THE STATUS OF WOMEN IN TAMILNADU DURING THE SANGAM AGE

C. BALASUBRAMANIAN
The Status of Women in Tamil Nadu During the Sangam Age

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FOREWORD

Dr. MALCOLM S. ADISESHIAH,
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It is appropriate that 1975 which was proclaimed by the United Nations as the International Women’s Year and the following year 1976 which was declared by that same august body as the start of the United Nations Decade for Women should see the publication by the University of Madras of the Diwan Bahadur K. Krishnaswami Rao Endowment Lectures 1971-72 devoted to the subject, “The Status of Women in Tamil Nadu during the Sangam Age.” The status of women is a theme which has no beginning and no end. It is perennially alive and insistently challenging.

Reading through this clear, concise and illuminating historical commentary on the status of women in this part of our vast country at the time of Valluvar’s famous writings and Nakkirar’s memorable poems, two thoughts come to my mind.

The first is whether we, the people of India, the community in Tamil Nadu, will learn from history. This is an important issue because nothing that has been adumbrated on the status of women either internationally in the World Plan of Action adopted by the United Nations Conference on the Status of Women held last year in Mexico city of set forth in detail, precision and majestic sweep in our National Report on the Status of Women in India entitled, “Towards Equality,” contains anything that has not been recorded two thousand years ago, as evidenced in the lectures published in this monograph. And so the question is, will we learn from history or will we once more live up to the generalisation that the only lesson that men (and women) learn from history is that they never learn from history?

The second issue is related to our capacity for verbalisation and the consequences of our normative life styles. How far are the characterisations, rights and qualities attributed to
women in the Sangam Age a reflection of what was in fact the practice, the reality in existence? Are the various facets of the portrayal of the Status of Women normative standards set forth or descriptions of conditions as they existed. On the capacity for verbalisation, we, as a people, seem to possess somewhat unique abilities. Anyone reading through two thousand years from now—say in 4001 A.D.—our laws, exhortations, economic, social and juridical writings and political manifestos and rhetoric that issued between 1970-75 about eradicating poverty would naturally come to the conclusion that we had abolished poverty in this land by the nineteen seventies. Again our sacred literature is really a series of normative essays in the nature and being of God, man and the duties and obligations incumbent on us as a consequence of the God-Man equation. It has little relation to how we conduct our religious and secular life in the daily round which makes up our being. And so the question is whether we can slow down on our capacity for verbalism and practice a little of what we preach, can we close even a little the yawning and growing gap between the normative and positive in our lives?

If we can move a little further forward on both these issues—learn from our history and live by what we say—then, I believe this monograph by Dr. Balasubramanian would have served a useful and necessary purpose.


MALCOLM S. ADISESHIAH,  
Vice-Chancellor.
A Word Ere you Read...

Sangam age is regarded as the 'Golden Age' in the history of Tamil Literature. As rightly pointed out by Xavier S. Thaninayagam, 'Sangam Tamil has the characteristic of being extremely concise and curt of delineating magnificent word—pictures with great economy of language.' To put it in a nutshell, 'brevity was the soul of Sangam wit.' But, it is noteworthy that a number of comprehensive volumes have been published on Sangam Literature, and yet to be in the future also. Such is the greatness of Sangam classics.

The present volume deals precisely with the status of women in all dimensions in Tamil Nadu during the Sangam age. It is to be remembered that the scope of this study is limited for obvious reason. But, I hope it will certainly inspire the scholars to take up further profound studies.

With a deep sense of gratitude, I sincerely thank Dr. Malcolm S. Adiseshiah for having adorned this volume with his venerable and valuable foreword and Prof. Dr. N. Sanjeevi for his excellent encouragement. I am also deeply indebted to Thiru C. K. Kumaraswamy, the Registrar, University of Madras for his prompt help in bringing this volume to light.

I hope the Tamil world would warmly welcome this volume.

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Endowment Lectures 1971-72
BY
DR. C. BALASUBRAMANIAN
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THE SANGAM AGE

Revered President, Ladies representing Motherhood,
Learned Colleagues, Scholars and Gentlemen!

The honour of delivering the Diwan Bahadur,
Krishnaswami Rao Endowment lectures this year has been
graciously extended to me by the University of Madras; and
for this I am extremely beholden to the distinguished Vice-
Chancellor of the University, Padmasri N. D. Sundaravadivelu
and the members of the Syndicate of the University.
My heartfelt thanks are due to Thiru. C. E. Ramachandran,
Head of the Department of History and Dr. N. Sanjeevi, Head
of the Department of Tamil, University of Madras, but for
whose encouragement and assistance, I could not have
accepted this great responsibility.

I deem it a great honour and privilege to deliver this talk
under the Presidentship of Padmabhusan Dr. T. M. P.
Mahadevan, who is one of the outstanding Philosophers in
modern India, nay in the whole world. His vast erudition
and comprehension of the Philosophy of Sankara i.e.
Advaita have been recognised the world over, and his
Illuminative exposition of the Philosophy has been frequently sought after, by scholars of India as well as foreign.

Under the convention governing this Endowment I am obliged to deliver the lectures in English, even though Tamil would have been the appropriate medium. However I shall be supplementing my English talk with a few relevant quotations from the Tamil classics.

The subject of my talk today and tomorrow is "The status of women in Tamil Nadu during the Sangam age." You are all aware that the matter has already been thoroughly discussed by many scholars, and much light has been focussed on the social conditions of women during the Sangam period.

I hope my sense of humility will not be misunderstood if I may disclose to you that I myself had been interested in this study for a pretty long time, in fact from the days I had been an undergraduate in the Government Arts College, Madras. I am happy to state that during my teenages, I was inspired to compose a poem on the "Rights of Women," and I am gratified to mention that among the competitors drawn from three Universities, I won the distinction of being awarded the first prize for the poem.

My interest in the conditions and welfare of women of Tamil Nadu was kept sustained by the valuable and close contacts I had with one of the greatest of scholars of all time Thiru. Vi Ka. and the distinguished poet, Bāratidāsan who was at once a visionary and a revolutionary.

I should like to take this opportunity to acknowledge with love and respect, that the greatest source of inspiration in my literary pursuits had been my mentor, Dr. M. Varadarajanar. It was a unique experience for me to find that all these three distinguished men of letters possessed a very tender heart, towards women and advocated the enthronement of women as goddesses of the earth. As a
student I sat at the feet of the learned professors and lecturers of Pachaiyappa’s College and drank deep at the founts of the ancient Sangam literature, and I learnt more and more of the greatness of womanhood. Now that an opportunity had presented itself, I seized it quickly to express the results of my own examination of the condition and status of women of the Sangam Age.

The Tamils have enriched the Hindu philosophy by contributing to it the Sakti-Sivam Tatva which is peculiar to the Saiva Siddhanta system of thought. The Tamils have always believed in the manifestation of God as Sivam and Sakti in a single form. Saint Appar realised at Tiruvaiyaru in his ripe old age that the Supreme God had manifested Himself in this Sakti-Sivam aspect in all the categories of life on earth. He has described the Vision he had of this aspect in one of the most beautiful soul stirring and oft quoted hymns commencing with “Mādhar Piraikkānaiyānai.”

Kavimani Dēsika Vināyakam Pillai, one of the most loved and respected modern poets sings in simple and chaste Tamil, that one should have performed severe penance in the previous births to be gifted to be born a woman on earth. Poet Bharatidasan sings that a wife sublimates her husband’s life and guides him on the correct path. He further exalts the womanhood of Tamil Nadu and states that it is due to the feminine touch that man becomes generous, attains moral height and acquires all the masculine virtues. His appreciation of the fair sex reaches sky high when he says that a woman values her husband’s grace towards her as the very essence of her life even though he might have forsaken her.

The Sangam literature uniformly praises the womanhood of Tamil Nadu. The women of the Sangam period had distinguished themselves in their cultural attainments and virtuous living. Avvaiyār, the great poetess of very high literary attainments, untrammelled wisdom, and strength of
purpose addresses the land in these words: "O Land, you may be a plain ground; you may be a forest; you may be a dale or a vale; when righteous men live on you, you are righteous too". In her effusion embodied in these lines the poetess emphasises on the truth that a land has no significance or meaning of its own unless it is peopled by men possessing unsullied morality, character and action.

We shall now see what Tolkāppiyar has to say about womanhood in his famous grammar. He states that a woman is guarded by the three great feminine virtues, "Accam," "Nāṇam" and "Mādam". A woman’s innate fear of hurt to her modesty is "Accam". Coyness and dissociation with anything that is incompatible with womanhood is "Nāṇam," and feigning ignorance even though a woman may be a repository of learning is "Mādam."

Tolkāppiyar further credits the womanhood with the virtues of Self-restraint, mental peace, upright, uttering only purposeful words, discrimination between good and evil, and unfathomable mind. The grammarian defines the term "Mādhar" as love, leaving us to infer that women are to be the objects of love. The norm that he sets for the conduct of women is, that sense of shame is superior to her love for her own life, and chastity, in its turn, surpasses the sense of shame in value. At the same time he prescribes that fear of censure and sin and acquisition of knowledge are masculine virtues.

A woman gifted with fascinating beauty of form, and the loveliness and charm attractive to males, was called "Kārikai". Women endowed with sufficient graces to win the love of men were called "Mādhar". Women who were pleasurable to all the five senses were said to possess "Sāyal". This particular characteristic of woman was capable of undoing the heroism of a man, according to a verse in Kuṟuntokai. In this verse a woman’s softness and grace is compared to water, and the might of man to fire.
Because women possessed softness and grace, they were called "Melliyalār" (frail persons). But women are endowed with enough strength and stamina to control their mind, keep it well balanced, and shun evil ways.

THE LOVELINESS OF FEMALE FORM

Women possessed liquid charms, the swaying gait of a peacock, and a physical body endowed with tenderness, natural fragrance and susceptibility to sallowness due to love languishes.

Women possessed soft flowerlike eyes, arms comparable to round bamboo pieces and fascinating foreheads curved and shining like the moon a few days young.

I invite you to an eyeful feast of feminine charms provided by a song in Kalittokai. Therein, the lover extols the beauty of his lady-love as follows. "O my love! you have arms like rounded bamboos; you have done your fragrant hair into five thrilling styles; your frightened look puts a fawn to shame; you have the gait of a peacock. The pebbles of your anklets tingling, the jewels you are wearing shedding their brilliance, do go to me swaying like a frail creeper, flitting like a streak of lightning and shining like a goddess. I stole a look at your waist so insubstantial as to be invisible to my eyes. In the city of wealth and affluence belonging to your father you have thrown your ball, with the throb of a youth, and have followed it here.

The physical charms of his lady-love were sure to kindle the fire of love in the heart of the lover. Tolkāppiyar has prescribed ten dispositions that should exist between the young lovers. They are: Aptness in birth, status, virtues, conduct, knowledge, age, physical charm, manifestation of love-attainment of knowledge and wealth.

Fascinating beauty of form causes the birth of the feeling of love between the lovers. Tolkāppiyar speaks of lovers...
Women in Sangam age

possessing apt characteristics. In Poruliyal, Ilampuranar comments that these charms lead to their ultimate union.

The life time of a woman can be broadly divided into two periods. The first period relates to the life she leads with her parents upto her marriage, and the second is that she spends with her husband.

LIFE OF A WOMAN BEFORE THE MARRIAGE

There is ample proof in Sangam literature to the fact that heroism in war had been the chief characteristics in men. Porunaiyar, a Sangam poetess sings that a young man should find it his prime duty to destroy the enemy elephants on the battle-field and to return home victoriously.1 Another verse in Puranasuru refers to the masculine virtue that a man was born to fight on the battle-field.2 It speaks of yet another virtue, that he should surpass on the battle-field.3

As contrasted with these male characteristics, a woman was expected to be loving and graceous. The Tamil Community anxiously developed such a womanhood. An Ainkuranuru song bears evidence to this fact. It is a composition by Kapilar, a Brahman of unsullied character.4 He has been praised for his morals even by his contemporaries, themselves.5 In this song Kapilar says that the chief of the hilly country prayed to God and begged for a daughter.6 It is an incontrovertible proof that during the Sangam period people had welcomed baby girls. The Modern Tamils feel it a great burden to bear and bring up female children. "What a contrast, gentleman! How far we have fallen from our ancient ideals!"

THE SPORTS OF YOUNG GIRLS

The Sports of young girls in the ancient Tamil society conformed to their tender age and limited capacity. They plucked flowers, plunged in tanks and rivers, rocked in
swings, threw balls, built sand-houses, and played with small balls in games like "Ammānai."

The Kurinji girls drove away the birds that infested the Tiṇai fields with "Tattais." They knew how to string beautiful flower garlands too. Kapilar mentions 99 varieties of flowers in Kurinjiippattu.

The young women were never melancholic; were always cheerful, were romping and lively. The little groups of girls indulging in sports and amusements were called "Āyam" or "Orai Āyam." A Nāṭinai poet speaks disparagingly of girls who sulked in their houses without mingling with their companions in play and amusements. He says that sulking is not a correct conduct, and it will ruin their health. In his composition the maid-companion invites the lady-love to go with her and plunge in the milky, bubbling freshes of the river.

Young ladies made dolls of a kind of kōrai grass and played with them. Dolls were also made of pollin dust. An innocent little girl suckles her doll with her immature breast. The lady-love builds a toy house with her toy vessels and dolls. There is yet another maid who, along with her girl friends, decks herself with a variety of jewels and engages herself in the performance of 'Tai Nōbō' praying to be blessed with a suitable husband. A little girl goes house to house singing, and distributes to the inmates whatever gifts she had got from others.

The Nettal girls frolic with the crabs on the sea-shore; beatrice in the wooden mortars with pestles and string garlands of Vaḷḷi flowers.

Ancient Tamil families, some of them, appear to have been so very affluent that the girls played with golden-balls standing on the sand-dunes. Some girls played throw-balls with Molucca beans.

The Tamil girls appear to have had a fascination for plunging in beautiful streams.
EDUCATION OF GIRLS

The girls of the Sangam age were given a good training in literature, music and drama. The Sangam literature bears ample evidence to the fact that many women had distinguished themselves in the art of music. The education received by women was different from that imparted to men. Young men were taught the art of warfare, the ambassadorial assignments, town policing and various professions for earning a living. On the other hand the girls were given a good training in domestic science, to use the modern term. Even the mother liked only her educated son. Puṉanāṉūru says that a king followed the path prescribed by men of wisdom. 

The education imparted to the young men of the Sangam age was well designed to promote their physical health, balanced growth, and to fit them to their married life to follow. The girls got their instructions on the maintenance of their house-hold from their foster-mothers and lady-companions (the daughters of foster-mothers).

The companion sits on the same side of the boat where the lady-love sits; and follows her during her sports in water.

The preliminary instruction, a girl receives from her lady-friend and foster-mother blossoms into a full fledged knowledge in Iyal, Isai and Naṭakam, even before she outgrows her adolescence. Such a girl was called "Mudukkuṟai." In Citappatikāram, Kaṉṇaki is hailed as a "Mudukkuṟai." 

More than fifty women have been ranked among the Sangam poets. Outstanding among the poetesses were: Aṇji Atτai Makaḷ Nākaiyār, Aṇḷur NaṆ Mullaiyār, Aṇdi mandiyār, Uṭṭiyār, Uppittaιyār, Okkūr Māsāṭτiyār, Avvaiyār, NaṆīnākaiyār, Kākkaippaṭṭiιyār, Nachellaiyār, Kāvarpeṇdu, Kuṟamakaḷ Ilā veyiṇiyār NakkaṆnaiyār, Netṭimaiyār,
Of the above women poets, Ārvaiyar outshines as the most distinguished, one who could tender sage counsel even to mighty monarchs. Kākkaippāṭiniyār has contributed two works on prosody namely, Kākkaippāṭiniyam, and Sīrukkākkaippāḍiniyam. The most exquisite and soul-stirring pieces contributed by the Tamil poetesses of Sangam period have been praised as the repositories of poetic excellence and fertile wisdom.

