

## Quadrant II – Transcript and Related Materials

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Subject: History

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Unit: IV

Module Name: South India: Sangam: Contributions

Module No: 19

Name of the Presenter: Diksha Dessai

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Glossary of terms/words:

Sangam: - Coming together

Varna: - each of the four Hindu castes, Brahmans, Kshatriyas, Vaisyas and Sudras.

Dharmashastra: - Brahmanical collection of rules of life often in a form of metrical law book.

Arthashastra: - It is an Ancient Indian Sanskrit treatise on statecraft, economy policy and military strategy.

Kamasutra: - Teaching on Desire. "Kama" means "Desire, pleasure, love" "Sutra" means "Text"

Anthology: - Collection of Poems.

Monk: - a member of religious community typically living under Vows.

Possible misconceptions/clarification



## Case Studies and Additional Examples/Illustrations

### Quadrant II – Transcript and Related Materials

Notes:-

#### South India: Sangam: Contribution

- Sangam meaning coming together.
- Sangam age refers to the age when many Tamil scholars, poets came together in three successive literary gatherings called as Sangam.
- The three kingdoms Pandyas, Cheras and Cholas were always at war.
- Their wars and deeds form the themes of Sangam Literature.
- Although it was written in 6<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> Century AD, it depicts the society of 1<sup>st</sup> – 4<sup>th</sup> Century AD.
- Three types of Tamil Literary pieces are found – Grammar, Poems and Epics.
- It describes the period of Pandyas, Cheras and Cholas, the three important rival kingdoms of South India.
- According to Legends, there were three Sangams which took more than 10,000 years to complete.

#### Historical Information from Sangam Literature:

- In Sangam Literature, three kings are mentioned – Pandyas, Cheras and Cholas.
- The literature informs us about the contemporary economy, like Agriculture was well



developed and land was fertile.

- Cotton cloth industry was also well developed. Main center was Uraiyur.
- They have well developed Port Cities like Muziri in Kerala.
- Roman Coins have been found at Arikamedu (Pondicherry) and a Roman Colony was also found there, showing trade relationship with Europe.
- They used animal pulled carts for transportation.
- Traders used to take their female folks with them unlike the traders of the North.
- In the Society there were certain similarity and dissimilarity from the North:
- The Varna "Kshatriya" is almost missing in the South.
- The Brahmins enjoyed the highest position in the South as in the North, but the second highest significance was that of Vaishya.
- Similar Vedic rituals were prevalent here like that of the North.
- The Brahmins of the south ate Non-Vegetarian and also took wine.

#### **1<sup>st</sup> Sangam:**

- Held at Madurai
- Attended by Gods and Legendary sages under the chairmanship of Agastya, but no literary work of this Sangam is available.

#### **2<sup>nd</sup> Sangam:**

- Held at Kapadapuram
- All literary work had been perished except Tolkappiyam.
- Under the Chairmanship of Agastya.
- The Sangam flourished under the Royal Patronage of Pandyas.

#### **3<sup>rd</sup> Sangam:**

- Held at Madurai.
- Under the Chairmanship of Nakkirar.
- It was attended by a large number of poets who produced numerous literature but only few had survived.
- This Tamil literary works remain useful sources to reconstruct the History of Sangam Age.

#### **Sangam Literature:**

- The Sangam literature includes Tolkappiyam, Ettutogai, Pattuppattu, Pathinenkilkanakku and two Epics Silappathigaram and Manimegalai.
- **Tolkappiyam:-** Authored by Tolkappiyar is the earliest of the Tamil Literature.



It is a work on Tamil Grammar but it provides information on the political and socio economic conditions of the Sangam period.

- The Pattuppattu consists of ten literary works.
- Ettutogai and Pattuppattu were divided into two main groups- Aham (Love) and Puram (Valour).
- Pathinenkilkanakku contains eighteen works mostly dealing with ethics and Morals.
- The most important among them is Tirukkural authored by Thiruvalluvar.
- The Epics, Silappathigaram written by Elango Adigal and Manimekalai by Sittalai Sattanar also provides valuable information on the Sangam Polity and Society.

### **Literary Sources:**

#### **A. Tirukkural:**

- Out of the eighteen great poems of Sangam Literature, Tirukkural is considered as one of the most important poems.
- It contains proverbs on many aspects of Life and Religion.
- It is a combination of Dharmashastra, Arthashastra and Kamasutra.
- It has 133 chapters in it.
- It teaches Simplicity and truth.

#### **B. Poems (Ettutogai):**

- The Eight Anthologies (Sets) has 2282 poems written by 200 authors.
- The poems are divided into two sections namely:
- Aham (Love)
- Puram (Militarism and Hero Worship)

#### **C. Tolkappiyam:**

- It is the oldest Tamil Literary work.
- It includes information on Grammar, Classification of habitats, plants, animals and human beings.
- It also talks about human emotions and interactions.
- Tolkappiyam is divided into three Chapters:
- Orthography (how to write Language)
- Etymology (Study of Words)
- Subject Matter (People and their behaviour)

#### **D. Epics**



- ❖ **Silappadikaram:-** (The Story of Jeweled Anklet)
- ❖ Kovalan falls in love with Madhavi. Kovalan goes to sell anklet of Kannagi, but gets caught and he is held guilty of stealing queens anklet and is beheaded by the King.
- ❖ Kannagi avenges the death of her husband and becomes a goddess.

#### **Manimegalai:**

- ❖ Manimegalai, the daughter of Kovalan and Madhavi (continuation of the previous epic Silappadikaram)
- ❖ It describes how she becomes Buddhist nun to preach the principles of Buddhism.

#### **Sivaga Cindamani:**

- ❖ Sivaga Cindamani, it is a story of Sivaga - a superman.
- ❖ He wins a new Bride and at the end he becomes a Monk.

#### **Sangam Administration:**

- The king was the centre of the Administration.
- King was also called as Ko, Mannam, Vendan, Korraivan or Iraivan.
- Avai was the court of the crowned monarch.
- Important officials (Panchmahasabha):
  - i. Amaichchar (Ministers) ii. Purohitar (Priests)
  - iii. Dutar (Envoys) iv. Senapatiyar (Commandar)
  - v. Orar (Spies)

#### **Economy During Sangam Age:**

- Agriculture was the chief occupation where rice was the most common crop.
- The Handicraft included weaving, metal works, carpentry ship building and making of ornaments using beads, stones and ivory.
- Major exports of the Sangam Age were Cotton, Fabrics and Spices like Pepper, Ginger, Cardamom and Turmeric along with ivory products, Pearls and Precious Stones.

Major imports were Horses, Gold and Sweet Wine.

#### **Religion Sangam:**

- The primary Deity of the Sangam period was Murugan, who hailed as Tamil God.
- The worship of Murugan was having an Ancient origin and the festivals relating to God Murugan was mentioned in the Sangam Literature.



- Murugan was honored with six abodes known as Arupadai Veedu.

#### **Position of women during Sangam Age:**

- A lot of information is available in the Sangam Literature to understand the position of women during the Sangam Age.
- Women's had respect and were allowed intellectual pursuits. There were women poets also who flourished and contributed to Tamil Literature.

#### **END OF SANGAM AGE**

- The Sangam period slowly witnesses its decline towards the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Century A.D.
- The Kalabhras occupied the Tamil country during post Sangam period between 300 AD to 600 AD, the period was called as "Dark Age" by the Earlier Historians.

