in the very early times. Ur, Nippur etc were the place names which resemble the Tamil names. Kerala teak wood was found in the ruins of a temple in the far east.

In Tamil Nadu we find many Roman coins which belong to the period prior to 3rd century A. D. 'Paavai Vilakku' (Lamb in the hand of lady) wine and glass came to Tamil Nadu from Rome and Greece. At Arikamedu a Roman glass factory has been excavated. Roman soldiers were appointed as body guards of the Tamil kings. Some Roman soldiers served under the Pandyan kings as watchmen to the fort.

6 SOCIETY

We can know the structure of the society of the Tamils during Sangam Age from the Sangam Literature and Tolkaappiam. Third part of Tolkaappiam is a source to the historians to construct the structure of the society of the Tamils.

Tolkaappiam was written before Panini, the Sanskrit grammarian. Considering so many facts we can say that Tolkaappiam was written during or before 1000 B. C. During the time of Tolkaappiar himself Aryan mingling was there. It is an unrefutable fact according to Dr. M. R. P. Gurusamy (1).

Tolkaappiar compares the Tamil pre-marital Love (களவு) with Kaantharva of the Northern Sanskrit people.

அன்பொடு புணர்ந்த ஐந்திணை மருங்கின்
காமக் கூட்டம் காணுங் காலை
மறையோர் தேளத்து மன்றல் எட்டனுள்
துறையமை நல்யாழ்த் துணைமையோர் இயல்பே, (2)

Tolkaappiar had known about the eight kinds of Aryan marriages. He makes rules for the use of Sanskrit words into Tamil Language :

(1) Dr. M. R. P. Gurusamy, Sanga Kaalam, P. 68

(2) Tolkaappiam, Porul, Sutram, 92

வடசொற் கிளவி வடவெழுத் தொர்இ
எழுத்தொடு புணர்ந்த சொல்லா சும்மே
சிதைந்தன வரினும் இயைந்தன வரையார்.

He also says that Sanskrit words were also used in Tamil versification.

இயற்சொல் திரிசொல் திசைச்சொல் வடசொலென்று
அனைத்தே செய்யுள் ஈட்டச் சொல்லே. (3)

All these matters make us believe that even before Tolkaappiam the Aryan influence or Aryan beliefs and customs as well as words were accepted into Tamil society and Tamil language. The Aryans also took Tamil customs and Tamil words into their society and language. This is but natural when two different peoples mingle together.

Aryanisation was very limited during the Sangam Age. But any how we can see the impact of the Aryans in the Tamil society. While I say this it is not meant that Aryans were more civilized and cultured than the Tamils and that is why the Tamils adopted some customs and beliefs of the Aryans. H. G. Wells in his book 'A Short History of the World' says that the Aryans came into contact with the Dravidian civilization and learnt much from the Dravidians (4)

The caste system in Tamil society during Sangam age was based on profession. Four-fold system in caste was prevailing during the time of Tolkaappiar. In Tolkaappiam

(3) Tol. Echchaviyal, Sutram, 1

(4) H. G. Wells, A Short History of the World, Chapter 19

itself there are sutrams dealing with caste system. This resembles the varna sytem of the Northerners. But the sutrams 71 to 85 of Marabiyal (மரபியல்) might have been interpolations according to Dr. N. Subramanian (5). Dr. T. P. M. and some other Tamil scholars also hold the same view. So we should not take the views expressed in the sutrams from 71 to 85. On the basis of these sutrams some historians hold the view that varna system in caste was in existence among the Tamils. Some historians like Dr. C. E. Ramachandran do not believe the meaning of the sutrams and say the Tamils did not have varna systems at all during Sangam Age (6).

In Puranaanuru four Kudis are mentioned. They are Tudiyan, Paanan, Parayan and Kadamban :

குடியன் பாணன் பறையன் கடம்பன் என்று
இந்நான் கல்லது குடியு மில்லை (7).