WOMEN’S KNOWLEDGE OF MUSIC

By nature women were soft and tender, and their tone was sweet. They nursed the art of music as they nursed their babies, singing them lullaby songs. Even the beasts of the forests were charmed by the music of women. In one of the Sangam poems an interesting episode is related. A ‘Kurava’ girl sang the ‘Kurinći-p-pan,’ a melody native to the Kurinći tract, so sweetly, that an elephant, which came to forage the well ripe ears of Thinai corn, was fascinated by the music and fell into slumber.

When women sang the Pālai-p-pan, even the cruel hearts of the Maravars of the Pālai tract melted, and the hunting weapons slipped from their hands.

It was not unusual for women to sing sweetly into the ears of their husbands and nurse their war wounds.

Malaippaṭukaṭām, one of the ten Idylls, contains reference to such instances.

GIRLS PRACTISING DRAMA

Dancing is an art in which the participants could express by physical signs the emotions which surge through their
hearts. The ancient Tamil women were well versed in this art too. A dancer who knew the art of physically expressing her emotions (Virāli) was called a Virāli. Malaiyāṭukāṭam gives a graphic account of the accomplished Virālis who could dance to the mellow tunes of Yāl.

We shall now pass on to consider the life of women led subsequent to their marriage.

A little girl and a boy would have been quarrelling with one another and would have pulled each other’s hair even though their foster-mother tried to stop them. But later when these children grew up, and blossomed into youth, their hearts got locked up in love, and they appeared like beautiful twin garlands. They marry and lead a happy life. Here, in the lives of these young persons, we see the fingers of fate moving. Those who have observed the life of this happy couple have blessed the “fate” for its contribution to their felicity. The entire drama is embodied in a short song by Mōtāsanār.** The stage setting now turns. We now witness a different drama. A young man and a girl meet together for the first time. Till this happy and accidental meeting they were strangers; yet they fall in love with one another. The lover addresses his lady-love in these words: “Your mother and father and my mother and father are not relatives at all. Till this moment we too have not seen each other. The showers fall from the skies and mix with the red soil they soak into. Similarly we have now become inseparable ones.”**

In the ancient Tamilagam, in most cases a short period of love preceded marriage. A girl would like to marry only the young man whom she cared for. To achieve this purpose she would pray to her God offering Him flowers and incense. Poet Kapilar in one of his songs included in Aiṅkuṭunūṭu paints a beautiful picture of such a girl.**
GIRLS WHO OFFERED THEIR HEARTS TO THE WINNERS IN BULL FIGHTS

Young women born of Mullai tract would like to marry only those heroes who came out successful in bull fighting games. They never dream of marrying a coward who was afraid of the games. Girls of long beautiful tresses could be won only by the heroes who had over-mastered the bull. From these internal evidences we have to infer that bull-fighting and success in the fierce game was a condition precedent to a match between a young man and a young woman of the Mullai tract.

In the ancient Tamil Society a huge amount was offered by the bridegroom’s party for purchase of jewels for the embellishment of the bride. But a father would never agree to give his daughter in marriage to a young man, even though he had brought out very large gifts of wealth, if only he was otherwise ineligible to her hand.

When once a lady-love elected to marry a youngman, she accepted him as her lord finally, and never rejects him later. A lady-love who had lost her heart to her lover feigns to be carried only away by fresh floods while she was sporting in the river along with her maid friends. The lover who, she know was in the vicinity, plunged in the stream, caught hold of the girl, hugged her to his bosom, and rescued her from her danger. Her parents and villagers decided to marry them, because their physical bodies united in contact, as did their hearts already. The maid friends of the lady love wonders how, at the apt moment, the lady could have called for rains at her command to bring freshes in the river. In this context I am tempted to bring to your attention a parallel ideal embodied by Tiruvalluvar in his famous, oft quoted Kural, “The Lady who worships no God but her husband could bid even untimely rains to fall.” As the Kurinci girls marry only the suitor of their choice rains came in abundance and in time. And the Kurinci men had plenty of
game for their food. What more; because of the chastity of the girls who worshipped no God than their husband, even her brothers could aim some arrows at their targets."

The girls of Mullai tract also follow those of the Kurinci girls in the practice of this matrimonial virtue. The Neytal girls do not lag behind in these high morals. A Mullai girl can never think of marrying any one other than her lover, even though she could have the world offered to her as prize.""55

A Kurinci lady-love decked her dark hair with the little string of flowers offered by her lover, but she is afraid of her mother and her reproach. Her lady-companion comforts her by these words:

"He is the son of a shepherd; you are the daughter of a shepherd. You love him. Now where is the question for your mother rebuking you for the act? The heart of your mother is similar to yours, be assured.""55

A poet of Kuruntokai has also confirmed in one of his verses the existence of the practice of love marriages, and none of other among the ancient Tamils.""60

TOLKAPPIYAR'S REMARKS ON THE VIRTUES OF WEDDED WOMEN

Tolkappiyar says that the transcendent virtue of a married woman consisted of chastity, love, feminine patience, strength of mind, anxiety to entertain guests, love and generosity to relatives and many other good traits.""61

The lady is the King-pin to the chariot of wedded life. The word "Illai" in Tamil means "the governor of a house hold." The term "Maaiavi" and "Maai Mutal" also denote a wife.

Bharatiyar would like women to afford her fullest sympathy and cooperation to all the household functions and charity of her husband.""62
A woman who has united herself with her husband in ties of everlasting love is called "A woman of unswerving chastity" (குருந்து மாளி) and "life's companion" (நீதித்துறையில்) by Tiruvalluvar.

The maid-companion informs the lover of the lady-love that even at the moment she met him for the first time she had mentally accepted him as her wedded lord and had been behaving as his wife.

According to the first commentator of Aiñkuṟunūṟu chastity does not commence with the marriage ceremonies but exists even during the period of courtship. He avers that the lady commenced her wedded life even from the moment she fell in love with her lord. Dr. V. Sp. Manickam has explained that "Karaṇam" or "Catanku" represents the stage in which a girl gave up her virginity and entered into wedlock. We have to presume that it was the occasion when the girl was given away in marriage to her lover.

But the force of true love is as strong as destiny than, as it is now. When the lovers met with obstruction to their cause of love from their parents they could elope and marry clandestinely. According to Tolkāppiyar marriage ceremonies had to be introduced later when, by passage of time, morals became loose. On this statement of the grammarian Iḻampūṟaṉar comments thus: 'Falsehood and loose morals appeared only after the deluge; during the period before the deluge, married life commenced without any open ceremony; and, after the deluge, marriage rites had to be introduced.'

Gentlemen! Now I shall examine what were the characteristics and duties enjoined upon married life by the Tamils of the Sangam period.

Chastity: The term "Kaṟpu" has been defined variously. According to one definition, "Kaṟpu" denotes the path laid
by her husband which a woman should follow in her married life. Some explain the term as "possessing the rocky strength of a moral purpose." "Nāṇam" is superior to one's life, and chastity surpasses "Nāṇam" in value—says Tolkāppiyar."

Tiruvalluvar raises a mighty question, "what is more transcendent for a wife than the possession of stable chastity?" The immortal author of Silappatikāram remarks through the mouth of Kavunthi Adikā! that chastity is an absolute necessity for women, and Kaṭṭhaki is the only Goddess on earth possessing the mighty virtue and none else."

Love: Then we shall see what love meant to the ancient Tamil girls. Love is possession of a heart filled with an undying affection toward the lover. "The world cannot sustain without water." My lord knowsthat, without him, I cannot live"—Wails a Nāṭṭina! woman. Tiruvalluvar represents a lover as remarking that the relationship between him and his loved one is comparable to the relation between body and soul."

The royal poet Perumkaṭṭukō, who sang on Pālai tract asserts that, while exercise of a profession was the life of a man, to a woman, in her wedded life, her husband was her life."

NOBILITY OF BIRTH

Character is behaving in conformity with the canons of right conduct prescribed for observance.

The husband of a lady who had been sporting with a harlot for some days wanted to resume to the company of his wife after sometime, and sent a Pāḷaṅ as a messenger to negotiate peace with her. But the lady refused her husband entry into the household stating that she was not angry with him, but he was only eligible to be respected as her lord, and not share her amorous company."
Another lady, whose husband returned to her after a few days stay with a harlot, said thus: "my husband's cruelty is unbearable. But I have to yield to him because I am born of a virtuous family." We see how much nobility of birth is valued by the lady. A woman did not fear death, but, she was afraid, that, if she died she would lose the company of her lord. Another lady tells that even in the next birth the same must be her husband.

When Kövala abandoned Mādhavi and returned to the arms of her wife, Kannaki, and regretted his conduct toward her, she remarked "you had been leading a life of moral turpitude condemned by men of wisdom. But, I am a woman of immutable fidelity. Hence when you announced your wish to go to Madurai to eke out a living I agreed to accompany you to that city."

A woman of virtue could not restrain her husband from pursuing loose morals, nor could she forsake him for it. She would be always faithful to him.

Here is a picture painted by Bōdhāyān— the picture of a girl, who had miserable turns in her fortunes in life, but still stuck on to the nobility of her character and birth. She was the child of rich parents. As a little child, she was offered food with milk in a golden cup by her foster-mothers, but would not eat, and giving them slip, hid herself under flower creepers. She grew up to maidenhood and loved and married. But, unfortunately, her husband fell into wants, and could not afford to provide a square meal to his wife. The father of the lady learnt of the plight of his daughter, and sent her sumptuous food from his own house. But the noble birth of the lady would not permit her to accept the dole. She elected to lead a life of poverty, denying herself alternate meals. The long corridor of time now vanishes before our eyes. A domestic scene, painted by the poet two thousand years back, stands out in glare; and brings tears to our eyes.

Here is another word-picture painted by another Sangam
Women in Šangam age

poet. A young lady finds the water in the well in her husbands place, in which leaves rotted and animals drank, sweeter than a mixture of milk and honey in the garden of her birth place."

PATIENCE

Forbearance is a virtue that springs from a tender heart. Tiruvaliuvvar rules that it is the prime duty of a person to put up with the taunts of others, just as the earth supports even those who dug deep into it."

There is a separate chapter allotted in Tirukkuṟaḷ emphasizing on the necessity of cultivating this supreme virtue. We could easily find that this virtue manifests itself in women, more than in men.

Even while the mother beats her child it cries "Ammā, Ammā." Similarly a lady will always yearn for the graces of her lover even though he might indulge in acts of cruelty toward her."

Koṇkuvēḷir, the famous author of Perunṉkatai, the epic on which I am now carrying on my research, says that one born as a woman should put up patiently with the wrong doings of her husband that might even hurt her."

The late poet Kambar describes in his own inimitable style the virtues of Sita. He says that the heroine of the great Kavya bore the characteristics of noble birth, and was the mainstay of patience and an embellishment of chastity."

A later-day Avvaiyār advises woman to afford her husband a mother's protection, the services of a maid, the charms of Goddess Lakshmi, the embraces of a harlot, the counsels of a minister and the patience of earth."

Nāḷaiyār, an eminent work on didactics included in the Patinemkilkkarakkku anthology contains a poem in which certain rare virtues of a woman are counted. A woman should be fascinating to her husband, should act according to his restraint, and should learn when to indulge in petty quarrels with her husband, and, when to compose the differences."


FIRM ADHERENCE TO A LIFE OF CHASTITY

Nacchirarkkiyiar, the eminent commentator of Tolkāppiyam defines “Niṟai” (unswerving adherence to life of chastity) as the virtue of not exposing to others, the troubles and travails a woman may be undergoing.  

A lady might be aware of the loose morals of her husband and the mental cruelty afflicted to her by him, yet, she would patiently bear with him and would not reveal his lapses and her troubles even to her maid. Such was the high degree of chastity of the ancient woman of the Tamil society.

ENTERTAINING GUESTS

The arrangement of chapters in the “Illaṟa Iyal” in Tirukkuṟaḷ has a meaning and a purpose. It is not a haphazard setting. In the first chapter Tiruvaḷḷuvar defines life of a householder; in the next, he details with the virtues of the lifelong companion, the wife; in the next he extols the duty of giving birth intelligent and useful children; in the next chapter he deals with the love one should feel for other human beings; ultimately he emphasises on the duty of a householder to receive and entertain guests cordially.

Tolkāppiyar has included entertainment of guests as one of the virtues of mistress of the household. He has defined “Viruntu” as “a thing that is quite new”.

The author of Silappatikāram has enjoined entertainment of guests as one of the important domestic duties of a person. Kaṁakāki bemoans the fate that had overtaken her on being abandoned by Kōvalan in these words: “Alas! I have lost, in my life, the rare opportunity of giving gifts to men of wisdom, Anthaṇars, ascetics, and entertaining guests....”

Sita laments while at Lanka, that what could her husband do without her when he had guests to entertain.
The women of Sangam period would be very much happy to receive guests even at the untimely hours in the night.\textsuperscript{100}

A lady calls the main gate of her house as "Palar puku Vāyil" (that is the door through which many used to enter).\textsuperscript{101}

It was an admirable custom in those days to let in all the guests for the night, call out if there was any one left out, and then close the gate.\textsuperscript{102}

Households have been glorified as places of inexhaustible resources wherein any one could get at any time a warm reception, and even a world of guests can find food and entertainment.\textsuperscript{103}

The petty quarrels between the lord of the house and his wife used to be made up briefly in the presence of a guest.\textsuperscript{104}

I need not tell you that, even today, the guests often times serve a similar purpose and sometimes the other way also.

\textit{Cherishing of relatives:}

Nacchiārkkiṇiyar comments on what is to be cherished of relatives. The householder should first see that his friends, relatives, beasts of burden, men bearing weapons of war have had their food, and, then only he should proceed to satisfy his hunger.\textsuperscript{105}

A girl was first trained to cook tasty food for her husband. A foster mother who happened to witness her daughter newly wed, feeding her husband, reported to the lady’s mother as follows: "The girl crushed curds with her tender petal like fingers, spiced it with fried mustard seeds, the smoke from the spoon irritating her dark eyes, wiped her fingers on the cloth and forgot to wash the saree, served the dainty dish to her husband, and enjoyed her husband’s words of praise for the delicacy."\textsuperscript{106}
Bharatidasan also describes a similar scene in one of his poems. Kamban says that Sita Devi was cursing her fate with remorse that as she was being a captive in Lanka she could not provide her dear husband with tasty food.

The lover would tell his loved one that even if she served him poison, it would be nectar to him. A lady-companion recalls the endearing words of the lover spoke to his loved one before marriage. He praised the margosa fruits given to him by his loved one as sheer delicacies made of jaggery. A later composition, Tiruvengaikkōvai, also contains an allusion to a similar sweet and endearing comment of a husband.

THE HEROISM OF TAMIL WOMEN

The heroism of women is called “Mādin Mullai” in Purapporu Grammar. Women born of families dedicated to defence of their country were also called “Mādin Makalir”. We find from Purapadru interesting evidences regarding the extraordinary valour and intrepidity displayed by women during times of war. A brave woman had the misfortune of losing her elder brother and husband on the battle field. She had only a young male child left to her. She called him, dressed him in white, dressed his tuft, put a lance in his hand and directed him toward the battle field. It is to be noted here that the famous poet who has given an account of this dauntless act of a Tamil mother is none other than Okkār Māsāththiyār, a woman poet.

