Thirukkural and Tolkappiyam

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In news : Tamil Nadu petrol pump offers free fuel for children reciting Thirukkural

About Thirukkural

- **It is a classical Tamil language text consisting of short couplets of seven words each, or kurals**

- **Written by:** Thirukkural was written more than 2000 years ago by an ancient sage called Thiruvalluvar.

- **The text is divided into three books** with aphoristic teachings on virtue (*aram*), wealth (*porul*) and love (*inbam*), respectively.

- Considered one of the greatest works on ethics and morality, it is known for its **universality and secular nature**

- The traditional accounts describe it as the last work of the third Sangam, but linguistic analysis suggests a later date of 450 to 500 CE and that it was composed after the Sangam period

- It is traditionally praised with epithets and alternate titles such as "the Tamil Veda" and "the divine book

- This book emphasizes non-violence and moral vegetarianism as virtues for an individual

- It highlights truthfulness, self-restraint, gratitude, hospitality, kindness, goodness of wife, duty, giving, and so forth, besides covering a wide range of social and political topics such as king, ministers, taxes, justice, forts, war, greatness of army and soldier's honor, death sentence for the wicked, agriculture, education, abstinence from alcohol and intoxicants

- It also includes chapters on friendship, love, sexual union, and domestic life.

- The Tamil people and the government of Tamil Nadu have

long celebrated and upheld the text with reverence

Details of three parts of Thirukkural

First part:

- The **first part of the Kural**, Aram (dharma), deals with various aspects of leading a righteous domestic life and ascetic life (if one chooses to do so).
- According to Valluvar, dharma is a simple and straightforward concept: *"Righteousness is all about removing the four flaws – envy, desire, anger and harsh words."*

Second part:

- The **second part of the Kural** deals with Porul, or "wealth" as translated in English.
- During Valluvar's time period, the type of government that was prevalent was monarchy. Therefore, the context of this section is to be considered as suitable for an emperor.
- For example, the first couplet of this section describes the qualities of a ruler: *"The military, citizenry, resources, advisers, friends and fortresses: who owns these six is a lion amongst kings."*

Third part:

- The **third and final part of the Kural** deals with the subject matter of love or Inbam, including pre-marital love and post-marital love.
- It is presented in a story form as dialogues between a man and a woman who have fallen in love with each other.
- Upon the news of their love story spreading through clamour and gossip, the lovers get married. Immediately after the marriage, the husband leaves his newly wedded bride to fight a war, leading to the wife's monologue on

the pangs of separation from her husband.

- After the husband's return, the lady feigns anger and pouts in order to induce a raise in her husband for leaving her to suffer alone from separation.
- Through pouting and feigning anger, both husband and wife enjoy conjugal union.
- Valluvar brilliantly expresses all the emotions of love, anxiety, separation, excitement and even pouting through exquisite poetry.
- Even in the section about "love", Valluvar has based it on the principles of righteousness.

Tolkappiyam

- Tolkāppiyam is the most ancient extant Tamil grammar text and the oldest extant long work of Tamil literature.
- The surviving manuscripts of the Tolkappiyam consists of three books, each with nine chapters, with a cumulative total of 1,612 sutras in the *nūṛpā* meter.
- The three books are -the *Eluttatikaram* ("Eluttu" meaning "letter, phoneme"), the *Sollatikaram* ("Sol" meaning "Sound, word") and the *Porulatikaram* ("Porul" meaning "subject matter", i.e. prosody, rhetoric, poetics)
- It is a comprehensive text on grammar, and includes *sutras* on orthography, phonology, etymology, morphology, semantics, prosody, sentence structure and the significance of context in language
- Tolkappiyam is difficult to date. Some in the Tamil tradition place the text in the mythical second sangam, variously in 1st millennium BCE or earlier

Author:

- There is no firm evidence to assign the authorship of this treatise to any one author. *Tholkapiyam*, some traditionally believe, was written by a single author named Tholkappiyar, a disciple of Vedic sage Agastya

mentioned in the *Rigveda* (1500–1200 BCE).
- According to the traditional legend, the original grammar was called Agathiam written down by sage Agastya, but it went missing after a great deluge.