Kudis are communities. The meaning of these lines is that "there are no kudis other than these four". Can we accept this? No. There were Antanar, Arasar, Vaisiyar and Velaalar. Like these four castes among Aryans also there were Brahmins, Kshatryas, Vaisiyas and Sudras. The four castes among the Aryans are similar to that of the Tamils. But some scholars say that among the Tamil castes there was no bar for inter caste marriages. Among

(5) N. Subramanian, History of Tamilnad, (to A. D. 1565) P. 339

(6) Dr. C. E. Ramachandran, Sanga Kaala Varalaaru, P. 170

(7) Puranaanuru, Stanza, 355

the Aryan castes there was no inter-caste marriage. Velaalar were not untouchables like sudras. Velirs, the Velaalar chieftains ruled the countries and had matrimonial alliances with the ruling class people (Kshatrias) like Chera, Chola and Pandya kings.

In Puranaanuru we can find in one verse that there was gradation in society among castes. High castes and low castes were recognised. Four castes were recognised in gradation.

“வேற்றுமை தெரிந்த நாற்பா லுள்ளும்
கீழ்ப்பா லொருவன் கற்பின்
மேற்பா லொருவனும் அவன்கட் படுமே” (8)

Ilinthor, Adiyavar, Vinaivalar were the low caste people. Ilinthor were like panchamas. The Puram verse (183) speaks of varna system only according to Prof S. Vaiyapuri Pillai (9).

There were slaves also in Tamil society. In Tolkaap-piam the sutram “அடியோர் பாங்கினும் வினைவலர் பாங்கினும்” (தொல். அகத். 25) gives a chance to believe that a kind of slaves were among the Tamils. To have slaves shows the highly civilized society.

The Brahmins were highly respected. Even kings bowed their head to the Brahmins only.

“பார்ப்பார்க்கு அல்லது பணிபு அறியலையே” (10).

(8) Puram, Stanza, 183

(9) S. Vaiyapuri Pillai, Tamilar Panpaadu, P. 31

(10) Padiruppattu, Stanza, 63

“Love marriage was not scorned by elders but was indeed spoken highly of, if the circumstances did not besmirch the reputation of the lover and the beloved, and if rules of the game were followed. Eternal and steadfast love between a male and his beloved when perfect was considered as a continuing process over many births (Narr. 199)” (11)

The Tamil Kalavu (களவு) (prematrilial love) is compared with the Kaantharva form of marriage. R. Ragava Iyengar also holds the view that Kalavu and Kaantharva are the same. But his statement is wrong. Nacchinaarkkiniyar—commentator, explains that both Kalavu and Kaantharva are different because Kalavu does not exist without chastity whereas Kaantharva exists even without chastity. Chastity is not emphasised in Kaantharva but in Kalavu chastity is the goal. The Tamil commentator Nacchinaarkkiniyar says thus : “காந்தருவருக்குக் கற்பின்றிக் களவு அமையவும் பெறும்; ஈண்டுக் கற்பின்றிக் களவே அமையாது”

To illustrate the vital difference between these two, Kapilar, sings a song—Kurinji-P-Pattu. It was written to explain this difference to an Aryan king, Prahattan. He knew Tamil but did not know the difference between these Kalavu and Kaantharva. He might have the illusion that Kalavu and Kaantharva were the same. We can't see the 'Arattodu Nirral' (telling the secret of love to the parents in view of getting married) in the Aryan culture. This is the special feature in the Tamil Culture.

(11) K A Nilakanta Sastri, Sangam Literature : Its Cults and Cultures, P. 52

Polygamy was is practice. A man could marry more than one wife. There is no single instance about the remarriage of the widow. Widowhood was strictly followed. The widows did not enjoy the life after the death of their husbands. They suffered a lot. A Pandyan Queen jumped into the flames of the pyre of her husband. But this Sati was not common.

The dead were buried. Cremation was also in practice. Cremation of the dead was the practice of the Aryans. Tamils got this practice from the Aryans.