WOMEN, THE LIGHT OF HOME

Women have been glorified in Tamil literature as the “lamp of home”. “A young woman sheds lustre to a home” says Nagmani-k-kadikai. It also negatively lays down that “A home is a void without a woman to run it.” Tiruvaḷḷuvār has stated that a man whose wife could not save the honour of her home could not walk boldly like a bull before his enemies. A wife possessing all feminine virtues and homely cultures is an asset to a family.
accomplished wife illumines a home. A poem in Palai-k kali contains in a nut-shell the philosophy of married life. It says that the husband and wife may be so indigent as to wear only a single piece of cloth and not a shred more, but they should live a united, inseparable life. In Sangam literature we could find a young man and his wife leading a life of love and affection, being called "A bird with two heads and one soul."

WOMEN AND WORSHIP OF GOD

Women of the Sangam period were devoted to God, and spent considerable time at home in worshipping Him.

Young virgins would go to Lord Murugan. They had already met their lovers in dreams. They now supplicated to Him to bring them and their lovers together in marriage in reality. Married women entreat the deity for blessing them with good children. Some lift their hands to Murugan to protect their husband in the exercise of his profession and also to bless him to meet with victory on the battle field.

Married women offered worship to Siva, Māyōn, Murugan and other Gods. Ladies would hug their little ones to their bosoms, as they would the lotus blossoms, and would go to the temples along with their husbands carrying the Puja offerings like flowers and incense.

The love, women cherished for their lords, was larger than the world, loftier than the skies and deeper than the seas. A Sangam poet called "Tūkālōri" has all admiration for a girl after whose marriage to a young man, his poverty-stricken home began to fill with plenty and the family grew prosperous and happy.

The hair of a person has not turned grey despite his advanced years. To inquisitive questioners, he discloses that the secret of his youth was his cultured and devoted wife at home.
A loving wife would naturally disdain to prolong her life after her husband’s death. Tiruvalluvar takes us to the bedchamber of a young couple where delicate drama is enacted. The husband promises not to leave her in the present birth. At once tears stream in the eyes of his wife. She cries, because she fears that she might get separated from in the future births. Such was the great affection women possessed for their husbands.

Suttee was not widely prevalent in ancient Tamilagam. In some cases women commits suttee on the death of their husbands. Perunkoppi, the wife of Bhuda-p-pandiyar wanted to die on the funeral pyre of her husband. Men of wisdom around her entreated her to give up her decision. She refused to comply with their request and addressed them in these words: “O men of Wisdom! You ask me not to follow my husband but to live. You are wise but you have hurt me. You want me to eat rice mixed with Seasamum seeds and Veilai greens cooked with tamarind; you want me to sleep on hard, pebbled floor. Be assumed that I am not such a mean woman to live performing the “Kaimmai Nohbu.” (widowhood.) The funeral pyre may be frightening to you. But to me, you should know, it appears as cool as a beautiful lotus pond.”

A woman very intensely in love with her husband, died immediately she heard of his demise. This was considered to be top class chastity. Some women burnt themselves to death along with the remains of their husbands. Their affection was considered to be of the second sort. Many women chose to lead a life of widow with all the sufferings it entailed. Their affection was considered to be of the lowest. This information is furnished by Mamimkalai, an epic belonged to a later period.

Kopperundevi, who died the moment she saw her husband roll to his death, belonged to the first category. Bhuda-p-
pandiyan’s wife, who died on the funeral pyre of her husband, falls into the second category. Women who live widowed life relate to the lowest category of women.

The relationship that existed between a husband and wife is extraordinary and unique. To chaste women none can be compared to her husband. Therefore, Köpperundevi left the mundane world along with her lord. The ancient Tamils raised monuments over the remains of women who committed suttee. We have various instances of women dying on the funeral pyre of their husband in Puranānūru. Ay Andiran died. His wives died with him.

The practice of committing suttee has continued during the medieval times according to the archaeological evidence.

The father of Tirunavukarasu Nayanar died, and his mother at once committed suttee. Sundara Chola Parantakan II (957-970) died. According to the information contained in the Tiruvalaṅkādu copper plates his queen Vanavan-Mā-Dēviyar committed Suttee. Similarly Viramā Devi, the queen of Kulothunga I committed herself to the flames that engulfed her husband’s body.

Women who chose to lead a widow’s life were called “Aṭṭil Penḍir.” (That is, they have no proper persons to protect them.) These widows earned their livelihood by spinning. Hence they were called “Paruththippendir” (Cotton women).

As the widows removed their jewels they were called “Kaḷi Kala Makaḷir” (காளி காள் மகளிர்). They also tonsured their heads. This practice appears to have been widely prevalent in many countries of the world in the olden days. Western scholars are of the opinion that women cut off their hair to add to the strength to the departed.
Sir J. G. Fraser, while discussing the reason for shearing of locks as an offering for the dead, says "still it is to be remembered that in the opinion of some people, the hair is the special seat of its owner’s strength, and that accordingly in cutting their hair and presenting it to the dead they may have imagined that they were supplying him with a source of energy not less ample and certain than when they provided with their blood to drink".\textsuperscript{144} (Folk tales in the old Testament, P. IV. Ch. iv. p. 397).

The old Testament says that "virtuous woman is a crown to her husband".\textsuperscript{148}

Gentlemen and Ladies! in concluding for the day I may say that the ancient Tamil woman was considered the loved one for her husband in early days, in the middle age his life’s companion, and his nurse in old age.\textsuperscript{149}

The English poet Pope says:

"All other goods by Fortune’s hands are given,
A wife is the peculiar gift of heaven".\textsuperscript{149}

Another Poet Otwayn exclaims in raptures thus: "O woman, lovely woman, nature made thee to temper men, we had been brutes without you".\textsuperscript{145}

There is a verse in the New Testament that says "giving honour unto the wife as unto the Weaker vessel".\textsuperscript{146}

The love of the husband toward his wife must be sustained and ever tender. There should be no paucity in its course at all. Tiruvalluviar says that a husbandman should be continuously supervising his lands. Otherwise it will yield no return. He compares this attention and care to that he must bestow on his wife.\textsuperscript{147}

He would consider no wealth superior to the acquisition of a good wife.\textsuperscript{115}
Ingersoll thinks that if only a person would occupy woman's heart as her emperor, and if only she sits in his heart as his empress, he can be content to die a beggar in a gutte r.

The greatest bliss on the world is life of love and union of heart on the part of a husband and wife.

Ladies and Gentlemen, with this I conclude my today's lecture. Thank you for your patiently bearing with me.

Tomorrow I shall be discussing the position of women and their status in detail during the glorious Sangam Age.
II

Revered President, learned Colleagues,
Ladies and gentlemen and my young friends!

My yesterday’s talk dealt with the characteristics virtues and the degree of culture attained by the womanhood of ancient Tamilagam. We have seen, how women were equipped culturally to fit themselves into the vicissitudes of life that confronted them in their youth, in their adult age, and in their old age.

In today’s talk I propose to discuss the high status and position they had occupied in the ancient Tamilagam.

It has been generally agreed to, by the scholars all over the world that the Tamil society is one of the most ancient societies in the world. Scholars who have given a shape to the Lemurian theory have always maintained that the present territorial portion of South India, and, a long stretch of land to the South of it, which submerged under deluges thousands of years back, have been the cradle of human civilisation. Father Heras has been maintaining that the civilisation of the Dravidians had dawned long long back, and that the civilisation, that prevailed in the Indo-Gangetic plain seven thousand years back, was definitely that of the Dravidians. He says that “being Dravidians, the inhabitants of Mohenjo Daro and Northern India naturally spoke a Dravidian language.”

\[\text{Puramporu\, ve\textsuperscript{p}\textsuperscript{a}\ M\textaelai, a latter composition exults the fact that the Tamil Community was born “when rocks appeared on the face of the earth and sand was not yet formed.”}\]

It is such an ancient lore. In this context it will be interesting to consider that, of all the women belonging to the ancient civilisation all the world over, the Tamil women had been enjoying certain higher status, privileges and freedom in life. Thiru V. Kanakasabai Pillai says in his
pioneer book "Tamils one thousand eight hundred years ago" that the Tamil women "mixed freely, though modestly, in the business and amusements of social life." Thiru K. A. Nilakanta Sastri has remarked in his book "The History of the Tamils and their Culture" that women of the ancient Tamilagam enjoyed considerable privileges, and that many poetesses distinguished themselves in the literary field. 

Thiru V Kalyanasundaranar, who was one of the heralds in Tamil Nadu to have raised the standard of independence of women early in this century, says: "It is not an exaggeration to assert that the ancient Tamilagam was a symbol of independent womanhood. This fact can be substantiated by any amount of evidence collected from the ancient Sangam works. None, in those days, felt that woman was inferior, less equipped, and a slave to man. What is it that stands in relief in all the Sangam Works? Is it not the pleasure of home? How can there be enjoyment when there is no independence? The very manifestation of independence is nothing but pleasure. The lover and his loved-one should have been equally placed in their enjoyment of domestic pleasure. There were no disparities of any sort between them. Both of them enjoyed equal privileges and equal status. The characteristics and accomplishments of both the lover and his loved-one should be balanced and matched. According to Nachinarkkinayar the lover and the loved-one should function as the pair of horns adorning the head of a cow. The ancient Tamils practised love marriages. The very fact that a girl could select her own lord is a proof positive for the large amount of freedom enjoyed by women."

Prof. M. Varadarajanar, the Vice chancellor of Madurai University writes in his book "Pēṟmai Vālka" (பேர்மை வால்கா), as follows: - "During the period called "Sangam Age"—that is the period prior the 2nd Century A. D. Tamil Nadu had attained a very high status in political, social and
commercial spheres. A study of the literature of those days would amply prove that the women enjoyed a good deal of esteem and respect. More than thirty women poets have flourished at various times in the ancient Tamilagam. There have been poetesses like Avvaiyar who had the privilege of being employed on ambassadorial duties. Royal Ladies like the wife of Bhūda-p-pāṇḍiyān were erudite scholars. Women well accomplished in the acts of music and drama have been living in every town. In many other fields women distinguished along with men to a considerable degree."

Dr. V. Sp. Manickam who has made a special study of the condition of women of Sangam period, emphasises that "The woman of the ancient Tamil Society had the privilege to seek for educational equipments, to compose poems, to love and marry, to rebuke her lover, to pursue her domestic functions without any hindrance and to command a status in all these equal to men."

Dr. K. K. Pillay has observed in his "Social history of the Tamils:—Vol. 1— that "women were treated with consideration in view of their comparatively weaker physical capacity and power of resistance."

Dr. N. Subramaniyam declares that "the position of women of Sangam age was not as it is today; and at the same time, it was not widely different from the one as it obtains today." In one of his articles he further states that "the Sangam Society from the point of view of the sexes, was not an egalitarian Society, and the men granted a markedly inferior status to their women, who consciously or by habit accepted that position. There was no contemporary demand for a revision of that status on philosophical or even practical grounds, and, till recently, that position has remained without appreciable change."

Jawaharlal Nehru, remarks in his "Discovery of India" as follows: "The legal position of women according to Manu, the earliest exponent of the law, was definitely bad. They
were always dependent on somebody—on the father, the husband or the son. They were treated in law almost as chattels. And yet from the numerous instances in the Epics this law was not applied very rigidly and they held an honoured place in the home and in society. Bad as the legal position of women was in ancient India, judged by modern standards, it was far better than in ancient Greece, and Rome; in early Christianity, in the canon law of medieval Europe; and, indeed, right upto comparatively modern times at the beginning of the nineteenth century."

Thirumathi K. Gnanambal states in her book on ‘‘Home life among the Tamils in the Sangam Age’’ that “woman is the fountain head of love. She was free, independent and the equal of man, and she was treated with uniform courtesy and respect. She was not a mere household beast of burden. She was indispensable and the vital half of man. She was held in reverence and adoration in the Tamil Land of the Sangam Age.”

We shall now see how far the remarks of the scholars and historians quoted above are supported by Sangam classics.

Yesterday, we saw how the lover and his loved-one should agree in birth, nobility, capacity, age, personal charms, affection, humility, grace, wisdom and wealth. The couple who possesses all these ten characteristics are called by Tolkāppiyar ‘‘Oththa kilavan and kilaththi’’ (ஒத்தக்கிலவன் கிலாத்தி).

The degree of civilisation a society has attained can be very well understood from the words of the language spoken. Language never lets down a civilisation.

It is a peculiar excellence and sublimity of the Tamil language that the words ‘‘கத்தாஸ்கர்-களையு’’, ‘‘கருளாசா கருளி’’ and ‘‘வியாகரந்தய்த்தி’’ have found their usage in it.

A young man and a young woman established in a life of love and affection were not only called man and wife, but
they were also "Thalaiva" and "Thalaivi" which appellations connote that they had been endowed with equal position and honour in the society. Because they shared their privilleges equally they were called "Kilava" (he who had rights) and "Kilaththi" (she who had rights). Love manifests itself in the rights and freedom enjoyed by both of them."16

In the West, women, after their marriage, lose their birth identity. They take the name of their husbands. Such a practice indicative of inferior status of women does not obtain in this country.16 Here the women continues to bear her maiden name even after her marriage.

Tolkäppiyäär would permit marriage between a young man and a young woman even though he may be superior to the lady in certain respects, which may be, according to Nachchiyärkkädiyar, parentage, education, age, etc.

The practice of a young man marrying a lady elder to him is not prevalent in Tamil Nadu. A woman matures and grows much more early than a man. The life time of women was divided into seven catagories, Pädäi (Gumä) to Përiämpeña (Psliyä Omsør). The upper limit of the last category Përiämpeña is forty years. It has been considered a natural virtue that a person who loves a woman should continue to protect her even in her old age.

A lady companion (Gumä) of the loved-one arranges for her elopement with her lover, and, at that time, commands the lover not to forsake the girl even when she grows old, her firm round breasts sag, and the long lustrous tresses grow grey.17

Bharatidasan in one of his poems says: "Her body is not soft like a newly opened blossom; it is like a bundle of grass; she no more walks with a dancing gait; she totters while she walks; her face does not shine like the full moon any more; it is like a withered piece of land; her eyes are dark pits."

—3—
None of these changes afford me comport. It is only the thought that "she is yet alive" that gives me contentment."

The characteristics and functions of a male are in many ways different from those of a female. Tolkāppiyar lays down that nobility of birth and physical and mental strength are made virtues."

Nachchiarklärkiyar defines nobility of birth (Gullukam) as including the characteristics of wisdom, strength, fame, generosity, faculty of discrimination, culture, friendliness, and avoiding sin and shama. He further defines "Usan" (usarin) as an inclining stand against odds and the faculty of coming to right decisions in difficult situations."'

Tolkāppiyar assigns the characteristics fear, shyness, and reservation to women."’ Nachchiarklärkiyar defines "Achham" (fear) as the one that is born out of affection; "Nanaam" (shyness) as the self restraint natural to women during love advances, and "Maadam" as the continued compliance with the counsels of the lady companions.

Shyness (Nanaam) is a greater virtue than love of life; and chastity surpasses Nanaam."’ Above all the feminine virtues are enlarged to include humility, self restraint during amoros moments, an unbending mind, exquisiteness of expression and manners when in the act of wooing, a knowledge of good and bad, and the power of asserting it; and depth of mind."’

We find here that the virtues of a woman conform to her physical limitations and capacity.

The ancient Tamils called love and marriage "Aham" (Ahamb). The terms "Aham" can be interpreted to mean both the mind and the house. Dr. Rev. Thani Nayasgam finds that of all literatures dealing in love episodes of young men and women all the world over, the "Aham treatment in Tamil Grammar is the most outstanding and incomparable."’
He further states that if any one has declared that a particular individual has fathomed the feminine mind better than Shakespeare, he should be either an ignoramus or a great scholar. As the Sangam poets have assessed women's mind as no others have done, they have to be deemed to be great men of wisdom.

