



Tamil Heritage Month Celebration

January 2022

Our histories. Our legacies. Our homelands.
எமது வரலாறுகள். எமது மரபுகள். எமது
தாயகங்கள்.



**தமிழ்
பாரம்பரியம்**

TAMIL HERITAGE

A message from TDSB Tamil Heritage Month Committee



Tamil Heritage Month was proudly recognized at the Toronto District School Board for the first time in January 2016 and also nationally in January 2016. It was recognized by the province of Ontario since March 2014 when the Tamil Heritage Month Act was passed.

Toronto has the largest population of Tamil people outside of South and Southeast Asia with thousands of TDSB students and staff members identifying as Tamil. There are approximately 200,000 Tamil people that call Canada home!

The importance of building awareness, creating a strong self identity and understanding one's own roots and rights are important objectives of the Tamil Heritage Month volunteer planning committee.

Why January?

January marks the celebration of Thai Pongal, a Tamil harvest festival.

Overflowing rice, or pongal, symbolizes abundance and prosperity.



Theme January 2022

- This year's theme:

Our histories. Our legacies. Our homelands.
எமது வரலாறுகள். எமது மரபுகள். எமது தாயகங்கள்.

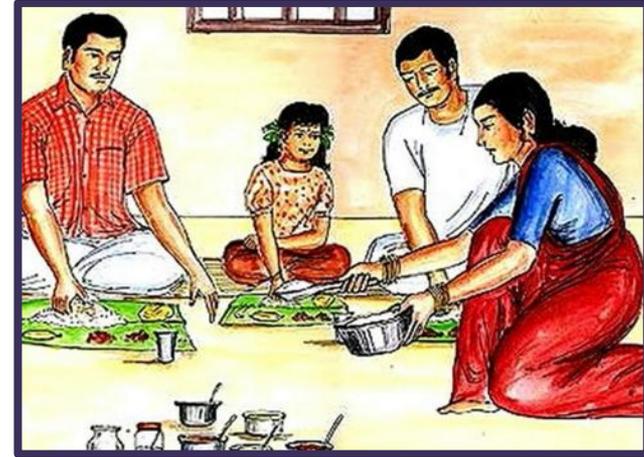
- *Emathu varalaarukal (எமது வரலாறுகள்)* speaks to our histories. *Emathu marapukal (எமது மரபுகள்)* speaks to our legacies. *Emathu thaayakankal (எமது தாயகங்கள்)* speaks to our homelands.



Culture and Tradition

Tamil Values

- 1) Hospitality (விரும்தோம்பல்)
- 2) Duty (கடமை)
- 3) Upholding Character (மானம்)
- 4) Respecting Elders (பெரியாரை மதித்தல்)
- 5) Maintaining Discipline (ஓழுக்கம்)
- 6) Gratitude (செய்நன்றி மறவாமை)
- 7) Truthfulness (வாய்மை)



Greeting - Vanakkam



This is the common way of greeting where by joining both palms together and hold the hand at the heart and say “**VANAKKAM**”.

Getting Blessings

- One Tamil tradition is getting blessings of elders by touching their feet.
- When elders bless this way we get their energy transferred through their hands and feet.



Welcoming People

- ▶ Nirai-kudam (full pot) is used when Tamils have their celebrations. Each part of it has a significant meaning behind it:
- ▶ Coconut represents the human head
- ▶ 5 Mango leaves represents the 5 senses
- ▶ Pot with water – represents water in the human body
- ▶ Rice represents the earth
- ▶ Lamps – cures ignorance





Kōlam

Made with rice flour, finely ground rice powder /paste or sometimes vegetable and mineral based coloured powders.

It is typically drawn using one's hands and utilizes geometric shapes. Reasons for engaging in this art range from giving thanks for one's prosperity, banishing evil and is also seen as a symbol of a powerful woman leading the household.

There are even organized competitions which take place in state of Tamil Nadu in India to showcase this artistic ability.