The betrothal or marriage function of the Tamils was different from the Aryans. Ceremonial bathing of the bride was the first function and after the bath four married women who had children came forward to bless the bride to be a dutiful and loyal wife to her lord. The garland of the bride consisted of the root of the Durva grass and flowers. The bride was then led to the bridegroom's chamber and properly seated beside him. The parents offered her hand to the bridegroom, requesting him to make her the mistress of his household. Talisiman, (தூலி) the 'mangalyasutram' was not tied in the neck of the bride.

Chaste woman was compared to Aruntati.

வடமீன் புரையும் கற்பின் மடமொழி

(புறம். 122)

There was no purohita in the Tamil marriage. The newly wedded people did not come round the fire or stepping the 'ammi' stone they did not see the Aruntati in the sky. This form of Aryan marriage came into practice

among the Tamils only after the Sangam Age. We see this Aryan type of marriage in Silappadikaaram which was written after the Sangam Age.

Brahmins also ate meat and drank liquor. Kapilar-a Tamil Brahmin poet ate meat and drank wine as other poets. Even females drank wine. Avvai—the famous woman poet also drank wine. Eating non-vegetarian diet and drinking wine was very common in the Tamil society. Nobody thought this eating and drinking was bad. Only Valluvar who came later prohibits drinking and eating meat.

Grahasta was considered higher than the other three stages of life—Brahmacharya, sanyasa and vanaprastha. Only the grahasta fed the other three. Charity was insisted to the grahasta as a duty. Hospitality was considered the highest duty of the married couple. The wife entertained the strangers only when she was with her husband. She was not expected to do the hospitality while she was suffering in separation of her husband.

King was considered as the life to all human beings and other animate and inanimate things.

‘மன்னன் உயிர்த்தே மலர்தலை உலகம்’

There were regional communities :Kuravar, Idaiyar, Ulavar, Parathavar etc Blacksmiths and other artisans also lived in the villages. Carpenter was a busy craftsman in the village. There were weavers also. They made very nice cloth by name mazline cloth. Silk was known then (கொட்டைக் கரைய பட்டுடை).

The Tamils wore various kinds of jewels made of gold and silver. The married women put the flowers on their heads. The maidens did not put the flowers on their heads. Putting flowers on head itself showed that the woman was a married one. Only virgin girls prayed the moon. The girl who loved somebody did not pray to moon.

Harlots were allowed in the society. In Tolkaappiam the time when the husband could leave the wife and go to the harlot is mentioned. Prostitution was a recognised institution during Sangam period. Aham poems of Marutam speak of the quarrels between the husband and wife because of the husband's contact with the harlot or harlots.

The existence of slavery and harlots are the proofs for a well developed society. Didactic poets or the law givers may speak ill of slavery and harlots.

Tamils had many beliefs and superstitions in their life. They believed in and feared of ghosts and spirits.

Dr. N. Subramanian says that they practised untouchability (12). But in Sangam literature there is no evidence for this statement. There might have been gradation among the castes but there was no evidence that they practised untouchability. They mingled freely with each other.

The Banas – the musicians who were untouchables in later period had freely mingled with all the people.

(12) N. Subramanian, History of Tamilnad (to A. D. 1565)
P. 341

The kings gave much respect to the poets and artists. The poets and artists could enter the palace to meet the king at any time without any permission. But others had no such right or respect. Karikala Chola himself came seven steps forward and gave leave to the 'porunars, - the musicians.

Tamil society during Sangam Age was not much polluted by the Aryan society as in the later ages. But at the same time we can't say Tamil society was free from pollution of Aryans.

7. RELIGION

Tamils were religious minded people even before the coming of the Aryans. The Indus Valley People had worshipped Mother Goddess, Pasupathi etc. They worshipped Nature. Like Indus Valley People Tamils of South India also worshipped Gods like Siva, Muruga, Mayon, Vendan, Varunan, Korraivai or Kali.

Siva is considered a Dravidian God. Rudra of the Vedic Age was not Siva. Mayon was different from Vedic Vishnu, Muruga was more ancient and purely Dravidian. Karthikeya or Subramanya of the Aryans was different from Muruga. But when the Aryans mingled with the Tamils prior to Tolkaappiar and during the Sangam Age - the Age of Pattuppattu and Ettuttogai Siva became Rudra; Muruga became Subramanya or Karthikeya; Mayon or Mal became Vishnu and like this the Tamil Gods became Aryanised and mythical stories were told about the gods.