The literary places designated as Sangam literature include Paththuppattu and Ėḻuththagai anthologies and consist of 2381 verses on the whole. Of these verses 1862 relate to Aham topics. Nãrginai contains 500, Paripãdal 8, Kaliththagai 149, Ahanâmbûrû 400, and Paththuppattu 4.

Most of the Aham songs revolve around the lady-love. The actors who take part in the thrilling dramas of the Aham life are Thalaivu (தளவூ), Thalaivan (தளவைன), Tholi (தத்தி), Sevili (சேவிலி), Nârgi (நார்கி), and Paṅgan (பங்கன்). The Aham songs most of them, portrays the warm feelings of love, the throbings of expectation and mental ecstasy etc, of the loved-ones.

Dr. V. Sp. Manickam concludes his article with the following words: A literature, the object of which is the treatment of general behaviours of human beings, cannot but show respect for women in general. Indeed in the Sangam epoch, there was no superiority or inferiority of sexes. The Tamils regarded man and woman as two different beings of the class "புரீர்கள்" or rational beings. They, as the Greeks did, entrusted the management of the family and the bringing up of children to women, while outside came to be responsibility of man. Monogamy and chastity were strictly enjoined on women for the uninterrupted continuation of family life, and for the procreation of good and pure progeny. Thus society depended upon and consciousness of women of their responsibility for its stability and existence."

I shall now proceed with the songs, the themes of which fall into Aham type: These poems declare unequivocally the
extraordinary measure of freedom, women enjoyed in the domestic and social set up.

"An interesting information is furnished by a ‘Kuriṇci-k kali’ song. ‘The parents of a young girl who has already fallen in love with a young man have been proposing her in marriage to another one. The ‘Thōli’ is anxious to see that the ‘Thalaiyi’ is not forced by circumstances to lose her virtues. She would very delicately disclose her friend’s love to her mother either impliedly or openly. The mother will reveal the information to her husband and sons. They might spend a day or two in irritation and disappointment; but finally after careful consideration agree to the girl’s selection. When the parents after sufficient enquiry found out that their daughter had after all accepted a suitable, eligible young man as her lover, they were ashamed of their anger and hung their heads in shame.”

The tact and ingenuity displayed by the Thōli (lady companion) in her recommendations of the choice of the lady love are applaudable. She tells the parents of the girl stricken with love that a young man had saved her from being carried away by floods while bathing in a river, that while she was being rescued by him her young breasts crushed against his embrace, that she, at that very ecstatic moment decided to love him and accept him as her lord, and herself as his wedded wife, and that she could not sacrifice her chastity by being married to another person. She further warns the parents of the girl that if the people of the Kuriṇci village decided against the dear wishes of the girl a curse will strike the mountain side. The Vāḷḷi creeper will not yield tubers; the bees will not build their fat hives; the ear of the Thīnai corn will be very thin. The Kuriṇci girls have never swerved from the path of virtue. Because they worship their husbands as the lord of their hearts, even their brothers enjoy the uncanny gift of aiming faultless arrows on their quarries.
But for the tireless efforts of the "Thōli" (lady companion) the lady-in-love would not have married the young man who had been the object of her affections and care.

In another Kūruntogai song we learn that when the relatives of the lover approached the parents of the loved-one asking her hand in marriage to the same young man, the lady in love enquires inquisitively her maid friend whether her parents had signified their acceptance of the match. She is being assured by the lady companion that they had consigned her to the rightful ownership of the lover.

On this poem Dr. U.V. Swaminatha Ayyar comments as follows: Of all the persons and things that are owned by a person the wife claims a special position and status. Hence she is said to have been consigned to the rightful ownership of the lover.

It was the practice in those ancient days to send elderly emissaries to ask for the hand of the loved-one at the instance of the lover. As these messengers were instrumental in bringing together these lovers in marriage they were called the "Agents" who made the young couple to speak together in marriage.

A young man and his lady-love had eloped. The foster mother of the girl searches for her in the cruel grim palais-tract. She had rambled far and wide. She was dead tired and could walk no more. She saw many couples on her path going or coming hand in hand. Not one of them was the one she had been in search after. The lady companion wonders that those who have been eloping count more than the stars in the wide skies.

It is a pleasant surprise for the Tamils of the 20th century to learn from those literary records that their ancestors practised elopement so very widely.

Here is another instance of elopement. A lady-love elopes with her lover and they both proceed along the hot
Palai tract. The foster mother goes in search after the missing couple. On her way she meets with Tiridandi Sanyasis (திருதண்டி சானைசியை). She hails them, and asks them if they had seen a young girl, her own daughter, and a young man the son of another woman, who had loved one another walking together.

The reply given by the Sanyasis is the most interesting piece of information that has gone in Tamil literature as a priceless literary gem. The more it has been quoted the more lustre it has gathered. Well, this is their reply.

"O venerable mother. You may return home happily. We did behold a handsome youngman in the company of a beautiful girl; you should be proud of being the mother of the girl who had the strength of heart to follow her lord in these terrible Palai tracts. The Sandal tree is born on the slopes of mountains. But it gives pleasure to those who smear its rubbings on their chests and not to the mountains. Your daughter is likewise too.

The priceless pearls though born of the deep sea are of no use to the place of their birth, but are worn with pleasure by persons knowing their value. Your daughter is also a pearl to you but valuable to her lover.

The sweet music arising from the seven strings of a yāl (உயிர்) is enjoyable not by the yāl but only by a listener. So also daughter is of exquisite value not to you but to her lover only.

Therefore, O mother, do not feel sorry for the elopement of your daughter. Do not pursue her any further, she is a gem of chastity. She has gone away in the company of her lover. What she has done is accepted by canon of feminine virtues and moral law."

The woman of ancient Tamilagam knew and appreciated the value of their married status. They had understood that they had more to do with the duties of their husband’s homes than singing the glory of their parents’ houses.
They had realised that the life in their husband’s house was natural and a part of feminine virtues.

"We have already seen how the parents, the neighbours, the sages and the hero bowed their heads in reverence to the noble quality of chastity. We have also seen that a girl after her association with a youth keeps her loyalty at all costs, even disregarding her parents and experiencing any amount of hardships. Therefore the main figure in Ahaithtinai (அஹாத்தினை) around which all other figures revolve and the chief quality to which all other qualities are attached are the heroism and her chastity,"

The Aham songs inform us that the practice of the bridegroom paying a price for the hand of the girl he was marrying existed largely in Tamilagam. A poem in Ainikurin–ru states that a lady companion happily assures the lady love that her lord has assigned her parents his very kingdom in return for her hand. ""The old commentator of the anthology goes a step further and says that the young man wanted to gift the entire world to her loved one, but as that was not possible, he parted with his country.

The Āyar’s (shepherds) did not value the bride price (breast) Price or (நழத்தம்) very much. But they valued the high valour of a young man who could plunged in between the two sharp horns of a bull, as he would in between the breasts of his love, and bring it under control in the bull fighting sports."" Two verses in Akanāṟṟu bear evidence to the practice of receiving brideprice.

A lover, resident of the Neydal tract thinks within himself thus:–

"My love is a most beautiful one. She is too valuable a gift that I can obtain even though I could exchange boat loads of the best wealth possess in return for her."

From the instances quoted above we have to infer that during the Sangam period girls were considered as pieces of
property owned by a person. Contrary to this practice in modern Tamil Nadu bridegrooms insist on receiving large sums of money as Sridhanam from the bride’s parents.

The entry of a bride into her husband’s household as an important member thereof is hailed as a fortunate occasion." Instances have been quoted which reveal that a household, that was being carried on the mere pittance obtained from the sale of a single cow’s milk, now after the auspicious arrival of the bride has blossomed into one of fairs and festivities.

We may recall, in this connection the proverb, widely circulated in Modern Tamil Nadu, which says "what can do he plougher? The fortune follows the woman who handles his cooking utensils." (சிட் புட்டின்சு சேல உடையது; சேல புட்டின்சு உடையது)

But all bride prices however much sumptuous they might have been, have not fetched the brides. There have been cases when parents have refused to give their daughter in marriage to a young man in spite of his offer of valuable gifts as he was otherwise ineligible to her."

Sometimes the lover would go out to earn enough bride money to be offered to his loved-one. The marital act the bridegroom locking his hand with that of his bride was called "Koḍai" (கோடை).

**IN THE LOVE-LIFE OF IN THE SETTING**
(BACKGROUND OF THE FIVE TRACTS OF LAND)

A loved one exalts the love she bore toward her lord as large than the world, deeper than the seas and loftier than the skies."

Another young girl in love asserts that though her lover had not yet pleased her she feels ecstatic by merely keeping on looking at him."

A loved-one finds comfort in her lover’s wiping her tears and whispering words of endearment into her ears."
There is a species of water-birds called "Mahānil" (மகானில்). The mating couples always keep together closely. As they float about swimming on the streams even if a flower used to pass in between them, they will consider the interference several years long. Similarly a lady love laments for her separation from her lord, though it might have been only a momentary one.**

One lady love questions whether she will feel happy at home while her lord will feel insecure and meet with dangers in the forests if he leaves her for a while on any mission.***

A woman declares that the husbands are the life and soul of young women who live at home.****

A lady companion (நண்ணு) is surprised at the tiny spark of life in the lady-love bearing the huge love for her lord even as a tiny twig stands supporting the big jackfruit.*****

These affectionate and amorous experiences and expressions of the lady-love are reciprocated by the lovers also. A lover declares that the liquid charms of his loved one have extinguished his fiery tempers.****** Another would never lose the affections of his loved one even though he might be offered in exchange the whole world surrounded by the seas.******* Yet another one thinks that the days spent in sleeping with his love are the most useful one, and the other days are futile.********

Here is another lover who would be happy to spend a single happy, pleasant day with his lover, and he does not want even half a day longer.********** A lover in Paṭṭinappalai refuses to get separated from his loved-one even though he may be offered the entire city of the flourishing Kaviri p-pūmpattinam.***********

THE LOVE THAT DOES NOT WEAROUT

A young woman says that her husband continues to show her the same love and affection which he exhibited at
the time of their marriage." Another lady is very happy that the affections of her lord have actually increased since their marriage."

In these instances one could see a thread of a philosophical import running through. As the married life of the young couple advances the physical attraction slowly wears out, but the union of their hearts gathers strength step by step.

**THE LAMP OF THE HOME**

We have already seen that because a woman adds illumination to a home she is called the lamp of the home (எளியை வைத்து) because a woman rules over the hearth she is called the ruler of the house (அச்சல்) because she is the head of the house she is called the "Maṇai Mutalvi" (மணை முதல்வி), and because she constituted life's inseparable companion she was called "Vākkaiṭh Thunai" (வாக்கைத் துணை).

There are no comparative male appellations such as "இளை" (இளையர்), "Maṇaiyan" (மணையன்), or "Maṇai Mudhalvan" (மணை முதல்வன்) in Tamil language.

The back portion of the houses was considered a place of importance, because it is presided over by the lady of the house, and it was the main entrance to the house, because the front portion of the house, where the men-folk sojourned was considered less important when compared to the back portion. This fact is borne out by literary evidences. Well, here is an evidence. The famous author of 'Siṟupāṇṟuppaṟai' gives us a life-like description of the family of a Pāṇāya struck by chili penury and suffering from indigence and want, says the author—"Little puppies which have not even opened their eyes yet are suckling the dry nipples of their mothers, and they are crying of anguish because no milk comes; the strings which kept the bamboo rafters bound with the roof of the house are worn out and cut into
pieces, the fireplace in the kitchen which has not seen fire for a long time has fallen into disuse. It is infested with fungus. It has become a place for dogs to sleep. The lady of the house with her body withered due to interminable fire of hunger, with a lean waist and with emaciated bangled arms plucks little heads of vēḷai (ဝேலை) greens, found grown on the dust heap, with her nails and cooks them without salt. The lady was shy that unscrupulous persons, ignorant of the fact that poverty was but a natural occurrence, could talk low of her. She therefore hurries to the “kaḍai” (கடை) shuts it and shares the poor fare with her starving relatives.** Here the terms “shut the kaḍai” has been interpreted by Nachchiyākkkiyiar as “shut the Thalaivāsal” (main entrance).

WOMEN AND CHASTITY

In the Sangam works a woman is always spoken of along with her chastity. We have references to “a good woman who, distinguished for her divine virtue of chastity, has acquired additional consideration by begetting a good child which shines like a lamp in the house,”* and then again to a woman with the assets of chastity and a lustrous forehead.”**

Women are praised in the Sangam literature as always uttering sweet and useful words, as possessing beautiful red mouths yielding the divine nectar and as blessed with beautiful eyes, lustrous forehead and a swaying gait.***

Women are always referred to as மாயையாளி,*** மாயையாளியர்,*** மாயையாளாசி,*** மாயையாளையர்,*** மாயையாளர்,*** வசனையாளி,*** வசனையாளர்,*** They are also described as exemplary women whom even Arundadhi worshipped.”***

Here again I shall like to echo the words of my learned Professor Dr. Varadarajan. He says that—“No other language than Tamil language contains literary works glorifying the freedom of women. To doubt the fidelity of one’s wife was considered the height of one’s foolishness
This foolishness does not find a place in Tamil literature. But it can be found in the works of other languages including English. But the Aham works always refer to the Lady suspecting the fidelity of her lover or husband. That is why the stature of women is found raised in Tamilaham. That is why the women were called “Nallăr” (நல்லார்).

PETTY CONJUGAL QUARRELS AND THE PRIVILEGES OF WOMEN

(குரல் குடிநூல்)

We come across many instances of petty quarrels between the husband and wife in the treatment of Marudattigai (மருத்துக்கை) in Tamil literature.

A marudam woman, angry at her husband returning to her from the house of a harlot, asks him wildly “who asked you go over here?” Another lady aggressively questions “How are you related to us? You are a big man. I am trembling with sorrow and suffering. Am I your wife? Get away from me.” A third woman retorts in a rage “who are you that comes here and touches my tresses. It is cruelty on your part. Do not go to my house. Return as you came.” Another woman of certain amount of tragic humour remarks: ‘O, you who enters into my house! Who are you? I knew you. You always appear in marriage embellishments, even as a honey bee endlessly search for nectar from blossom to blossom.”

The lady has been head of the domestic establishment. The house belongs to her. She always refers to it as “my house.” Whereas, the husband never calls it as “his house.” The exalted position which the Sangam women claimed for themselves is perhaps due to their unflinching virtue of chastity, strength of mind and a sense of righteousness.

It has been always considered a great privilege to be born in a family characterised by these virtues and culture.
Hence a woman is eulogised as possessing the highest quality of chastity, and, as godly enough to be worshipped by even Arundati, the northern star.

MEN AND CHASTITY

Poet Bhāratīyār has called the virtue of chastity the common property of woman as well as man.

Some scholars have considered that during the Sangam period only women were required to be chaste and not men. I am afraid they have not perhaps perused the poem of Chōḷaṉ Nalaṅkiḷiḷi (Chōḷaṉ Nalaṅkiḷiḷi). He raises words of vengeance and declares: If they go to me in supplication and humility I shall give away to them not only my Kingdom, but also my life, Whoever taunts foolishly my valour shall suffer destruction like a blind man who steps on the tail of a repose tiger. Like a bamboo shoot bent at the foot of an elephant I shall pursue my enemy up to his own place and destroy him. If I fail in what I have declared, let me embrace loveless public women and let my garland fade away.

