

A. Answer the following questions briefly:-

1. What is the Sangam age?

Ans.1 The Sangam Age was the period of history of ancient Tamil Nadu and Kerala and parts of Sri Lanka (then known as Tamilakam) spanning from 3rd century BCE to 3rd century CE. It was named after the famous Sangam academies of poets and scholars centered in the city of Madurai.

2. Which were the three prominent Tamil kingdoms of the Sangam Age?

Ans.2 The Tamil country was ruled by three dynasties namely the Chera, Chola and Pandyas during the Sangam Age.

3. Which literary sources are available for the study of the Sangam Age?

Ans.3 Sangam Literature: Major source giving details of Sangam Age?

The Sangam literature includes Tolkappiyam, Ettutogai, Pattuppattu, Pathinenkilkanakku, and two epics named— Silappathikaram and Manimegalai. Tolkappiyam was authored by Tolkappiyar and is considered the earliest of Tamil literary work.

4. What is Tirukurral?

Ans.4 The Tirukkural or shortly the Kural, is a classic Tamil language text consisting of 1,330 short couplets of seven words each, or Kurals. The text is divided into three books, each with aphoristic teachings on virtue (aram, dharma), wealth (porul, artha) and love (inbam, kama).

5. Write a short note on poems as a source of information on the Sangam Age.

Ans.5 These poems vary between 3 and 782 lines long. The bardic poetry of the Sangam era is largely about love (akam) and war (puram), with the exception of the shorter poems such as in paripaatal which is more religious and praise Vishnu, Shiva, Durga and Murugan.

6. Name the sources which give us information about the grammar and language of the ancient Tamil people.

Ans.6 Tolkappiyam is one of the earliest works on the grammar of the Tamil language. The authorship of this treatise has still not been traced. The name Tolkappiyam comes from the combination of the two Tamil words tonmai (meaning 'ancientness') and kappiam (meaning 'literature').

7. Mention the three categories of coins that were used during the Sangam Age.

Ans.7 Three categories of coins that were used during the Sangam Age are:-

- i. Punch-marked coins from Magadha
- ii. Coins from the Roman Empire
- iii. Punch-marked silver, copper and lead coins belonging to the Muvendar.

8. Name a few deities that were worshipped during the Sangam Age. What information do we have on the religious practices of this time?

Ans.8 During the Sangam period, Shiva, Murugan, Thirumal and Kotravai were some of the popular deities. The poetic division of the landscape into five regions also associated each region with its own patron deity. The people of the pastoral lands or the Mullai regions worshipped Thirumal.

The Sangam period in Tamilakam was characterized by the coexistence of many religions: Shaivism, Vaishnavism, Buddhism and Jainism alongside the folk religion of the Tamil people.

9. Mention the sites where cave inscriptions have been discovered and describe what each inscription denotes?

Ans.9 Thirty-nine cave inscriptions were discovered in several sites near Madurai, out of which the Alagarmalai inscriptions, dated to the 1st century BCE, record the endowments made by a group of merchants from Madurai. The Arachalur cave inscriptions provide evidence for the cultivation of music and dance in Tamizhakam. Cave inscriptions found at Arnattar Hills in Pugalur village (near Karur), document the construction of a rock shelter by a Chera king for a Jain monk.

10. Write a short note on trade practices during the Sangam Age.

Ans.10 During the Sangam age, crafts and trade occupations were considered secondary to agriculture. Carpenters crafted wooden wares and blacksmiths worked in simple workshops. Weaving, pearl fishing, smithy and ship building were prominent industries of ancient Tamilakam.

11. State the social hierarchy during the Sangam Age.

Ans.11 Social hierarchy during Sangam age:-

- i. Tamil people had a common language and culture divided broadly into five different kudis (clans) based on their profession.
- ii. They followed either Nature worship or Hinduism as their religion. Lord Murugan was the most popular deity.
- iii. Monarchy was the accepted system of governance.
- iv. The kings, the nobility, the rich and the general population were entertained by musicians, stage artists and performers.
- v. Women had respectable position, some received education and became poets.