During Sangam Age the terrain was divided into four divisions - Mullai, Kurunji, Marudam and Neythal. There was no land for Palai according to Tolkaappiam Only later land was assigned to Palai. For each division of land the people had separate god for worship. Muruga was the God of Kurunji (Forests); Vendan was the God of Marudam (Rice field). In later times Vendan became Indra by the Aryan influence. N. Subramanyan says

“ The Tolkaappiam says that Indra was the deity of the agricultural lands ” (1). But this is not true. Tolkaappiar says that Vendan was the god of the agricultural land.

“ வேந்தன்மேய பைம்புனல் உலகமும் ”

N. Subramanyan wantanly misinterprets the sutram. Varunan was the god of the littoral land. Tamil Varunan was different from the Vedic Varuna.

Kandu or a piece of wood was erected in the place of Podiyil (பொதியில்) - a common place where the villagers assembled to discharge and discuss the village cases. They worshipped the Kandu. The backbone of the shark was also erected and worshipped by the fishermen.

Balaraman, the brother of Kannan (Krishna) was also worshipped. He was called Vaaliyon (வாலியோன்) - God in white colour. Rama was also known to the Tamils.

K. A. Nilakanta Sastri says “ The Marudam folk performed the Indra festival every year ” (2) This was not the fact. During Sangam Age Indra was not worshipped by the people of Marudam. Silappadikaaram and Manimekalai which speak of the festival of Indra were written after the Sangam Age. We can't take these two epics as Sangam epics. According to Paripaadal Tamils knew Indra and Ahalya, the wife of Gautama. Tamils knew the story about Indra but did not worship Indra during Sangam Age. Moreover some scholars hold the view that Paripaadal and Kalittogai belonged to later

(1) N. Subramanyan, Histry of Tamilnad, P. 376.

(2) K. A. Nilakanta Sastri, Sangam Literature : Its Culture And Cultures, P. 69

age. Tirumurugarruppadai also is believed to be a post - Sangam work. Whether these three books belong to Sangam Age or post - Sangam Age nothing is clear. These three books speak the matters of the later development in the field of religion and society. The story of Cupid and Rati was also known to the Tamils. Aruntati star was called Vadamin (Northern Star). She was not worshipped but chastity of a woman was compared to that of Aruntati in Sangam literature.

The people worshipped hero stones. Great soldiers or kings were honoured by the people by worshipping them in stones. The hero stone was set up either in the place where the hero fell or in some other convenient place in which case it would be a cenotaph.

Veriyaadal was a practice followed by the Tamils. It was a dance of the officiant in a frenzy when he was supposed to be under divine inspiration. It took place when the parents of a love-sick girl wanted to know the cause of and remedy for her indisposition. After offering prayers and sacrificing a goat, the priest danced.

K. K. Pillay also like other historians say that Vendan was Indra (3). The historians must know that Indra was not Tamil Vendan, the god of Marudam people.

Korravai was the goddess of war and of victory. The soldiers worshipped before and after the war, the goddess Korravai. Sun and moon were also worshipped.

(3) K. K. Pillay, A Social History of the Tamils. P. 503.

The Tamil kings performed Vedic sacrifices, Rajasuya yagnam was performed by Rajasuyam Vetta Perunarkilli. A Chera King performed many sacrifices and so he was called Palyaagasaalai Mudukudumi Peruvaluti. Brahmins performed vedic sacrifices in Tamil Nadu with the help of the Tamil Kings. The sacrifice shows the influence of the Aryans.

Jainism and Buddhism were also known to the Tamils. Bhadrabahu, the Jain saint came to Mysore along with Chandragupta Maurya. Asoka sent many Dharma Mahamatras to Tamil Nadu to spread Buddhism.