If a Chōḷa monarch could have praised the male chastity so much, how much value ordinary folk would have placed on it, we have only to imagine and estimate.

Ollaiyār Thantha Bhūdappāṇḍiyān (Ollaiyār Thantha Bhūdappāṇḍiyān) had an occasion to declare thus:—

"I will inflict crushing defeat on my enemies who may spring on me like the raging lions. If I fail in my efforts, I shall sever myself from the company of my wife."

Because this monarch was so much attached to his wife, she decided upon committing suttee on his death, which I referred to in my talk yesterday. Because some scholars are of the opinion that the practice of "Suttee" shows the state of slavery of women of those period.
LOVE OF ANIMALS

We find in one of the Kuruṇthogai songs a depiction of manifestation of love among animals too. The maid-companion entreats the lover not to meet his lady love in night tryst; but to marry her as early as possible.

In that connection she recalls to a mind of the lover certain traits observed in mountain monkeys. She says: "The male monkey is dead. Its mate, a beautiful animal, could not bear a lonely widowed life. The young one in her arms is too tender to climb the trees and seek for food. Therefore, the female monkey hands over the young one to the care of its relatives and rolls down the slopes of a high hill to death. You are the chief of the hill where such virtue is being displayed even by irrational beings. Do not go to your love during night hours. We are all afraid very much that some danger may overtake you on your way. Blesse by you."  

THE FOLLY OF LUSTING FOR ANOTHER'S WIFE

Selva-kadunogō Valiyādañ (செல்வகடுணோ வாழ்யாதன்) is the hero of the poem forming the seventh decade of Padhīṟuputtu sung by Kapilār. He attributes to the monarch the rare virtue of exposing his chest to none but his own wives.  

Tiruaḷḷuvar exalts the male chastity to a very high rank. He calls the virtue the summation of manhood not yielding to the temptations of looking at another person's wife with amorous intentions.  

Though it might not been possible for a person not to tread the path of righteousness in his life, his life would yet be a straight one, if only he does not covet his neighbour's wife.  

But there has been a black sheep also among the ancient Tamil kings. Bēgañ (பெகக்), a chieftain abandoned his wife Kannaki, embarked on a loose life, and, for that act of
loneliness and contempt, poets like Kapilār, Paranār, Arisiil Kiliyār, and Perumkurakkiliyār have raised their hands in reproach.

In the course of domestic life certain occasions are bound to arise when the husband would have to submit to his wife simply without any remonstrance. Such occasions will arise during the course of conjugal differences according to Tolkāppiyarār.

The wife is suiting. Her husband is trying to humour her. His wife asks him not to waste his precious time and not be uttering lies to her. She asks him to go and tempt any lady who would listen to him. The lord says: "My dear girl unless you direct your gracious glance upon me I shall not live." From this instance we have to infer that it is the husband, who may sometimes swerve from the path of virtue, and never the wife; and, that, during the times of conjugal quarrels the husband will abjectly submit to his wife.

Sometimes the husband may fall flat at the feet of his wife. She will remonstrate that his conduct was bad, and that it may give an occasion to his harlot friends to laugh at him. We find such instances related in later Tamil works.

A Kurunthogai verse relates an incident involving a harlot. She say that the lover was acting as if he surrendered, himself to her absolutely, but after returning to his wife he is behaving as though he was a mere image in a mirror moving its limbs.

Tolkāppiyarār calls chastity the right of a woman much to be admired and feared by others. According to Nachchiarkkikaiyar, a wife engaged in running a home during her married life, possesses the capacity of domestic management, generosity to give to others, and mighty virtue of chastity.

Tolkāppiyarār denies the right of women accompanying their husbands to battle-fields.
Pândiyâr Neññcheñiyâr was embarked on his war actions. He continued to fight even when the fierce cold north wind commenced to blow.

Before starting an attack on the enemy, a warning used to be proclaimed by the raiding King. He will ask cattle, Andhanars, women, sick people, those who had not begotten any children to be removed to a safer place. Similarly Kaññaki, before she proceeded to consign Madurai to flames by the curse, commanded that the God of fire should not harm Andhanars, men of renunciation and wisdom, chaste women, elderly people and children, but he should consume only evil doers.

**NANNAN WHO MURDERED A WOMAN**

Killing a woman was considered a most heinous and abominable crime.

A young woman went to a stream to bathing. A mango fruit belonging to Nâññan, a chieftain, was coming floating on the stream. Not knowingly it belonged to Nêññam, the girl ate the fruit. Nâññan was angry and killed her, even though, gold equal to her weight and eighty one bull elephants, were offered to him in compensation of the loss of the mango fruit. Hencè Nâññan fell headlong into the hell for the crime of killing a woman.

The old commentator of Purânânûru states, that because of Nâññan’s detestable crime his descendants were all excommunicated by men of wisdom.

During the Sangam period Kosars noted for their wisdom and truthfulness were inhabiting in various places in Tamilâham. They got very angry at the outrageous crime of Nâññan, cut down his totem tree and wreaked their vengeance on Nâññan’s Kingdom.

**WOMEN PROHIBITED FROM THE EXTREME ACT OF EXHIBITION OF LOVE CALLED “MADALERUTHAL.”**

Whatever calamity might occur, women were not eligible to perform the act of “Madaleruthal.” There have been
ferences in Sangam works to the threats of lovers to perform the extreme act, if they did not win their loved-ones. But there has not been even a single instance of a person having performed the act, or of having lost his life thereby.

Tolkāppiyar lays down that, as a rule, a young man does not take with him his loved-one on high seas." Perhaps the young man was anxious that his lady-love should not undergo the troubles and travails as he would be subject on sea voyages.

CHILDREN

Tiruvalluvar says that a woman of virtue is an auspicious possession of a family; and that good children are ornaments of the family.  

The wife adds a glow to the home. Her children make her glorious. Ilanaganaar (இலங்காநார்), a Sangam poet extols the virtues of a wife who has given to the family a good progeny. 100 Alangudi Vainganar, another poet blesses women who are chaste and bring forth good children. 101

In Marudam Tinai poems we find that it is the son who brings together his father and mother, who had quarrelled on account of the loose morals of the former.

The husband spends the whole day in the company of a harlot, but returns home for the night. Not minding the rebukes of his wife he hugs his little boy to his bosom and feign going to bed. The enraged wife orders him out of the house and not to touch her son. But the culprit tells her that the boy bears the name of his father, and he would hug him, and that mattered nothing for her. 102

A poem in Akanāṅku describes a similar event. 103

THE SPORTS OF YOUNG WOMEN

Women practised "Thunaṅgai Dance" 104 (துணாங்கை நீட்டி) when the season for the entertainment arrived. 105
They would play the first round with the person they loved.\textsuperscript{106}

The Tamil women exhibited extraordinary pleasure in bathing in ponds and streams.\textsuperscript{107} This sport is described not only in Sangam literature but also in later Purāṇas. Before their marriage, the women of Sangam age were accompanied by their maid-companions to plunge in water, and after their marriage their husbands took the places of the lady companions (குரையை). The young women appear to have been endowed with a large amount of freedom is going about for seeking pleasures of entertainment, and not to have been bound to their hearth like slaves.\textsuperscript{108} There were also certain religious rites prescribed for young girls such as “Pāvai-Nōsupu” (பப்பை நோசுபு) which entailed arising before dawn and going to a river or a pond to bathe and perform the rites, at the same time, praying to their Gods for the gift of a good husband.\textsuperscript{109}

There is an interesting account in Maduraikkāṭchi of women resorting to Tirupparaikkuṭram, and worshipping at the temple of God Murugan with their hands locked with those of their husbands and children. This shows that they had been moving about freely and could visit any place of their choice.\textsuperscript{110} Paripādal also gives us a graphic account of families and relations gathering at Tirumāl-Iruṇchōlai (திருமால்-றுங்கோலை) for worshipping Thirumāl (திருமால்).\textsuperscript{111}

A lord of the Kuriṇchi tract is reported to have performed severe penance and had a daughter born to him.\textsuperscript{112} The great poet Pisiṟandaiyār (பிசிரங்கோது), when questioned how he could have continued to sport his dark hair, even in his advanced years, replied that it was possible for him, because, he had the fortune of possessing a wife was very good to him possessing exemplary character.\textsuperscript{113}

We have already seen that more than fifty women poets have contributed to the enrichment of the Sangam literature. Women appear to have been aware of the cultural and other
possibilities afforded by education and many of them have excelled in enlargement of their knowledge. Poet Avvaiyar was a scholar respected and revered by chieftains and monarchs. King Adhigamam held her in such honour and reverence that he presented her a rare Nelli fruit (நீல்லி கொழி) which had the divine attribute of prolonging life even though he might have tasted the Kayapa drug (கைபாம). The poetess, in her turn, exercised her good offices to see that the proposed war between Adhigamam and Thondaimam did not happen at all.

STOOPING TO WIFE (காட்சியானை நடந்து)

This term has been explained by Parimalalakar, a renowned commentator of Tirukkuṟaḻ, as connoting a person following a wife who had her own predilections and ways of life. Dr. M. Varadarajan has the following remarks to offer in the matter in one of his expositions of Tirukkuṟaḻ. “A man has certain family duties to attend, and also certain public duties. A woman who has been depicted by Tiruvalluvar in his Aṟaththuppāl as a life’s companion, and in Porupāl as a colleague facilitating the performance of his public functions. Tiruvalluvar has a word of disapprobation only when the woman stands as an obstruction to the efficient discharge of the duties of her husband. Even then it is interesting to note, he does not rebuke the wayward woman herself, but proceeds to rectify her husband only. He expresses emphatically against a woman crossing the path of her husband’s duties to the public. Tiruvalluvar has always offered to women an equal status with men. The frailty of a woman bending to all the whims of her husbands will disrupt a family. Similarly a man becoming a slave to the caprices of his wife will hurt his public life.”

THE ULTIMATE LOWERING OF WOMEN’S STATUS

Subsequently at the end of the Sangam epoch the status of women in Tamil society appears to have suffered a fall.
The domestic virtue of the husband valuing his duties as his life, and the wife considering her husband as her life, began to lose its meaning and importance. Because in some of the Pathigān-kīlkkanakku (பதிக்கஞ்சன் கிள்க்கனாக்கு) compositions we are distressed to find the following remarks:

"இன்மா நார்பாது" says that a man should shun as poison a woman with soft, rounded, bamboo like a shoot.¹¹⁸

Blemished and implaceable women have been beaten with sticks.¹¹⁹

A termagent wife,¹²⁰ a woman involving herself in legal fights,¹²¹ and a man always living in fear of his wife have all come under the condemnation of the later day moralists.¹²²

Various reasons have been adduced for the fall of women from their high pedestal in society. One of them is that the Jain and Buddhistic Doctrines spread widely in Tamilāham during the 5th, 6th and 7th centuries A.D. and that these faiths carried a propaganda that women stood on the path of the spiritual progress of man.

THE GREATNESS ACHIEVED BY MEN THROUGH WOMEN

Whenever a man, whether a king or a chieftain has been spoken of the Sargam literature by the poets they are mostly referred to as the husband of such and such a lady. This fact is an important one and has to be assessed adequately.

The poets of Pathiruppaththu have hailed the heroes of the compositions with the following attributes:

"Nallōḷ Kaṇayaḷ" (னல்லோள் காணையல்)¹²⁴
"Puraiyōḷ Kaṇayaḷ" (புரையோள் காணையல்)¹²⁵
"Sēyilai Kaṇayaḷ" (செயிலை காணையல்)¹²⁶
and "Ondoji-k-Kaṇayaḷ" (ஓண்டோஜி-கை காணையல்)¹²⁷

In one of the love episodes of "Aham" life, we are informed that a maid-companion to the lady-in-love refuses to bring the Thalaivi (தலாவி) to her lover. The lover then
threatens that he would ride the palmyra horse (இலையானதுறு) and proclaim to the wide world that his love had brought him to this plight with her unrequited love; If people saw in the painted picture, he was carrying, the images of both himself and his loved-one together, they will find out which good girls lord he was. He is proud to refer himself as the lord of a ‘good girl’ (தம்புளை).

Nakkīrār calls God Murugaṇ as the husband of Deiva Yāgai, of unblemished chastity, perhaps because of the traditional attributes of virtues and goodness given to women.

Thiruṇāṇa Sambandar, refers to Lord Siva as the father of Murugaṇ, the husband of Valli in his Thirumaṟaikkādu hymn (இந்தும்பூன்றும் திருச்சுற்று).

CONCLUSION

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I believe it is time for me to conclude. I have placed before you enough material these two days to enable a study of the high status and position women had attained during the Sangam period. We have seen how they had the extraordinary privilege and freedom of choice in selecting their life’s partners, how they had been offering their husbands conjugal pleasures and the counsels of a minister, and above all how they had been treated as the queens of the home.

Even a person, given to occasional moral lapses like friendship with Paraththais, returns like a black sheep to his wife ultimately. Though she is angry with him she employs words of moral authority and rebuke. The husband admits that she has a right to reprimand him for his act of infidelity.

While in the later literary compositions like Puranas, Kōvais etc., it had become the custom of the poets to sing on the rapturous beauty of a feminine form, the Sangam poets mostly confined their attention to the mental equipment and
cultural attainments of women. The Sangam poets had always been harping on the virtues of chastity, and culture.

The late lamented Rajaji has pronounced that to become a gentleman, one requires a man’s brain, a woman’s heart and the feeling of a child.

The Bible contains a sage advice that a cultured wife is the crown of her husband. In concluding I wish to emphasise on the fact that the women of ancient Tamilagam were in enjoyment of higher privileges, freedom, scope and opportunities than at any time later.

Ladies and Gentleman, it had been my privilege to deliver these endowment lectures and I know the audience is a discriminating, critical and at the same time an appreciative one.

I hope Ladies and Gentlemen that I have not trespassed on your patience and forbearance.

Mr. President, you had been very kind and considerate to me these two days, and it was my rare and good fortune to deliver my first endowment lectures under your auspices.

I am very happy that my chief Dr. Sanjeevi, has always been insisting on me, as on all research scholars that a research worker should go deep into a matter and then make a comparative study of it. "The two mottos he has coined are" (மூன்றாம் மாதானம்) and "முன்னாள் சீனாப்பார்." These mottos have been stimulating and inspiring students of Tamil like me and have served to discipline and regulate research work.

I am grateful very much to the Ladies especially who have graced this occasion in large numbers and bent their patient ears to my talk.

