

Sangam Age

- The **Sangam Age** is a significant period in South Indian history.
- According to Tamil folklore, there were three Sangams (Academies of Tamil poets) in ancient Tamil Nadu, which were widely known as **Muchchangam**.
- These Sangams thrived under the Pandyas' royal support.
- Sangam Period refers to the time period in South India (the area south of the rivers Krishna and Tungabhadra) between the third century B.C. and third century A.D

Sangam age

- The **Sangam period** or age, specifically the third Sangam period, is a period of history in ancient Tamil Nadu, Kerala, and portions of Sri Lanka that lasted from around the 6th century BCE to around the 3rd century CE.
- It was named after the well-known Sangam schools of poets and philosophers based in Madurai.
- It was named after the **Sangam academies** that flourished during that era under the royal patronage of the **Pandya rulers of Madurai**.
- Eminent intellectuals gathered at the sangams to serve as censors, and the best writing was rendered in the form of anthologies.
- These literary works were among the first examples of **Dravidian literature**.
- According to **Tamil traditions**, three Sangams (Academies of Tamil poets) were held in ancient South India, generally known as **Muchchangam**.
- The **First Sangam** is said to have taken place in Madurai, and it was attended by gods and mythical sages.
- This Sangam's literary work is not available.
- Only **Tolkappiyam** survived from the **Second Sangam**, which was held in Kapadapuram.
- Madurai also hosted the **Third Sangam**.
- A handful of these Tamil literary works have survived and can be used to recreate the **Sangam period's history**.
- It was attended by a great number of poets who generated extensive literature, but only a handful of them survived.

- These Tamil literary works continue to be valuable materials for reconstructing the history of the Sangam Age.

Sangam Literature

- **Tolkappiyam, Ettutogai, Pattuppattu, Pathinenkilkanakku, and the two epics – Silappathikaram and Manimegalai** – are among the works in the Sangam literary corpus.
- Tolkappiyam, written by Tolkappiyar, is the first piece of Tamil literature.
- It is a study on Tamil language, but it also discusses the political and economic realities during the Sangam period.
- **Aingurunooru, Narrinai, Aganaooru, Purananooru, Kuruntogai, Kalittogai, Paripadal, and Padirrupattu** are the works included in the Ettuthogai or Eight Anthologies.
- **Thirumurugarrupadai, Porunarrupadai, Sirupanarrupadai, Perumpanarrupadai, Mullaippattu, Nedunalvadai, Madurai Kanji, Kurinjippattu, Pattinappalai, and Malaipadukadam** comprise the Pattuppattu or Ten Idylls.
- Aingurunooru, Narrinai, Aganaooru, Purananooru, Kuruntogai, Kalittogai, Paripadal, and Padirrupattu are the eight works included in Ettuthogai (Eight Anthologies).
- Pathinenkilkanakku features eighteen pieces, the most of which deal with ethics and morals.
- The most important is Thirukkural, written by Thiruvalluvar.
- Elango Adigal's **Silappathigaram** and Sittalai Sattanar's Manimegalai both include useful information on **Sangam politics** and society.
- Scholars are still divided on the dating of the Sangam literature.
- The fact that **Gajabhagu II** of Sri Lanka and Chera Senguttuvan of the Chera dynasty were contemporaries is the primary anchor of Sangam chronology.
- Silappathigaram, as well as the **Dipavamsa and Mahavamsa**, confirm this.
- In addition, Roman coins minted by **Roman emperors** in the first century A.D. were discovered in abundance in numerous locations around Tamil Nadu.

- As a result, based on literary, archaeological, and numismatic evidence, the most likely dating of the **Sangam literature** has been assigned to the third century B.C. to the third century A.D.

Other Sources

- Aside from the Sangam literature, Greek authors such as Megasthenes, Strabo, Pliny, and Ptolemy indicate economic links between the West and South India.
- The Chera, Chola, and Pandya monarchs of the Mauryan empire are mentioned in the **Asokan inscriptions**.
- The **Hathikumbha inscription** of Kharavela of Kalinga mentions Tamil kingdoms as well.
- The excavations at **Arikamedu, Poompuhar, Kodumanal**, and other locations demonstrate the Tamils' abroad trading operations.

Sangam age - Political History

- During the Sangam Age, South India was dominated by three dynasties: the Cheras, Cholas, and Pandyas.
- The Sangam Period literary allusions are the primary source of knowledge about these countries.
- Cheras
- **The Cheras** ruled over Kerala's centre and northern regions, as well as the Kongu area of Tamil Nadu.
- Their capital was Vanji, and they controlled the ports on the west coast, Musiri and Tondi.
- Cheras's insignia was a "bow and arrow."
- The **Pugalur inscription** from the first century AD mentions three generations of Chera monarchs.
- The **Cheras' significance** stemmed from trading with the Romans. They also erected an Augustus temple nearby.
- Senguttuvan, often known as the Red Chera or the Good Chera, was the greatest monarch of Cheras in the second century A.D.
- His military exploits are detailed in the epic Silapathikaram, including his trip to the Himalayas, where he destroyed numerous north Indian kingdoms.