Tamils knew well Vedic religion, Buddhism and Jainism. The names of the poets like Ilampothisaar, Ulochchanaar indicate the influence of the later creeds of North India.

Tamils were religious but not fanatic. They had religious tolerance. They did not give much importance to the religious differences. Religions were secondary to them. They considered heroism and love more than religion.

Paripaadal and Tirumurugarruppadai give more materials concerning religion. We can see stray cases about gods or religion.

In Tolkaappiam Kantazhi (கந்தழி), Kodinilai (கொடி நிலை) and Valli (வள்ளி) refer to fire, sun and moon respectively. These three words had been interpreted in different ways by different authors. 'Kadavul' was also a word referred to god in Tolkaappiam.

Tamils believed in hell and heaven. The people believed that those who did good deeds went to heaven and those who did bad deeds went to hell. Fate and Destiny were also believed by the Tamils. Tamil literature speaks of Immai and Marumai — life in this world and life in the next world.

Tamils believed in the mortality (நிலையாமை) of body, wealth and youth. The world itself was believed mortal. One's glory was considered immortal. People who knew this truth did good deeds of fame and leaving their fame in this world they died in physic.

“ மண்ணு உலகத்து மண்ணுதல் குறித்தோர்
தம்புகழ் நிறீஇத் தாம்மாய்ந்தனர் ”

— புறம்

Kaniyan Poongunran says in Puram that one lives in this world according to his destiny. One who had done good deeds in the previous birth enjoys life in this birth and the other who had done bad deeds in the previous birth suffers in this birth. So good or evil comes not from others ; they are the results of one's own acts according to Poongunranaar (கீதும் நன்றும் பிறர் தர வாரா). We are the sole cause for our suffering or joy

8. TRADE

Tamils were good traders during Sangam Age. They traded with the foreigners as well as the indogenous people. Tamils went to various countries and had traded with them even before 4000 B. C. Malabar teak wood has been found in the ruins of Ur in Sumeria. That teak wood should have been brought to Sumeria from Tamilaham before 4000 B. C. The words 'Kapim' and 'Tuki' in Hebrew language were derived from the Tamil words Kavi (கவி) and Tokai (தோகை). These words confirm the trade relations in the past. According to Prof. K. K. Pillay "There is clear evidence that the maritime trade of Western Asia with South India flourished in a larger measure and with greater continuity from about the 7th century B. C." (1)

Greek merchants in Tamil Nadu were known as Yavanas.

“ வலிபுணரி யாக்கை வன்கண் யவனர் ” (2)

“ யவனர் இயற்றிய வினைமாள் பாலை ” (3)

Hippalus discovered in 45 A. D. that the Monsoon winds helped the trade between the West and South India. The Greeks and Romans brought to the ports of Tamilaham wine, brass, lead, glass, copper, tin etc. In

(1) K. K. Pillay. A Social History of the Tamils, P. 250

(2) Mullaippattu, Line - 61

(3) Nedunayadai Line - 103

exchange of these commodities they purchased at Tamilian ports pepper, pearls, ivory, diamonds, silk etc. During the time of the Roman Emperor Augustus maritime trade with South India developed. Pandyan Embassy went to Rome and met the Emperor to improve the trade relations.

The Roman merchants purchased Indian goods by giving gold coins.

“ பொன்னெடு வந்து கறியொடு பெயரும்
வளங்கெழு முசிறி ” (4)

The Roman coins are found in various places of Tamilaham.

Near Pondicherry Arikamedu had been excavated. The finds reveal the occupation of the Romans of that place. Roman jars and glasses are found there. Ptolemy's 'Poduke' is identifiable with modern Pondicherry.

The author of the Periplus of the Erythraen Sea mentions names of the ports of Tamil Nadu. Muziris, Tondy, Korkai, Vaikkarai, Mandai, Naravu, Kavirippumpattinam, Kumari etc. were the important ports during Sangam Age. Maritime trade with West Asia was flourishing upto 3rd century A. D. Strabo says that he saw in 25 B.C. about 120 ships sailing from Hormuz to India.