At the risk of repetition, I should like to thank again Dr. M. Varadarajan but for whose insistent efforts to mould me in my formative years and instil into me a sense of duty, love of Tamil and power of expression; I should not have been what I am now.
The Status of Women in Tamil Nadu During the Sangam Age

Notes

1. Kavimani Dēsika Vināyakam Pillai
   'Malarum Mālaiyum.'
   —Penni yUrirmaikal, p. 148

2. Bhāratidāsan:
   'Bhāratidāsan Kavītakal.'
   —Volume I. "Penkalaippāṟṟi Bernard Sha"

3. Bhāratidāsan:
   'Bhāratidāsen Kavītaikal.'—Volume I.
   —Penkulantaral Talattu

4. Bhāratidāsan:
   'Kudumbavilakkku'
   —Part. I, p. 10

5. "இன்று பயச்சித்தானால் பயச்சித்தானால்
   அவன் பயச்சித்தானால் பயச்சித்தானால்
   அவனுக்கு கலப்பை வழிபடும் விளையும்."
   —Avvaiyar, Puranāṉṟu, 187

6. "அறிஞ்ஞம் பாதுகாத்தலாம் குதிக
   மிகுதியும் குடியும் குடியும்."
   —Tolkappiyam, Kaḻavlyal, 8

7. "செம்பு விளங்குத்து விளங்குத்து விளங்குத்து
   மும்பு அவள்லாம் அவள்லாம் கொண்டு."
   —Tolkappiyam, Poruliyal, 15

8. "பதில் காத்தா"
   —Tolkappiyam, Uriyiyal, 32

9. "அவளின் சிக்கும் பதிகள் பதிலிடும்
   நாய்களை கம்பிக்கு செலுத்தியது
   குடியையும் காட்டிய புகாரமும்
   கையேற்ற குலண்டு விளங்கிய
   குளையும் காட்டிய புகாரமும்
   பொருள் கேள்வி கேள்வியும்
   தெளியும் கருதுமத்திலிருந்து.
   —Tolkappiyam, Kaḻavlyal, 23
10. “அப்பவர் சுடும் உடலுடன்”
    —Tolkäppiyam, Kalaviyal, 7

11. “தூத்துக் கர்த்தர் குடும்பம்
     மானவர் உண்ணவதற்குப் பெயரியற்றது”
    —Kuruntokai, 95:4-5

12. “தூத்துக் கர்த்தர் குடும்பம்”
    —Kuruntokai, 95:4

13. “மானவர் உண்ணவதற்குப் பெயரியற்றது”
    —Kuruntokai, 2:3

14. “தூத்துக் கர்த்தர் குடும்பம்”
    —Kuruntokai, 168:4

15. “அழையுமின் மிளக் குடும்பம்
     பிறங்கைய பூச்சியன் முன்னிலை”
    —Kuruntokai, 2:4-5

16. “மானவர் உண்ணவதற்குப் பெயரியற்றது”
    —Kuruntokai, 9

“சூழ்வு குறிப்பிட்டுள்ள வேதியியல்.”
    —Kuruntokai, 199

17. “பூச்சிய புரேஸ்வர் குடும்பம் சமவெளி
     மிளக்காட்டு புரேஸ்வர் தோல்வியம்
     முன்னிலை பொருளிலேயே.”
    —Kuruntokai, 226:1-3

18. “தூத்துக் கர்த்தர் தோல்வியம் வாசகர்களை
     மானவர் உண்ணவதற்குப் பெயரியற்றது
     குறிப்பிட்டுள்ள குறிப்பிட்டுள்ள பூச்சியன்
     முன்னிலை பொருளிலேயே அதிர்த்தி பழத்தொட்டும்
     குறிப்பிட்டுள்ள குறிப்பிட்டுள்ள பூச்சியன்
     முன்னிலை பொருளிலேயே அதிர்த்தி
     குறிப்பிட்டுள்ள குறிப்பிட்டுள்ள பூச்சியன்
     முன்னிலை பொருளிலேயே அதிர்த்தி”
    —Kurincikkali, 21:1-7

19. “பூச்சிய புரேஸ்வர் குடும்பம்
     முன்னிலை பொருளிலே அதிர்த்தி
     குறிப்பிட்டுள்ள குறிப்பிட்டுள்ள
     பூச்சியன் முன்னிலை பொருளிலேயே.”
    —Tolkäppiyam-Meippättyal, 25
20. "தமிழ் வாழ்த்துக்கள் பராமரிக்கு
முன்னேனும் பார்வையே வங்காளப்பினுள்
தேச பிராந்தியா பிடித்து கருத்தை
மிகுதிக் காட்டுவதற்கு உருவாகும் விளக்கம்."
—Tolkāppiyam, Kaḻaviyal, 2

21. "தீப்புற விளக்கம் இவர்கள்
சலிப்புள்ள வாழ்த்துக்கள் காட்டுத்தை கலைத்து.
—Puranāṇūru, 312:5-6

22. "முழுக்கொண்டிரு மாதிரி வாழ்த்துக்கள்.
—Puranāṇūru, 314:2

23. "தமிழ் முயற்சியில்
தொகுதிகளில் பல பத்தவை கருத்தை டயசன்.
—Puranāṇūru, 86:5-6

24. "மாளிகா தரும் விளக்கம் பார்வை.
—Puranāṇūru, 174:10

25. "என்பதை தமிழ்ச் சொறுகள் பார்வை
காட்டும் முதலில் ஜூத விட பின்னர்
நிலைகள் பலராக முதலமலர் கிருபை
நூல் பக்சர் ஒரு காட்டும் முதலமலர்
ஓர் சொற்களைக் காட்டும் பத்தானை
பெருமையை காட்டும் பின்னர்
பெருமையை காட்டும் பின்னர் பெருமையை காட்டும்.
—Puranāṇūru, 129

26. "தீப்புற விளக்கம் கழுதை பார்வை
தமிழ் வாழ்த்துக்கள் காட்டும்
அழகு அர்த்தங்கள் குறிப்பிட்டு
செலுத்தும் பார்வை பிரித்து.
—Aiṅkūṟunūṟu, 257

27. "தமிழ்ச் சொற்களை காட்டும்
பள்ளிகள் குறிப்பிட்டு பார்வை.
—Kūṟuntokai, 142:2-1

28. "சிற்றுருவா சொல்லாய் என்றுப்
முயற்சியில் தொகையை உபயோகித்து மட்டை
அமைத்து என்று பார்வை முயற்சியில்
காட்டும் முன்னேன்ச் காட்டும்
முயற்சியை பற்றியும் காட்டும்.
—Naṟṟinai, 68:1-5
29. "பாலக்காடே நாளற்ற பாலம் கதையின்
போதும் பன்னிருந்த கூறுகளை.
—Kuruntokai, 276:1-2

30. "நட்டின் அன்று தென்றையின் பாலன
காலா தீயதின் கரவு நீர்ப்பொழுது
சுருக்கும் நம்பிக்கையே.
—Kuruntokai, 48:1-3

31. "ஏன் தான்வித்த மலரை
காலா குண்ணரமை கை கொள்ளி.
—Ainkurunuru, 128:2-3

32. "நாயகித திருமலையர்களின் பாலம்
திருமலை அம்பவெய் அந்தக் கூற்றிகளை.
—Kurinjikkal, 23:5-6

33. "தாயாவின் மன்னராவன் தரப்பெயின் பாலின்
அடையாது குமருகை பின்னிட்டே.
—Kurinjikkal, 23:12-13

34. "வாயில் மகடாவனா பீடனாவன் பாலின்
போதின் பாலாக்கின் பாலம்பெய் நிலைப்பெய்
நிலையில் பல்லாங்கவர்கள் மரப்பெயின்
சுருக்கும் நவாங்கவர்கள் நிலையில் பிரதமம்
—Kurinjikkal, 23.16-19

35. "பாலம் கிழக்கு குழக்க பொழுதை
வாரிய திட்டின் வரம்பினால் கூறில்
சுருக்கும் மன்னர் உண்டாயும்.
—Kuruntokai, 238:1.3

36. "அவளைக்கு வாழ்கை பாலிலே வேறு
வயலறக்கண மன்னர் வன்னித் தீயமா.
—Patiyuppattu, 29:1-2

37. "முற்றிலை இளமில் சுருக்கலாந் மகளின்
சுருக்ககாண குறிப்பிட்டு பாலிலே.
—Purananuru, 36:3-4


39. "நான் கைப்பற்று வருவாயின் போன்றை
சுருக்ககாண கருப்பு கைக்கின்சை நம்பினே
—Kurinjikkal, 3:1-2
40. "அடுத்து சுருக்கு பிறகு எதுவேன்."
—Pūranāṇūru, 183:7

41. "உலது கருவி அவளியும் மானா.
—Tolkāppiyam, Kaḻaviyal, 35


43. "இவன் நிகழ்வகத் வருகையிட்டது."
—Kuruntogai, 10:1

44. "நிமிடத்தக்குக்கும் கிருத்தத்து வீட்டில்.
—Silampu-Kolaikkalakkatai, 68

45. "வந்து உரையாயிட்டு நானிச் செய்யுள்ளே
மண்டலம் முழுமிக் தொற்றிழ
நான் செய்யுள்ள முன்வந்து உரையாயிட்டு
பாலும் மானகை மாவெளிய கணிக்கவே
கோளான இறக்கும் பாலை பிட்டே குன்று.
—Akanāṇūru, 102:5-9

46. "நூறு வரையாயிட்டு மனில் முழுமிக்
மண்டலத்து மாவெளிய மானா.
—Porunarāṟṟuppatai, 21-22

47. "சோழன் சிங்கம் தந்தி
நலம்பி குழுநர் தனங்கள் பத்தியா.
—Pūranāṇūru, 281:8-9

48. "சாதனை மருத்துவக் குருகர் மரணம்
தேசிய விளைப் பொருள் காட்டும்
அகழ்வது குழு சோழன் தந்தியா.
—Maḷaiṉṭukaṭām, 302-304

49. "சாதனை கலந்து பத்மு பொருளேசிய
பயணத்து வெள்ளிய வெளியின் விளையாடி
சோழன் தந்தியா கோலகன் கணிக்கவே
தேசிய விளைப் பொருள் நுழைப்பாக குன்று நூறு
மண்டனாம் தேசிய விளைப்
சோழன் தந்தியா கோலகன் கணிக்கவே
—Kuruntokal, 229

50. "மரும் கேட்டு மரும் விளைய
சோழன் விளைய வெளியின் விளை
மண்டனா சோழன் தந்தியா

Women in Sangam age

—Kuruntokai, 40

51. "முன்பது தமர் காக்கை என்று
தள்ளியுள்ள குத்து பாலமை ஏதாவது
பலர்கை பண்டி எதிர் முன்னிலை
தொடங்க வங்கியது உண்மையா இவளா.

—Aiṟkurunūru, 259

52. "நாமில்கு ஒரு கரை வாசன முற்றும
பலர்கை அழக் காயை.

—Kalittokai, 103:63-64

53. "நாம் கொண்டு தம் சீர்க்கக்கையில்
செல்வு வாசனை புழங்கும் மாமு.

—Mullaikkali, 1:41-42

54. "நாம் முன்னிலையடுத்து
பாலமை என்று பலர்
செய்து வாசன முற்றும
பலர்கை அழக் காயை.

—Puranāṅgūru, 383:10-13

55. "அழகை
கொண்டு
சீர்க்கக்கை
புழங்கும்.

—Kūriṅcikkali, 3, 6

56. "நாமாக முன்னிலை
சீர்க்கக்கை
புழங்கும் மாமு.

—Tirukkuṟaḷ, 55

57. "நாம் கொண்டு
சீர்க்கக்கை
புழங்கும்
பலர்கை
செய்து
வாசன ே
புழங்கும்
பலர்கை
செய்து
வாசன ே
புழங்கும்.

—Kūriṅcikkali, 3:15-18

58. "நாமாக மூன்று
சீர்க்கக்கை
புழங்கு
பலர்கை
செய்து
வாசன ே
புழங்கு
பலர்கை
செய்து
வாசன ே
புழங்கு.

—Mullaikkali, 14:15-21
59. “அப்படி வந்துள்ளது பொருளாடா பொருளையிட நிறை வலம் தரமானா அவள் தமிழன் பலியில் கேட்டாள் அவமை அவள் தமிழாக தங்கா வந்துள்ளாள்.”
—Mullaikkali, 7:20-23

60. “அலைவோ வேட்டல் விளையும் பெரிய சொடா பற்றும் பொருளையிட.”
—Kuruntokai, 44:3-4

61. “காப்பு வலமே தமிழ் வந்துள்ளது
அகட்டும் வைக்கும் வாழ்க்கை குச்சிகளின்
சோதனையும் கேட்டது வந்து வந்து
பற்றும் அல திருமீன பரந்து வந்த.”
—Tolkäppiyam, Kaṟpiyal, 11

62. “காப்பு வலமே தமிழ் வந்துள்ளது
காப்பு வேட்டல் விளைப் பொருளையிட
சோதனையும் கேட்டது வந்து வந்து
பற்றும் அல திருமீன பரந்து வந்த.”
—Bāratiyār Kavithaigal, Viḻuturaikummi, 8

63. “நடும் மேலடி வேட்டல் விளைப்பு
சோதனையும் கேட்டது வந்து.”
—Tirukkuṟal, 974

64. “மேலடித்தான வலமே தமிழ் வந்து
சோதனையும் கேட்டது வந்து.”
—Tirukkuṟal, 51

65. “மேலடித்தான வலமே தமிழ்
சோதனையும் கேட்டது வந்து
சோதனையும் கேட்டது வந்து
சோதனையும் கேட்டது வந்து
சோதனையும் கேட்டது வந்து
—Aiṟkuṟunuṟu-Vēṭkaippattu, 6

66. “காப்பு வலமே தமிழ் வந்து
சோதனையும் கேட்டது வந்து
—Aiṟkuṟunuṟu-Old Commentary

67. Dr. V. SP. Manickam: Tamil-k-Kathal:
—Page: 154
“அம்மனை முன்னாள்கள் வந்தலையும் கல்வி வந்தலையும் பார்த்து விளக்க விளக்கேற்று வைத்திருக்கின்றனர்.”
—Tolkāppiyam, Kaṟpiyal, 1

“அம்மையுடன் உடல்வருவதற்கு பதிக்கும் போது செய்தல்லூராயும் விளக்கம் வேங்கவேங்கார்.”
—Tolkāppiyam, Kaṟpiyal, 2

“அம்மையுடன் உடல்வருவதற்கு பதிக்கும் போது செய்தல்லூராயும் விளக்கம் வேங்கவேங்கார்.”
—Tolkāppiyam, Kaṟpiyal, 4

Tolkāppiyam: Kaṟpiyal Ilampūraṉar Commentary.

“அம்மையுடன் உடல்வருவதற்கு பதிக்கும் போது செய்தல்லூராயும் விளக்கம் வேங்கவேங்கார்.”
—Tolkāppiyam, Kaḷaviyal, 22

“அம்மையுடன் உடல்வருவதற்கு பதிக்கும் போது செய்தல்லூராயும் விளக்கம் வேங்கவேங்கார்.”
—Tirukkuṟaḷ, 54

“அம்மையுடன் உடல்வருவதற்கு பதிக்கும் போது செய்தல்லூராயும் விளக்கம் வேங்கவேங்கார்.”
—Silappatikāram: Adaikkalakkātai, 142-144

“இதில் மூத்தான் உடலவரும் விளக்கம் மூத்தான் வேற்றால்.”
—Naṟṟināi, 1:6-7

“இதில் மூத்தான் உடலவரும் விளக்கம் மூத்தான் வேற்றால்.”
—Tirukkuṟaḷ, 1122

“இதில் மூத்தான் உடலவரும் விளக்கம் மூத்தான் வேற்றால்.”
—Kuṟuntokai, 135:1-2

Kuṟuntokai-79.
79. "அந்தனும் மகூர்த மாகங்கள் தோற்றே புலம்பும் தோராதே அனைவே கைலே.

—Kuruntokai, 93:3-4

80. "கொண்ட மாருக கதையில் மாரளி மரணிது குறிப்பு வெறும் மலை அண்டு இருவருக்கு குறிக்கு மன்னர்கள் முன்னர் முக்கிய தொழில் வகு
தொழில் குறியீட்டுத் தொடரும் தமிழ்

—Kuruntokai, 45

81. "அந்து அதிகயிச் சோதனை கருதி புறப்பு பெருந்து சென்று முன்னென்று சீமானும் காட்டுமான கூறியதே.

—Naraini, 397

82. "இயற்றம் நான் எங்கள் பாலிது இரு விநூல் கூர்வன
முன்னாம் அளவிட்டு பாளை.