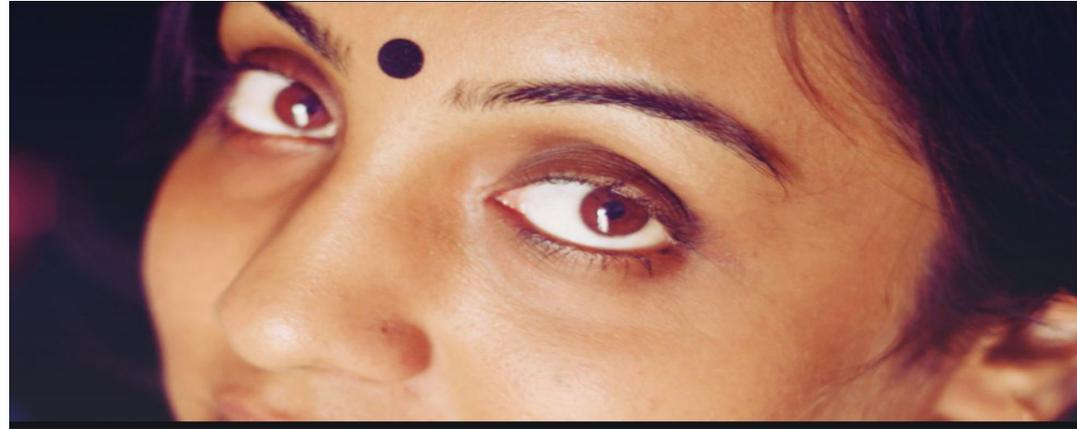
Lighting a Lamp

- Light symbolizes knowledge.
- Knowledge removes ignorance just as light removes darkness.



Pottu

- ▶ Since ancient times, Tamils believe that on the forehead between the two eyebrows is a spot considered a major nerve point in the human body.
- ▶ The Pottu is believed to prevent the loss of "energy" from this area.
- ▶ The red 'kunkumam ' between the eyebrows is said to retain energy in the human body and control the various levels of concentration.



Piercing of Ears

- ▶ Tamils believe that piercing ears helps in the development of intellect, power of thinking and decision making abilities.
- ▶ It also increases memory power.



Wearing Bangles

- ▶ Bangles cause constant friction with the wrist which increases the blood circulation level.
- ▶ Furthermore, the electricity passing out through outer skin is again reverted to one's own body because of the ring shaped bangles.



Tamil Traditional Outfits

Little girls

Paavadai sattai

பாவாடை சட்டை



Young girls

Paavadai thavani

பாவாடை தாவணி



Women

Saree

சேலை



Men/boys

Vetti sattai

வேட்டி





History & Antiquity of Tamil



Classical Languages

While it is hard to give a precise age to these languages, Tamil is more than 2000 years old.¹

Classical languages:

Tamil

Hebrew

Chinese

Arabic

Greek



Did you know?

There have been 10 World Tamil Conferences dating back to 1966. The most recent conference occurred in Chicago in 2019 and had around 6000 participants and 1,150 abstracts submitted.²