Tamilaham traded with China even before the birth of Christ. It is believed that trade flourished between South India and China as early as 7th century B. C. Sugar was imported from China and the word 'Sini' indicates the trade relationship between Tamilaham and China. Pepper, Cardamom and red coral were exported from South India to China.

Chinese had a colony on the Malabar Coast. Greeks had a colony at Kavirippattinam. Body guards to the Pandyas were Greeks. The Greeks were employed as guards of the Madurai fort also.

Pattinappaalai says the commodities and the countries from where they were imported into Tamil Nadu :

“ நீரின் வந்த நிமிர்பரிப் புரவியும்
காணின் வந்த கருங்கறி மூடையும்
வடமலைப் பிறந்த மணியும் பொன்னும்
குடமலைப் பிறந்த ஆரமும் அகிலும்
தென்கடல் முத்தும் குணகடல் துகிரும்
கங்கை வாரியும் காவிரிப் பயனும்
ஈழத்துணவும் காழகத் தாக்கமும்
அரியவும் பெரியவும் நெரிய ஈண்டி
வளந்தலை மயங்கிய நனந்தலை மறுகு ” (5)

Babylonian word 'sindhu' denoting muslin is not derived from the name of North Indian river but from the old Dravidian word 'sindi'. Even today in Tulu and Kannada languages 'sindi' means 'a piece of cloth'

The Barter system as well as money economy was in practice. Pon and kaanam were the coins used by the Tamils. Kaasu was also another gold coin used by them.

We know from Sangam classics about day bazaars (Nalangaadi) and night bazaars (Allangaadi). People in the five-fold divisions of land most probably exchanged food materials with each other. Coins were rare among the people of the five divisions of land.

“ தேனெய் யொடு கிழங்கு மாறியோர்
மீனெய் யொடு நறவு மறுகவும்
தீங்கரும் பொடு அவல் வகுத்தோர்
மாண்குறை யோடு மது மறுகவும் ” (6)

“ காந்தளஞ் சிலம்பில் சிறுகுடி பசித்தெனக்
கடுங்கண் வேழத்துக் கோடு கொடுத்துண்ணும்
வல்வில் ஓரி கொல்லிக் குடவரை ” (7)

“ மீன்கொடுத்து நெல் குவைஇ
மிசை அம்பியின் மனை மறுக்குந்து ” (8)

Like the above examples we find ample evidences to show the existence of the barter system during Sangam Age.

Tamils traded with North India and the Aham verses speak of the heroes going to North India, the region where different languages were spoken. They also went to East Indies with their business commodities in ships. When they went to foreign countries across the sea they did not go with their wives. There was a ban to go with wives across the seas.

“ முந்நீர் வழக்கம் மகடுஉ வோடில்லை ”

This is said in Tolkaappiam.

In cities like Madurai, Kavirippumpattinam and Vanji foreigners of different languages lived among the Tamils.

(6) Porunar Aarrupadai Lines 214—217

(7) Kuruntogai, Stanza, 100 : Lines 3—5

(8) Puram, Stanza, 343 : Lines 1—2

“ மொழிபல பெருகிய பழிதீர் தேளத்துப்
புலம் பெயர் மாக்கள் கலந்தினி துறையும்
முட்டாச் சிறப்பிற் பட்டினம் ” (9)

The result of the maritime trade is the knowledge of the wide world and the different peoples of the different countries with their varied customs and manners. The Tamils influenced the the foreigners in certain aspects and they were influenced by the foreigners in some aspects.

During Sangam Age Tamils were not ignorant of the outside world. All the cities were his cities and all the people were his relatives.

“ யாதும் ஊரே யாவரும் கேளிர் ” (10)



(9) Pattinappaalai, Lines 216–218
(10) puram, Stanza, 192 : Line 1

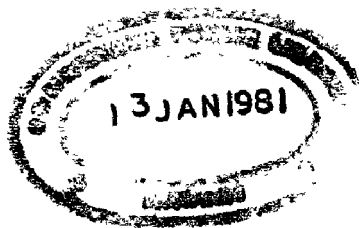
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