—Kuruntokai, 49:3-5

83. "மாரத்தாம்பது புதிதாம் மறுவது மாரத்தா புதும்பதுசமிலம் சுமதிதி சமந்திர் சமந்தர்

—Silappatikaram, Kolaikkalakkatai, 81-83

84. "சோகத்தாயின் விண்வெளியாய் வெளியாற்றம் கூடாது குறுகியாய் குலறு
சோகம் விண்வெளியாய் செய்யவும் கூடாது என்றால் முன்னென்று புரே இலங்காற்றதை.

—Paripadal, 20:86-89

85. "முன்னா கண்ட வேறுசாரத்தும் நூற்றின் மறுமலர்ம குழுகத்துக்கு குழுகத்துக்கு புலம்புக்கு மன்னருக்கு புலம்புக்கு விளக்கம் வேறுசாரத்தும் முன்னா கண்ட வேறுசாரத்தும் நூற்றின் மறுமலர்ம குழுகத்துக்கு புலம்புக்கு மன்னருக்கு புலம்புக்கு விளக்கம்
முன்னா கண்ட வேறுசாரத்தும் வெறுமலர்ம குழுகத்துக்கு புலம்புக்கு மன்னருக்கு
அமிதை கண்ட வேறுசாரத்தும் நூற்றின் மறுமலர்ம குழுகத்துக்கு புலம்புக்கு மன்னருக்கு
என்றால் வேறுசாரத்தும் நூற்றின் மறுமலர்ம குழுகத்துக்கு புலம்புக்கு மன்னருக்கு
அமிதை கண்ட வேறுசாரத்தும் வெறுமலர்ம குழுகத்துக்கு புலம்பு�்கு
மன்னருக்கு விளக்கம் வேறுசாரத்தும்

—Paripadal, 20:86-89
Women in Sangam Age

86. “அல்லையும் விஞ்ஞனையும் குறுக்கும் போது வேலூர் மகள் வலசாலைக் குடும்பர் கல்வன் இரு போது
நெறல் என்றும் கூற்றும்.”
—Alirukunurru, 203

87. “அனில்லையும் அரண்மனையும் துணைமன்னம் விளகுப்பு வந்த கூறும்.”
—Tirukkural, 151

88. “கருள் மகள்களை குறுக்கும் போதில் லேடி வேலூர் வலசாலை
நெறல் என்றும் கூற்றும் கூறும்
நெறல் என்றும் கூறும்.”
—Kuruntokai, 397:4.8

89. “அம்பாள் கல்வு முடிகும் வேலூர்
மகள் விளகுப்பு வந்த கூறும்.”
—Perunkatai, 4:14 (98-99)

90. “இல்லையும் மகளை முடிகும் வேலூர் வலசாலை
நெறல் என்றும் கூறும்
நெறல் என்றும் கூறும்.”
—Kambaramayanam-Sundarakandam, Toluda Padalam

91. “அம்பாள் மகளை அம்பாள் மகளை
லேடி வலசாலை விளகுப்பு வந்த கூறும்
நெறல் என்றும் கூறும்.”

92. “அம்பாள் மகளை அம்பாள் மகளை
லேடி வலசாலை விளகுப்பு வந்த
நெறல் என்றும் கூறும்.”
—Naladiyar, 384

93. “இல்லையும் முடிகும் வேலூர் வலசாலை
நெறல் என்றும் கூறும்.”
—Tolkappiyam. Kaippiyal Commentary Naccinarkkilair
94. “பாடல் விளையாட முடியாததை
மேலும் விளையாட முடியாததை
முடியாததில் விளையாட முடியாத
பாடல் விளையாட முடியாததை.
நேன் கல்வியுள்ள போது மேலும்
மேலும் விளையாட முடியாததை
வாழ்வாட வாழ்வாட முடியாத
பாடலை விளையாட வாழ்வாட.
—Kuruntokai, 9

95. “பாடல் விளையாட முடியாததை
மேலும் விளையாட முடியாததை
முடியாததில் விளையாட முடியாத
பாடல் விளையாட முடியாததை.
நேன் கல்வியுள்ள போது மேலும்
மேலும் விளையாட முடியாததை
வாழ்வாட வாழ்வாட முடியாத
பாடலை விளையாட வாழ்வாட.
—Kuruntokai, 10

96. “நேன் கல்வி 
பாடல் விளையாட வாழ்வாட வாழ்வாட.”
—Tolkāppiyam, Čeyyuliyal; 231

97. “மும்பை சிற்றுளவியாளர் மும்பை விளையாட 
விளையாட முடியாததை
—Cilappatikaram, Maṇaiyāṟampalūtha Kāṭai, 85-86

98. “அர்த்த கள்ளுக்கடைத் தமிழ் விளையாட 
விளையாட முடியாததை
—Cilappatikaram-Kolaikkalakkāṭai, 71-73

—Kambaramāyanaṅam, Sundara Kāṇḍam, 
Kāṭcippadālam, 15

100. “நேன் கல்வியாளர் விளையாட வாழ்வாட 
மேலும் விளையாட வாழ்வாட
—Nāṟṟippu, 142, 9-11

101. “பாடல் விளையாட முடியாததை
மேலும் விளையாட முடியாத
பாடலை விளையாட வாழ்வாட.”
—Kuruntokai, 118:2-5
102. “அதுவது தனிவாயில் முன்னி வெளிப்படுத்தி வெளிப்படுத்தும்.”
—Kurincippattu, 202-3

103. “உயிர்வும் மன்னு வண்டியிலும் வண்டியில் வண்டியும்.”
—Puranam, 234:5-9


105. Tolkappiyam: Karpiyal-11, Commentary—Naccigarikkinyar.

106. “மனிதர் பெருக்கு காதல் தாழ்வுறையும்
குறுப்பு பிள்ளையும் சத்தியமாக சுள்ளுக்
நூற்றாண்டு நூற்றாண்டின் லாஹை
துறுத்தப் பாடலுக்கு வருகை
துறுத்தப் பாடலுக்கு வருகை
துறுத்தப் பாடலுக்கு வருகை
—Kuruntokai, 167

107. “நூற்றாண்டு துறுத்தப் பாடல்
துறுத்தப் பாடலுக்கு வருகை.”
—Kudamba vilakku: Part. III

108. “அன்னே வட்டமான தாய் வதுத்தைச் சென்றது.”
—Kambaramayanaam—Sundarrakandaam, Katicippadal-15:1

109. “ஒன்றுக் கூறுவே இல்லா வரும்
பூமியின் பராயாண தொடற்றுக்கு
நூற்றாண்டு நூற்றாண்டு தொடற்றுக்கு.”
—Tolkappiyam, Karpiyal, 5

110. “சூரியன் பெருவையுடன் விளையாடுவது
சூரியன் விளையாடுவது.”
—Kuruntokai, 196:1-2

111. Tiruvellaiyadi: 403.

112. Tolkappiyam, Purattinaiyiyal 4.
Ilampuranar’s commentary.

113. “ஆல்லாஹ் திருச்சூடக் சார்ந்த
மதில் மகள் பாடல் சொல்லும்
சமாதியான திருவியேறுகிறது
பாடல் எப்பிறை காக்கியுள்ளது வேண்டும்.
114. "பாண்டிகறியாள் கதிர் மாடியாள்.

—Puranānūru, 279

115. "மஞ்சலை விளக்கி மட்டாய்.

—Nāmanikkaṭigai, 105:1


—Nāmanikkaṭigai, 22:1

117. "பாண்டிகறி விளக்கி கேதா தீர்த்தாக்காத

—Tirukkural, 656

118. "மஞ்சலை விளக்கி மாடியாள்.

—Tirukkural, 52

119. "மஞ்சலை விளக்கி மாடியாள்.

—Tirukkural, 60

120. "தீர்த்தாக்காத மாடியாள் மாடியாள் விளக்கி வடிவா.

—Palaikkali, 18:9-11

121. "மஞ்சலை விளக்கி மாடியாள்.

—Akanayurved; 12:5

122. "அதையுறு காட்டு பொருள்

—Paripūl, 8:102

123. "பாண்டிகறி விளக்கி மாடியாள் மாடியாள்

—Palaikkali, 18:9-11

124. "மஞ்சலை விளக்கி மாடியாள்

—Tirukkural, 52

125. "தீர்த்தாக்காத மாடியாள் மாடியாள்

—Palaikkali, 18:9-11
124. "நீரையில் பாது பாவிசை சந்திக்க நீரைல் மாடை சந்திக்க காரை கனவில் மறைந்திருந்து
முச்சு புடவையுள்ள உடலில் புறக்கிற
ஒமத்துல் கருத்து கைசல் வள்ளி பாடல்.

—Maduraikkānci, 461-467

125. "என் ஆன்மப் பொருள் பாவியூர்க
நெற்று வெள்ளையான உண்டு
அதிலாகா மேற்பகுதியானை.

—Kūruntokai, 3

126. "அனுமானம் மார் முடியுள்ள உருவக
அனைந்து இழுவான விலையில் பிறந்த
உருவையை இன்றியமார்த் பார்த்த பிள்ளையார்.

—Puranāṉṟū, 191:1-3

127. "அமர்மப் பொருள் பெரும் தூண்பாக
சந்திக்க ஹசைந்த உண்மை.

—Tirukkural, 1315

128. "ஒமத்துல் களையான மாதிரியால் மேற்பகுதி
அனைந்து முற்பகுதியானை
கைசல் வைப்படுத்து இழுவாள் நாடியை.

—Puranāṉṟū, 246:13-15

129. "சாதம் பிரிவாக கல்லுற்று பாடுக
அனுமானம் தோற்றம் பாறைக் குழுக்க தொல்லியலுடன்
இறுதியான வைக்க நீண்ட உருவில்
கைசல் வைப்படுத்து தற்போதை பொறுக
தொல்லியல் பார்வையான உள்ளேட்டின்
என்று உருவையற்று விளையாடின் பாடல்.

—Maṉimēkalai, 2:42-47

130. "காலநாள் பொருள் பார்வையான உண்மை.

—Cilappatikāram, Vaḷakkuraikātai, 80
131. “எளியன் பார்த்து வாழ்ந்து காணித்து கற்றேற்று

—Manimekalai, 6:55-59

132. “மூன்று வாயில்லான மலபிள்ளிகளுடன்

—Puranamur, 62:13-15

133. Puranamur : 240
134. Periya Puranam-Tirunavukkarasu Naayar Puranam.
135. M. E. R.
136. M. E. R.
137. “பெண்கள் பொருளிதழ் பயன் வரவே,”

—Puranamur, 125, 1

138. “எளியன் பார்த்து வாழ்ந்து வளர்ந்து வாழ்ந்து பயன் வரவே,”

—Naraini, 353

139. “எளியன் மலபிள்ளிகளுடன்

—Puranamur, 239:14-15

140. —Puranamur, 25, 250, 261, 280.
141. —Folklore in the Old Testament, Part I.,

Ch. III., P. 377.
142. “A virtuous woman is a crown to her husband.”

—Old Testament, Proverbs., XII. 4
143. “Wife's are young men's mistresses

—Francis Bacon. In Marriage and Simple Life
144. “All other good by Fortune's hands are given

—Pope: January and May
145. “O Woman! lovely Woman! Nature made the

—Otway, Venice Preserved. I-1
146. "Giving honour unto the wife; as unto the weaker vessel."

—New Testament, I. Peter. II-7

147. "உலகருக்கு மிகுதல் உயர்வில் விரைவுக்கு
நிலசனில் சாம்ப. விழுக்கு.

—Tirukkuṟaḷ, 1039

148. "தொழிவுத் தொழில் மானசாரணன் சாகநூர்
தொழில் மானசாரணக் காண்

—Tirukkuṟaḷ, 53

149. "Avvaiyār, Taṇippāṭai Tirattu,

Part I. P. 63."
Notes: Part II

1. "Being Dravidian, the inhabitants of Mohanjo-Daro and Northern India, naturally spoke of a Dravidian Language.”
   —Rev. Fr. Heras, Light on the Mohanjo Daro Riddle, 1

2. Puṟā-p-poruḻ Venomālai.
   —Karantallappatam, 14

3. V. Kanagasabai Pillai.
   —"The Tamil Eighteen Hundred Years Age, p. 120

4. K. A. Nilakanta Sastry.
   —"Tamilār Paṇpāṭum Varalārum;,” p. 115

5. T. V. Kalvana Sundaranar.
   —"Pēnṉī Perumal, (or) Vāḻkkaiṭṭunai” p. 39-40

6. Dr. M. Varadarajan.
   —"Pēnṉeḻi Vāḻka, p. 11-12

7. Dr. V. Sp. Manickam.
   —"Tamilkkatul,” p. 152

8. Dr. K. K. Pillai.
   —"A Social History of the Tamils," Part I, p. 395

9. Dr. N. Subramaniyam.
   —"Sangam Polity,” p. 285

10. Dr. N. Subramaniyam
    —"Journal of Indian History’
        Serial No: 112. Page 487

11. Jawaharlal Nehru.
    —"The Discovery of India.” p. 107

12. K. Gnanambal,
    —"Home life among the Tamils in Sangam age.” p. 107

13. "நபற்சூ புத்தம ஃபோசம பர்கர்சூரை
    குறு லேருக் தாம புரியும்
    தஞ்சையும் பத்தொன் தேர்க்கோடு கருதுகிற
    பெண்ட திரு உருத் தோர் குரு.”
    —Tolkāppiyam, Meyppāṭṭiyal. 25
14. "தலைத் தந்தையுடைய தந்தை பாவாவிலித்
 கல்லா மார்கள் மால குத்தைப்பினை
 தெருவோரின் துறவின் காலம்
 மூன்றாலும் உந்துத்தை குழுவத்துடன்.

—Tolkāppiyam, Kālvaiyil, 2

14A. Dr. V. Sp. Manickam, 'Tamil-kātai', p. 152

15. Dr. M. Varadarajan, 'Peṇmai Vālka', p. 26

16. Dr. M. Varadarajan, 'Peṇmai Vālka' p. 25

17. "அதிகாரம் வேளாண்மை வல்லவுக்கு தன்னையால்
 வேளாண்மை வல்லவுக்கு உறியாக
 வேளாண்மை வல்லவுக்கு நூற்று ரூபாண்டில்
 செய்ய வேளாண்மை இருந்த முறுங்கு!

—Nagirinai, 10:1–4

18. "புராமன் அல்ல; நருக்கு
 புராமன் அல்ல
 செய்யும் தெரியானது அல்லது
 குடியரசு. குற்றை நாட்டி
 மேலும் பதின் அருணா
 புராமனே; குற்றகவுக்கு
 செய்யும் தெரியா புராமனுக்கு
 "நூற்றுதெரியா வல்லவுக்கு வேண்டும்."

—Bharathidasan, Kuṭumbā vilakku, Muthiyōr Katal


—Tolkāppiyam, Kālvaiyil, 7

20. Tolkāppiyam, Kālvaiyil, 7 Commentary.

21. Tolkāppiyam, Kālvaiyil, 8 Commentary.

22. "புராமன் மிகவும் தெரியானது
 குடியரசு குற்றகம் தெரியாமல்.

—Tolkāppiyam, Kālvaiyil, 22:1.2

23. "அவனும் குற்றமும் நேரலாம் வைப்பு
 நேரமும் குற்றமும் தெரியாமல்.

