

HISTORY – PREMODERN PERIOD

ANCIENT TAMILAKAM

PART - 5

Video: 15

SANGAM LITERATURE

- The **sangam** was a **college or assembly of Tamil poets** held probably under the **patronage of the chiefs or kings**.
- **Neither know the number of sangam nor the period** for which they were held because of the lack of literary evidences.
- It is stated in a **Tamil literary work – 700CE** that **three sangam lasts for 9990 years**.
- They were **attended by 8598 poets** and had **197 Pandya kings as patrons**. As the **Sangam was held under royal patronage in Madurai**.
- Exaggeration

- **First sangam** was **attended by gods and legendary sages** but all its **works perished**.
- **Second** attended by **several poets**, produced a **large mass of literature** but only **Tolkapiyam** survived.
- **Third** attended by **several poets**, had also **produced vast literature** but only a **fraction of it has survived**. It is the fraction which constituted the extended body of sangam literature.

- The **classical or the earliest sangam works** consisted of ***Tolkapiyam*** the ***Eight anthologies / Ettuthogai, Ten idylls / Pathupattu***. Dated between **200CE – 300 CE**.

Tolkapiyam is the earliest extant **Tamil grammar** text dealing not only with **poetry** but also about **society and culture** of that times.

The **Pathinenkilkanakku / 18 minor works – 5 epics** belong to post sangam times – **300 CE** and describes a **different social and cultural set up**.

Ettuthogai and Pathupattu – collection has about **2400 poems** – both are **anthologies**. Diverse nature of anthologies. These poems varying in length from **3 to 800 lines** were composed by **Panar and Pulavar**.

Eight Anthologies - Ettuthogai

- **Natrinai**
- **Kurunthogai**
- **Aingurunuru**
- **Patitruppathu**
- **Paripadal**
- **Kalithogai**
- **Akananuru**
- **Purananuru**

Paththupattu:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thirumurugatrupatai • Porunaratrupatai • Sirupanatruppatai • Perumpanatruppatai • Mullaipattu • Maduraikanchi • Nedunalvadai • Kurinjipattu • Pattinappalai • Malaipadukadam

Patinenkilkanakku texts - which are post sangam works include- 18 text which deal with ethical and moral codes. Important -Thirukkural and Naladiyar.

Silappadikaram and Manimekalai – two important epic useful for insight into culture and religious history.

Sangam literature mention the evolution of languages. Sangam poems reflects the gradual development of Tamil lang and literature.

- Poems were **composed by bards** who roamed about singing the **praise of their patron chiefs**.
- Not all poem is composed by bards.
- Some of them composed by scholarly poets – **Kapilar, Paronar, Avvayar, Gautamanar.**
- **Scholarly bards** namely the **Pulavar**-as distinguished from the **common bards** namely **Panar.**

CLASSIFICATION

- The **anthologies** divided into two:
- **Akam – deal with love, affection.**
- **Puram – deal with themes of war, raid or plunder.**
- Ettuthogai and Pathupattu contains collection of poems based on akam and puram themes.
- **Akananuru – a collection of 400 poems based on akam themes.**
- **Puranauru – similar collection based on Puram themes.**
- Similar manner in Pathupattu.

WOMEN POETS

- Over **450 poets** contributed to sangam literature-**30 among them were women.**
- Composed **150 poem.**
- Most **prominent and prolific among them was – Avviyar.**

ENTRI

- Others – AllurNanmullaiyaar, Kaakkaipadiniyar, Kavarendu, Nalveliyyaar, OkkurMasaathiyar, Paarimakalir.

CONTENT / THEMES

- Stages of **social evolution** – development from **pastoralism and hunting**.
- Heroes are glorified – **hero stone**.
- Perpetual **wars and cattle raids** are frequently mentioned.
- The **kingdom formation** – **army, taxation, kings, dynasty**- kings followed two lineages: Suryavamsa and Chandravamsa.
- **Trade, merchants, craftsman, farmers-towns**.
- **Code of conduct** for the **kings, nobles**, for the **various social groups and occupations**.
- **Grants** of villages.
- **Tolkappiyam** which deals with **grammar and poetry**.
- **Tirukkural**- **philosophy**.
- **Epics** – **Silappadikaram**: written by **Ilango adigal**: about a **love story**- **main characters: kovalan, kannagi, madhavi**.
- **Manimekalai** – written by a **grain merchant** of Madurai, **santhanar** – deals with **adventures of the daughter born of the union of kovalan and madhavi**.
- It is claimed that in the **prologues** to the **epic that the authors were friends and contemporaries of the Chera kings Senguttuvan(200 CE)**but the epic cannot be dated so early – confusion in this statement by the Historians.