- **Senguttuvan** popularised the **Pattini cult**, or worship of Kannagi as the ideal bride, in **Tamil Nadu**.
- He was the first to send an embassy from **South India to China**.

Cholas

- During the Sangam era, the Chola monarchy stretched from the contemporary Tiruchi district to southern Andhra Pradesh.
- Their capital was first located in Uraiyur but was later relocated to Puhar. **Karikala** was a well-known **Sangam Chola ruler**.
- **Pattinappalai** depicts his childhood and military triumphs.
- He vanquished the powerful confederacy of the Cheras, Pandyas, and eleven smaller chieftains at the **Battle of Venni**.
- Many Sangam poetry reference this occurrence.
- Another significant fight fought by him was Vahaipparandalai, in which nine enemy chieftains surrendered before him.
- Karikala's military accomplishments elevated him to the position of ruler of the whole **Tamil kingdom**.
- During his rule, trade and commerce prospered.
- He was in charge of reclaiming forest lands and bringing them back into agriculture, bringing wealth to the people.
- He also erected **Kallanai** across the Kaveri River and several irrigation canals.

Pandyas

- The Pandyas reigned over what is now southern Tamil Nadu.
- **Madurai** was their capital. The first Pandyan rulers were Nediyan, Palyagasalai **Mudukudumi Peruvaludhi**, and Mudathirumaran.
- There were two Nedunchelians present.
- The first was known as Arya Padai **Kadhantha Neduncheliyan** (one who defeated Aryan armies).
- He was responsible for Kovalan's execution, for which Kannagi burnt Madurai.
- **Talaiyalanganattu Cheruvenra** (He who won the war of Talaiyalanganam) **Neduncheliyan** was the other.

- Nakkirar and Mangudi Maruthanar both commended him.
- He received this title after defeating his opponents in the Battle of Talaiyalanganam, which took place in the Tanjore district.
- With this win, Nedunchelivan won control of the whole state of Tamil Nadu.
- Mangudi Maruthanar's **Madurai Kanji** portrays the socioeconomic status of the Pandya nation, particularly the booming harbour of Korkai.
- **Uggira Peruvaludhi** was the last renowned Pandyan ruler.
- The invasion of the Kalabhras caused the Pandyan power to wane during the Sangam Age.

Sangam age - Minor Rulers

- Minor chieftains were important throughout the Sangam era.
- Pari, Kari, Ori, Nalli, Pegan, Ay, and Adiyaman were well-known for their charity and support of Tamil poets.
- As a result, they were dubbed **Kadai Elu Vallalgal**.
- They were strong and popular in their own domains, while being subordinate to the **Chera, Chola, and Pandya** emperors.

Sangam age - Polity

- During the **Sangam period**, the hereditary monarchy was the type of government.
- The monarch had also sought an opinion from his minister, court poet, and the imperial court, known as avai.
- The **Chera rulers** were known as **Vanavaramban, Vanavan, Kuttuvan, Irumporai, and Villavar**, while the Chola kings were known as Senni, Valavan, and Kili, and the Pandya kings were known as Thennavar and Minavar.
- Each **Sangam dynasty** had its own royal emblem: a carp for the Pandyas, a tiger for the Cholas, and a bow for the Cheras.
- A number of leaders and officials attended the imperial court, known as avai.
- A huge group of officials, split into five councils, helped the king.
- **Ministers (amaichar), priests (anthanar), military commanders (senapathi), envoys (thuthar), and spies (orrar)** were among them.

- Each monarch had a regular army as well as their own Kodimaram (tutelary tree).
- **Land revenue** was the primary source of governmental revenue, and customs duties were also levied on international commerce.
- The **Pattinappalai** are customs officials who work in Puhar's harbour.
- War booty was also a significant source of revenue for the royal treasury.
- **Roads and pathways** were well-maintained and monitored 24 hours a day, seven days a week to prevent robbery and smuggling.

Sangam age - Society

- **Kurinji** (hilly trails),
- **Mullai** (pastoral),
- **Marudam** (agricultural),
- **Neydal** (coastal), and
- **Palai** (desert) are the five land divisions of **Tolkappiyam**.
- The individuals who lived in these five divisions had their own primary jobs as well as gods to worship.
 - **Kurinji** – chief deity Murugan – chief occupation hunting and honey collection.
 - **Mullai** – chief deity Mayon (Vishnu) – chief occupation cattle-rearing and dealing with dairy products.
 - **Marudam** – chief deity Indira – chief occupation agriculture.
 - **Neydal** – chief deity Varunan – chief occupation fishing and salt manufacturing.
 - **Palai** – the supreme god Korravai is the major occupation of robbery.
- **Tolkappiyam** is also used to refer to four castes: arasar, anthanar, vanigar, and vellalar. The governing class was known as arasar.
- Anthanars were influential in Sangam politics and religion.
- Vanigars were traders and merchants.
- The vellalas worked in agriculture.
- Other tribal tribes identified in the Sangam civilization included the **Parathavar, Panar, Eyinar, Kadambar, Maravar, and Pulaiyar**.