—Tolkāppiyam, Poruḷiyal, 15
24. “அத்தடும் பிற்றிருவரற்று வரலாறு பெரியாறு குறிப்பிட்டு குத்தது அத்தடும் பிற்றிருவரற்று”
—அுரினார் தஞ்சியாக அத்காலார், தஞ்சியாக தந்தைத்துடு, p. 44

25. “அவளியில் ஦ுமை செய்தும்பிற்று குறிப்பிட்டு வரலாறு பெரிதரும் குறிப்பிட்டு அவளில் அத்தடும் பிற்றிருவரற்று”
—அுரினார் தஞ்சியாக அத்காலார், தஞ்சியாக தந்தைத்துடு, p. 46


27. அழகிய கிறிருவர்களை இருப்பு நூற்றாண்டு குறிப்பிட்டு ஓரைய வந்து;
அனந்த, குருக்களை இருப்பு கூற்று முற்றிலும் வந்து;
இருப்பு இருப்பு முற்றிலும் வந்து;
அனந்த, குருக்களை வந்து;
—Kūrumācikkāli, 3:20-25

28. “....... மோகன்கு கட்டு மீதம் வரலாறு மீதியான மீதியான.......”
—Kūrunṭokai, 351:4-5

29. Dr. U. V. Swaminatha Aiyar, Kūrunṭokai, 351, Commentary.

30. “அப்பட்டை தோற்று வெளியும்
நகூரகம் புதுவும் பிற்றுள் வெளியும்
குறிப்பிட்டு கரும் வெளியும் விதமான
குறிப்பிட்டு வெளியும் வெளியும்
புதுவும் பிற்றும் மற்றும் தென்பும்.”
—Kūrunṭokai, 146

31. “அப்பட்டை தோற்று வெளியும்
நகூரகம் புதுவும் பிற்றுள் வெளியும்
அனந்த, குருக்களை வந்து;
மீதம் மீதம் வந்து;
—Kūrunṭokai, 44

32. Palaikkāli, 8.
33. Dr. V. Sp, Manickam, The Tamil Concept of Love, p. 318.

34. “அரங்கை பொய்ப்பை மகிளிக மகிலை
துந்துவும் மசூதெ துகழவு 
கலந்து விதமும் மீதிகுண்டல்”

35. “அனுக்கூட்டல் பொய்ப்பை மகிளிக
கொள்ளுவிப்பதாக வாக்குடன் குதிகுண்டு பொய்ப்பால் வன்னுருப் புரில்.”
—Mullaikkali, 3:71-73


37. “...........அபுர்வத்து தும்பவதன்
துந்துவும் மசூதெ துகழவு கொள்ளாமல் 
புரிலும் குதிகுண்டு பொய்ப்பால்”
—Akanānūru, 280, 4-6

38. “அரங்கை பொய்ப்பை மகிலிக
மசூதெ துகழவு மகிலி
இனித்தும் இருந்து மீதிகுண்டு புரில்.”
—Kuruntokai, 265:4-6

39. “அபிருப்பான் புரித்திய விளை 
சுந்தரவு மிக்கசக் குருக்குடன் கேரளப்பிடு 
புரர் விளையாட்டில் குதிகுண்டு குருக்குடன்
சுந்தரவு விளையாட்டில் குருக்குடன்.”
—Puranānūru, 343:10-13

40. (1) Nārinnai: 393; 10, “வேறு விளையாட்டு விளையாட்டு”
(2) Aiṅkurūnumūru: 300; 2-3
“அந்திய விளையாட்டு விளையாட்டு விளை 
விளையாட்டு விளையாட்டு விளையாட்டு”
(3) Akanānūru: 282; 13—“அழுள்ள விளையாட்டு 
விளையாட்டு”

41. “இலைநிதயம் வாழ்க்கை வாழ்க்கைத் 
இனித்து வாழ்க்கை வாழ்க்கை
கொள்ளுவிப்பருடாய் வாழ்க்கை
அந்திய விளையாட்டு விளையாட்டு விளையாட்டு.
—Kuruntokai, 3
42. மாநிலம் வருவாய் விளையாடும்
புற்றுக்குறி வரும் விளையாட்டு புற்றுக்குறி
கற்று என்று என்று சிறைக்குத்து சிறைக்கு
சுருக்கு சுருக்கு கற்று
தனக் குறியே புறுக்குறியானது
அதிலிங் குறியே புறுக்குறியானது.

—Kuruntokai, 60

43. “மாநிலம் வருவாய் புறுக்குறியான
அதிலிங் குறியே புறுக்குறியான
புறுக்குறியான உடனே காணகினே
சுருக்கு சுருக்கு கற்று.”

—Kuruntokai, 82:1-3

44. “மாநிலம் புறுக்குறியான விளையாடும்
கற்று என்று என்று சிறைக்குத்து
சிறைக்கு சிறைக்கு கற்று
சுருக்கு கற்று
தனக் குறியே புறுக்குறியானது.

—Kuruntokai, 57

45. “மாநிலம் வருவாய் விளையாடும்
புறுக்குறியான உடனே காணகினே
சுருக்கு சுருக்கு கற்று
தனக் குறியே புறுக்குறியானது.

—Kuruntokai, 124

46. “புறுக்குறியான விளையாடும்
புறுக்குறியான உடனே காணகினே
சுருக்கு சுருக்கு கற்று
தனக் குறியே புறுக்குறியானது.

—Kuruntokai, 135

47. “மாநிலம் வருவாய் விளையாடும்
புறுக்குறியான உடனே காணகினே
சுருக்கு சுருக்கு கற்று
தனக் குறியே புறுக்குறியானது.

—Kuruntokai, 18
49. "தங்கு தத்துவமான எம்பதியே விலங்கான அர் ஒன்று நள்கண்டு புறந்து।"
—Kuruntokai, 95

50. "நாயார் மூலமே பழக்கத் தலை பார்த்தாம் புனிதமான புனிதவுடன் பார்த்தே ராகுவாது நடவி குமாரே, வாழ்த்து நெருங்கியே நெருங்கியே பார்த்தே தாரு சிற்றிணேந்தே அதிந்த உத்தரிக்கனது அவிக்க குறிப்பிட்டே உரும குறித்தே।"
—Kuruntokai, 323

51. "தேவதை பூங்கு பக்தமித்தாக ஒன்றுரை மற்றது மறையான।"
—Kuruntokai, 280:4-5

52. "என்று குறிப்பிட்டு புனிதமான புனிதவுடன் பார்த்தே வாழ்த்து நெருங்கியே வாழ்த்து நெருங்கியே பார்த்தே தாரு சிற்றிணேந்தே அதிந்த உத்தரிக்கனது அவிக்க குறிப்பிட்டே உரும குறித்தே।"
—Paṭṭinappālai, 218-20

53. (1) "தங்கு பயன் தேர்வு இருக்காந்தர்।"
—Kuruntokai, 385:6

(2) "கோவிலின் அகலம் வைத்திருத்துங்கள்"
—Natarai, 332:8

(3) "தேவதை காகியும் காகியும் வைத்திருத்துங்கள்"
—Akanānūru, 332:15

(4) "நூற்றாண்டு வரிச்சன விளக்குமில்லை"
—Kuriṅcippāṭṭu, 238

54. "பார்த்தே ராகுவாது நடவியார் பூங்கு பக்தமித்தாக குமாரே குமாரே குறிப்பிட்டே உரும குறித்தே।"
—Akanānūru, 352:16-17

55. "குறிப்பிட்டே கோவிலின் அகலம் வைத்திருத்துங்கள் என்று பூங்கு பக்தமித்தாக குமாரே பார்த்தே குமாரே குறிப்பிட்டே உரும குறித்தே விளக்குமில்லை"
56. "அழகும் காலமாக அனைத்து வானிலையும் கேள் குழுவனைக்கு அண்மைகளும் பயன்படுகின்றன."  
—AkanāṅṆu, 181:1-3

57. "அமிரும கனிய வாழ்வதற்கு முன் மிகுதியே பல பார்வை வந்தார்."  
—PuranāṅṆu, 332:5

58. "அபுதீப குரு பலவசமான ஆற்று செரிய குறுத்து விழாவாக  
அவ்விய பலவசமான அம்பாளை செழித்து யாரினை  
தோம் கும்பா தன் புனிதா பிரித்தா.
—Paturuppattu, 3:10-13

59. "மேல்கூர் மனிதரின் பாசத்தடசு."  
—PuranāṅṆu, 333:8

60. "ஸ்வாத்து தரசான எளித்தேற்று விளக்கம்."  
—PuranāṅṆu, 222:2

61. "சிம்முடைய மாதிகளில் பல்வேள்ளார் படை."  
—PuranāṅṆu, 222:2

62. "வல்லு மகளி."  
—Paturuppattu, 2:6:10-13

63. "மலரிவை மகளின்."  
—Paturuppattu, 12:23

64. "தள்ளியும் மகளின்."  
—Paturuppattu, 20:30-31

65. "செந்தேங்கார் ஓருவாய்க்கும் மாதிரியும் பைக்கார்."  
—Palaikkali, 1:21

68. “அசன்று சம்மதி பானை ஆயிரம்பாக்
கூப்பை நீதிக்க மெய்வனை துறந்தே தவங்கினான்.”
—Marutakkali, 23:3-4

69. “பரவல் நாயக்கிறது ஓராமாந்த விளக்கமிட்டான்
ஞானச்சுக்கை கேட்டு வரும்பாக் செய்தியறை
செய்யவும் குறிப்பிட்டான்.”
—Marutakkali, 24:1-3

70. “பலரும் பாரம்பரிய வருவது
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—Marutakkali, 33:1-3

71. “சோனது தவுச்சில்ல வலடும் கட்டை.”
—Kuruntokai, 45:5

72. Akanāṉūṟu, 190:12

73. “நாங்கள் வந்த பிற்புறத்தில் ஊருக்குள் எழுவது.”
—Pālaikkāli, 1:21

74. Bharathiyar Kavithaikal, Peṇkaḻ vitutalaik kummi.

75. “மலரிசா மறை பாலியின்
துடித பாலிச்சில் சுக்கராணம் மாரி.”
—Puranāṉūṟu, 73:13-14

76. “மாமிலின் எல்லா வரம்புகளின்
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—Puranāṉūṟu, 71:1-6

77. Puranāṉūṟu, 246

78. “சில்லே கூறுவதே பொய்யானது
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—Kuruntokai, 69
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   —Pattiyuppattu, 7:3; 4-5

80. “வெளியுள்ள தீர்த்தங்கர் பொருள்களைச் சுருக்கின்றது
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   —Tirukkural, 148

81. “அவர்கு ஦யா பிரித்து அவர்பட்டுக்கும் அவர்பட்டு
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   —Tirukkural, 78

82. Puranāṉṟu, 143.
83. Puranāṉṟu, 144 & 145.
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85. Puranāṉṟu, 147.
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87. Maruta-k-kali, 23.
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—Kūruntokai, 293:1-6

95. Puṟaṇaṇuṇu, 151: Commentary.

96. "மெப்பூர் பருநிய தன்னை பாயு
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99. மனைவிய கோர்கல் சமந்தர் பெற்றா
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100. Akanāṉūṟu, 184.
102. Kalittokai, 86.
103. Akanāṉūṟu, 66.
104. "மேற்கு வர்த்திரவ சிலியர் விளைய.
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105. "மனைவிய சுயினும் தவளினா பாலாம.
—Kūruntokai, 312;
106. (1) "‘தான் தொண்டர் தலையை கண்டுபிடித்தாழை கொண்டாரே கொண்டாரே கொண்டாரே கொண்டாரே நான்கு விளையாடினாரென்று கூருமண்டலார்.’
—Kalittokai, 73:16-17

(2) "‘உண்மையானது தான்கள் சென்று காண்தாக்கின்ற பல்வேறு மகளின் காரனுடன் தோன்றும்.’
—Puranāyuras, 24:8-9

107. "மலர் கருவில் மாகங்கையின் பாரதை எப்பெயரும் என்றார் முக்கியதுச் சோதனா வழங்கும்.
—Perumpāṇaṟṟuppaṭai, 387-388

108. "We may infer that women of the period had a free social life, and enjoyed themselves sporting in the river."
—J. V. Chellaiah, Pattuppāṭu. Translation: p. 46

109. "உண்மையான நதியை வருமதிக்கும் பெண்களின் காரணமாக பசையவை உண்டு உண்டு புனிதமான போவாய்க்
—Kalittokai, 59

110. "அருள் பெண்கள் தான் மன்னர்
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—Muraikangai, 460-467

111. "ஏன் வெளியில் குறுக்கு உடனும் கனவின் விளையாடினார் என்று வெளியில் சில விளையாடினார் தேவனா.
—Paripāṭal, 15:46-48

112. Aiṅkurūṭṭu, 257.

113. "உண்மையான நதியை வருமதிக்கும்
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—Purananuru, 191

115. Purananuru, 95
116. Tirukkural, Penvaliceral-Parimelalakar, commentary.
117. Tiruvalluvar allatu vālkkai vilakkam p. 206-210
118. Irai Nāṟṟupet, 37, 3-4.
119. “நாயனாரன் உடன்பண்டத்
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120. “சத்திய அடுத்த பொச்சையே.”
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—Tirikāṭukam, 71

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—Pattupattu, 7:10:14-16

126. "சர்க்கர்ய விளைவுகள் வெளியுவர் வேதனையோ?

—Pattupattu, 9:8:36

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—Kuruntokai, 14:5-6

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நல்லே, பராமரிகளின் காலங்கற்றை

தர்க்கத்தக்கது எண்ணிக்குறிகள்

குறிக்குறியில் குறிப்பது

புதிய தொகுப்புகளின் மார்காணம்

முனையில் வெளிய முற்பாதம் பராமரிகள்

நல்லே அவசயம்

முதலாம் இறாபடம்

பின்னர் வரும்

பெயர் மார்காண விளக்கம்

தர்க்கத்தக்கது கருத்துகள்

சுற்றங்களுள்ளது குறிப்பிட்டு

பராமரிகள் முற்பாதத்தை

பாதுகாப்பில் முற்பாதத்தை

குறிப்பிட்டு

முனையில் வெளிய பாதம்

தர்க்கத்தக்கது கருத்துகள்

Papers in Tamil Literature

நல்லே, பராமரிகளின் காலங்கற்றை

A Critical Study of Kuruntokai
Prof. Dr. C. BALASUBRAMANIAN, Vice-Chancellor, Tamil University, Thanjavur (from 4-12-1989) is an elite product of late Prof. Dr. Mu. Va. He hails from a weaver's family belonging to Backward Class. Born in village Gingee in South Arcot District on 10-5-1935, he secured First Class in M.A. in 1957. His research works viz., “A Critical Study of Kuruntokai” and “A Study of the Literature of the Cera Country” earned him M. Litt. and Ph.D. degrees of the University of Madras in 1963 & 1970 respectively.

He humbly started his academic career as Tutor in 1957: His academic position was gradually and steadily elevated from Tutorship to Lecturership, from Lecturership to Readership and then from Readership to Professorship. He became the Professor and Head, Dept. of Tamil of the Madras University in December 1976. He rose to the position of the Head, Department of Tamil Language, Madras University in 1980. With his 32 years of teaching and research experience, he has produced about 30 Ph. D. s and 100 M. Phils., apart from a good number of graduates and post-graduates. He has also published to his credit about 25 books, including four works in English.

His ‘Ilakkia Anikal’ won the First Prize of the Government of Tamilnadu for the best work on Literary Studies in 1972 and his ‘Ceranattucentamil Ilakkiyankal’ won the Cash Prize of Rs. 20,000/- the Raja Sir Annamalai Chettiar Award for the Best Research Work in 1987. He also won the cash prize of Rs. 5000/- in 1990 along with V. G. Santhanam Ammal Award for the Best Literary Writer in Tamil. Several titles like Pulavar Eru, Cencor pulavar, Canka-nurcelvar, Cankattamile celvar etc., were awarded to him in recognition of his contribution to Tamil Language and Literature. He has visited all over India and countries like Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Singapore and Mauritius and delivered scholarly lectures. He has also been serving sincerely in various academic committees of different Universities and the State and the Central Govt. bodies for the cause of higher education and research. He is the senior most Professor of Tamil in the State.