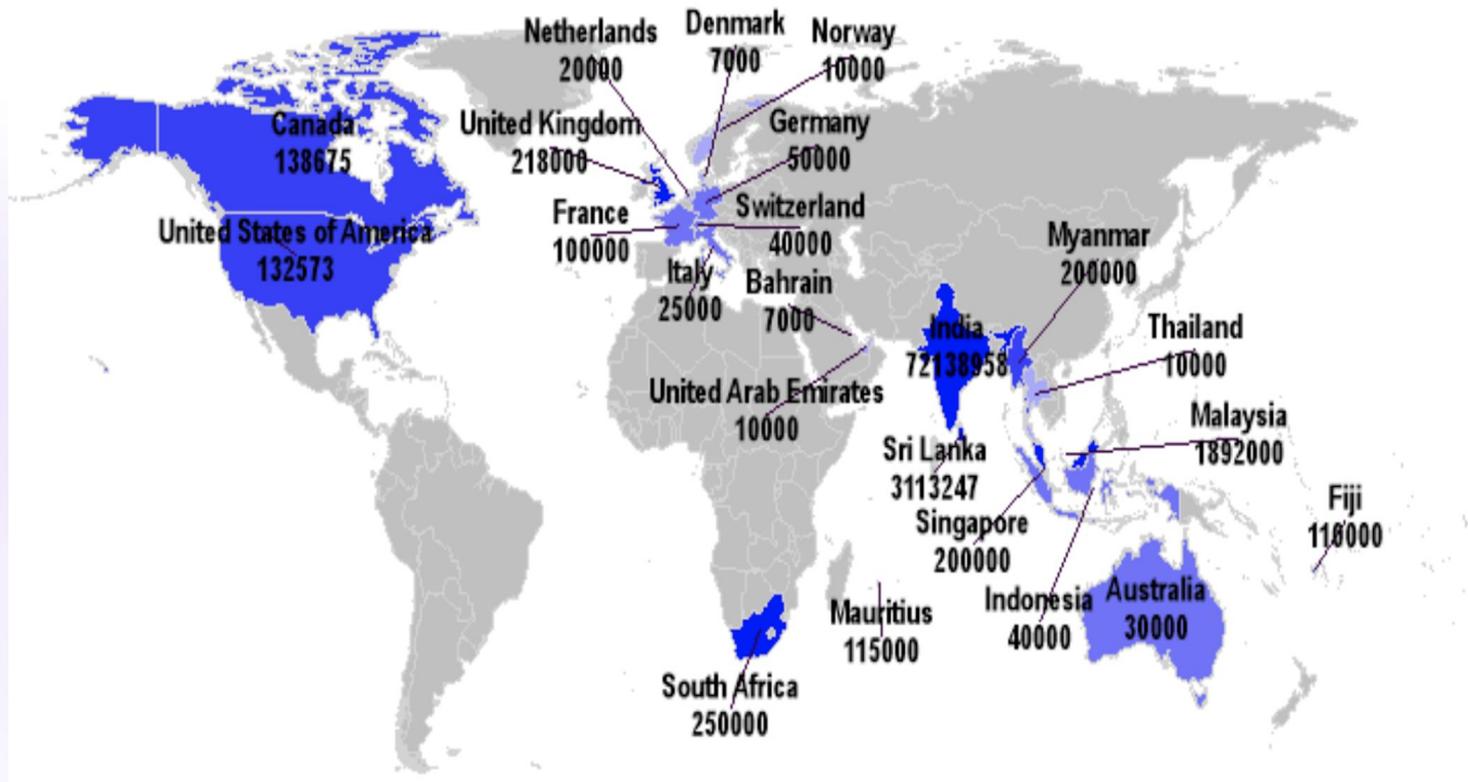
1. Zvelebil, Kamil (1992), *Companion studies to the history of Tamil literature*, Leiden: Brill, ISBN 978-90-04-09365-2
2. <https://www.newindianexpress.com/cities/chennai/2019/jun/26/10th-edition-of-world-tamil-conference-in-chicago-from-july-4-1995400.html>

Tamil Language

There are a significant number of Tamil speakers in:

- Australia, Canada, Fiji, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Mauritius, Myanmar, Réunion, Singapore, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Switzerland, United Kingdom, United States of America³

World Tamil Population



Tamil Language

Tamil is a phonetic language
(spoken form = written form)

Tamil letters:

12 vowels

18 consonants

12 × 18 = 216 compound letters

One special character (*aaytha ezutthu*)

TOTAL = 247 letters

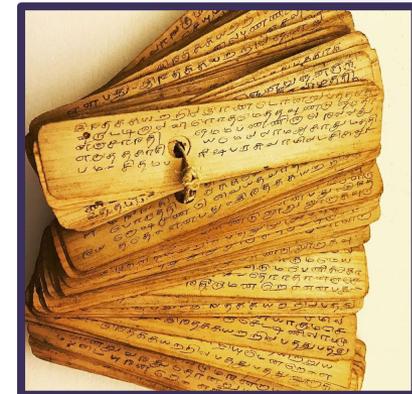
தமிழ் எழுத்துக்கள் (247) - ஆங்கில உச்சரிப்புடன்