- During this time, primitive tribes such as the Thodas, Irulas, Nagas, and Vedars existed.

Sangam age - Economy

- Agriculture was the most important employment. Rice was the most widely grown crop.
- Other crops were **ragi, sugarcane, cotton, pepper, ginger, turmeric, cinnamon**, and a variety of fruits.
- The **Chera** people were well-known for their love of jackfruit and pepper. Paddy was the main crop in **Chola and Pandya territory**.
- The **Sangam period's** handicrafts were popular. Weaving, metal work and carpentry, ship construction, and the creation of jewellery from beads, stones, and ivory are among them.
- As internal and external commerce was at its pinnacle during the **Sangam era**, there was a high demand for these things.
- **Cotton and silk** clothing spinning and weaving reached a high level of excellence.
- Cotton clothing as thin as a mist of steam or a snake's slough are mentioned in the poetry.
- The cotton clothing produced at **Uraiyur** was in high demand in the Western world.
- During the **Sangam Age**, both domestic and foreign trade was properly regulated and swiftly carried out.
- The **Sangam literature, Greek and Roman narratives**, and archaeological evidence all give much material on this topic.
- Merchants moved products from place to place on carts and on the backs of animals. Internal trade mostly relied on barter.
- **South India** and the **Greek kings** conducted external commerce. Roman commerce grew in prominence after the **Roman Empire's** rise.
- As large ships carrying valuable products reached Puhar's harbour, the city became a foreign commercial hub.

- **Tondi, Musiri, Korkai, Arikamedu, and Marakkanam** are other commercially active ports. Periplus's author delivers the most important information on overseas commerce.
- A plethora of gold and silver coins minted by **Roman Emperors** such as **Augustus, Tiberius, and Nero** were discovered around Tamil Nadu.
- They show the breadth of commerce and the presence of Roman traders in Tamil Nadu.
- **Cotton garments**, spices such as pepper, ginger, cardamom, cinnamon, and turmeric, ivory items, pearls, and precious stones were the principal exports of the Sangam period.
- The most important imports were gold, horses, and sweet wine.

Sangam age - Religion and Worship

- **Seyon or Murugan**, the Tamil God, was the major god of the Sangam era.
- **Murugan worship** has an ancient origin, and festivals related to God Murugan were documented in **Sangam literature**.
- He was given six abodes known as Arupadai Veedu in his honour.
- **Mayon (Vishnu), Vendan (Indiran), Varunan, and Korravai** were also worshipped throughout the Sangam era.
- The **Hero Stone**, also known as **Nadu Kal worship**, was important throughout the **Sangam era**.
- The **Hero Stone** was created to commemorate the warrior's valour in combat.
- Many hero stones with tales carved on them have been discovered in various locations of **Tamil Nadu**.
- This type of remembrance of the departed has a long history.

Sangam age - Position of Women

- There is a wealth of material in the **Sangam literature** that may be used to track the situation of women throughout the Sangam period.
- Women poets such as **Avvaiyar, Nachchellaiyar, and Kakkai Padiniyar** flourished and contributed to Tamil literature throughout this time period.
- Women's bravery was also lauded in several poems.

- **Karpu**, or chaste life, was seen to be the finest virtue of women.
- It was common practice to marry for love.
- Women were given the right to pick their life mates.
- Widows, on the other hand, had a wretched life.
- Sati was also widely practised in society's upper echelons.
- The **monarchs and nobility** patronised the class of dancers.

Sangam age - Arts

- Poetry, music, and dance were prominent among the Sangam people.
- The monarchs, chieftains, and nobility made generous payments to poets.
- Panar and Viraliyar, two singing bards, packed the royal courts.
- They were masters of traditional tunes and dances.
- Music and dance were highly developed arts.
- The **Sangam literature** mentions a variety of Yazhs and drums.
- Kanigaiyar did a dance.
- People's favourite form of entertainment was koothu.

End of Sangam age

- The **Sangam period** gradually declined at the end of the third century A.D.
- For almost two and a half centuries, the Kalabhras occupied Tamil land.
- There is very little knowledge about the Kalabhra reign.
- During this time, **Jainism and Buddhism** rose to prominence.
- The Pallavas of northern Tamil Nadu and the Pandyas of southern Tamil Nadu pushed the Kalabhras out of Tamil Nadu and established their reign.