12. What was the position of women in the Sangam Age?

Ans.12 Women had respectable position and a few of them were well-educated, such as Kaakkai, the poet and her accomplice, Avvaiyar. Chastity in women was considered a great virtue. Although some women got good education, their status in society was not equal to that of men. They did not have the right to inherit property. There were ascetics also among women.

B. Answer the following structured questions in detail:-

1. Archaeological sources are equally important as literary sources.

a. Write briefly on the literary sources of the Sangam Age.

Ans. Literary sources are in the form of Sangam Literature which chiefly comprise of the Ettu Thogai (The Eight Anthologies), Pathu Pattu(The Ten Idylls)and Tolkappiyam (Tamil Grammar).

Tirukkural by Thiruvalluvar is a classic containing 1330 rhyming Tamil language.

Poems:Sangam poetry can be broadly divided into two categories-the agam and the puram.

Epics:-Aimperumkappiyam provide information on the social, religious, cultural and academic life of people in the Sangam Age.

b. Explain the three main archaeological sources of the Sangam Age?

Ans. Three main archaeological sources of Sangam Age are:-

i. Hero Stones-Stone monuments commemorating the honourable death of war heroes during the Sangam Age.

ii. Coins-There are broadly three categories of coins; the coins consist of royal emblems, portrait of kings, symbols etc.; they give information about trade relations during the Sangam Age.

iii. Megaliths-Circular tombs made of big stone slabs that were built upon the place of burials.

c. Keeping the above statement in mind, explain how the various archaeological sources corroborate the literary sources.

Ans. Inscriptions, coins, excavations and hero stones are various archaeological sources of Sangam Age and with these we can correlate the time period and life of the people.

2. Describe life in Sangam Age with reference to:-

a. The social structure and the religious practices of Tamil people during the Sangam Age.

Ans. Tamil people had a common language and culture divided broadly into five different *kudis* (clans) based on their profession.

During the Sangam period, Shiva, Murugan, Thirumal and Kotravai were some of the popular deities. The poetic division of the landscape into five regions also associated each region with its own patron deity. The people of the pastoral lands or the Mullai regions worshipped

Thirumal. The Sangam period in Tamilakam was characterized by the coexistence of many religions: Shaivism, Vaishnavism, Buddhism and Jainism alongside the folk religion of the Tamil people.

b. Music and arts belonging to the Sangam Age.

Ans. Music and arts played an important role in the lives of ancient Tamils. The form of music was vocal, instrumental or both. The *kulal* (flute) was the most popular instrument. The kings, the nobility, the rich and general population were entertained by musicians, stage artists and performers.

c. System of governance.

Ans. Monarchy was the accepted system of governance during the Sangam Age and the king was variously called *Vedaan, ko or Irai*. The local chieftains were called the *Velirs*. The eldest son enjoyed the right to succeed his father.

3. What information do the various sources provide about the economy of the Sangam Age? Explain.

Ans.3 The main economic activities were agriculture, weaving, fishery, manufacturing (including shipbuilding) and construction. Both inland and foreign trade were brisk. The ancient Tamil used to do barter business with Roman merchants. The chief source of income of the government was from land revenue, custom duties etc.

4. Explain the various literary sources available for the period of our study.

Ans.4 Literary sources are in the form of Sangam Literature which chiefly comprise of the Ettu Thogai (The Eight Anthologies), Pathu Pattu (The Ten Idylls) and Tolkappiyam (Tamil Grammar).

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5. Write short notes on the following:-

6. Trade in Sangam Age:-

- a. Ans.3 The ancient Tamil used to do barter business with Roman merchants. The chief items of export include pepper, pearls, ivory, textiles and gold ornaments; while the imports included luxury goods such as glass, coral, wine and topaz. Many Roman traders lived in the port of Cannanore and Kottayam. They were very fond of spices, specially pepper (*Yavanapriya*).
- b. Agrarian practices:- Paddy, being the most important crop, served as a medium of exchange for inland trade. In addition to paddy, pepper, millets, grams and sugarcane were other commonly grown crops.

C. Photo study questions:-

1. Megalith burial.

2. Human bones, some utensils or daily use items and weapons.
3. Megalith are a vital element of landscape and for historical reasons they are a sui generis monument, commemorating prehistorical and historical cultures.