ஆய்த எழுத்து - 1	உயிர் எழுத்துக்கள் - 12						மெய் எழுத்துக்கள் - 18			உயிர்மெய் எழுத்துக்கள் - 216		
ஃ	அ	ஆ	இ	ஈ	உ	ஊ	எ	ஏ	ஐ	ஓ	ஔ	
ஃ ak	அ A	ஆ Aa	இ E	ஈ Ee	உ U	ஊ Oo	எ Ye	ஏ Yae	ஐ I	ஓ O	ஔ Oa	ஔ Ow
க் ik	க Ka	கா Kaa	கி Ki	கீ Kee	கு Ku	கூ Koo	கெ Ke	கே Kae	கை Kai	கொ Ko	கோ Koa	கௌ Kou
ங் ing	ங Gna	ஙா Gnaa	னி Gni	நீ Gnee	நு Gnu	நூ Gnoo	நெ Gne	நே Gnae	நை Gnai	நொ Gno	நோ Gnoa	நௌ Gnou
ச் ich	ச Cha	சா Chaa	சி Chi	சீ Chee	சு Chu	சூ Choo	செ Che	சே Chae	சை Chai	சொ Cho	சோ Choa	சௌ Chou
ஞ் inj	ஞ Gna	ஞா Gnaa	ஞி Gni	ஞீ Gnee	ஞு Gnu	ஞூ Gnoo	ஞெ Gne	ஞே Gnae	ஞை Gnai	ஞொ Gno	ஞோ Gnoa	ஞௌ Gnou
ட் it	ட Ta	டா Taa	டி Ti	டீ Tee	டு Tu	டூ Too	டெ Te	டே Tae	டை Tai	டொ Toe	டோ Toa	டௌ Tou
ண் in	ண Na	ணா Naa	ணி Ni	ணீ Nee	ணு Nu	ணூ Noo	ணெ Ne	ணே Nae	ணை Nie	ணொ No	ணோ Noa	ணௌ Nou
த் ith	த Tha	தா Thaa	தி Thi	தீ Thee	து Thu	தூ Thoo	தெ The	தே Thae	தை Thai	தொ Tho	தோ Thoa	தௌ Thou
ந் inth	ந Na	நா Naa	நி Ni	நீ Nee	நு Nu	நூ Noo	நெ Ne	நே Nae	நை Nie	நொ No	நோ Noa	நௌ Nou
ப் ip	ப Pa	பா Paa	பி Pi	பீ Pee	பு Pu	பூ Poo	பெ Pe	பே Pae	பை Pie	பொ Po	போ Poa	பௌ Pou
ம் im	ம Ma	மா Maa	மி Mi	மீ Mee	மு Mu	மூ Moo	மெ Me	மே Mae	மை My	மொ Mo	மோ Moa	மௌ Mou
ய் iy	ய Ya	யா Yaa	யி Yi	யீ Yee	யு Yu	யூ Yoo	யெ Ye	யே Yae	யை Yie	யொ Yo	யோ Yoa	யௌ Yow
ர் ir	ர Ra	ரா Raa	ரி Ri	ரீ Ree	ரு Ru	ரூ Roo	ரெ Re	ரே Rae	ரை Rie	ரொ Ro	ரோ Roa	ரௌ Rou
ல் il	ல La	லா Laa	லி Li	லீ Lee	லு Lu	லூ Loo	லெ Le	லே Lae	லை Lai	லொ Lo	லோ Loa	லௌ Lou
வ் iv	வ Va	வா Vaa	வி Vi	வீ Vee	வு Vu	வூ Voo	வெ Ve	வே Vae	வை Vai	வொ Vo	வோ Voa	வௌ Vou
ழ் izh	ழ Zha	ழா Zhaa	ழி Zhi	ழீ Zhee	ழு Zhu	ழூ Zhoo	ழெ Zhe	ழே Zhae	ழை Zhai	ழொ Zho	ழோ Zhoa	ழௌ Zhou
ள் il	ள La	ளா Laa	ளி Li	ளீ Lee	ளு Lu	ளூ Loo	ளெ Le	ளே Lae	ளை Lai	ளொ Lo	ளோ Loa	ளௌ Lou
ற் ir	ற Ra	றா Raa	றி Ri	றீ Ree	று Ru	றூ Roo	றெ Re	றே Rae	றை Rie	றொ Ro	றோ Roa	றௌ Rou
ண் in	ண Na	ணா Naa	ணி Ni	ணீ Nee	ணு Nu	ணூ Noo	ணெ Ne	ணே Nae	ணை Nie	ணொ No	ணோ Noa	ணௌ Nou

Tolkāppiyam (தொல்காப்பியம்)

Tolkappiyam is considered as one of the oldest book in Tamil literature.
Tolkāppiyam "ancient poem" is the most ancient Tamil grammar text and the oldest surviving work of Tamil literature.

The dating of the Tolkappiyam is difficult with proposals ranging between 8,000 BCE and the 8th century CE.⁶



6. Swamy, B.G.L. The Date of the Tolkāppiam: A Retrospect." *Annals of Oriental Research, Madras*, Silver Jubilee Volume (1975), 292 – 317.

Tirukkura!

Thiruvalluvar was a scholarly poet in the Tamil culture. He wrote 1330 poem couplets in a book which he named “Tirukkural”. This piece of literature described the ethics, values and beliefs of the Tamil culture. “Tirukkural” is a publication which explains the ideologies and philosophies of the Tamil people. It is now translated into many other languages and studied internationally.⁷



Nandri Thank You

*The TDSB Tamil Heritage Month
Volunteer Planning Committee*

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