

## TAMIL.

Tamil is spoken by about 17 millions of people. In the territory included within the operations of the Linguistic Survey it is only spoken, as a foreign language, by settlers from the south. We cannot, therefore, here deal with it in the same way as in the case of the languages of Northern India. Tamil is, on the other hand, so important a language that it has been found necessary to give a rapid sketch of it, without aiming at completeness or fullness of detail.

The name of the language should properly be written *Tamiṛ*. The consonant *r* being often interchangeable with *l*, the word is often pronounced *Tamiḷ* in the Tamil country. In the old Pāli of the Mahāvamsō the Tamils are called *Damiḷa*. The same form is also used in the Canon of the Śvētāmbara Jains. The forms *Daviḷa* and *Daviḍa* in the Prakrit literature of the Jains and of the Sanskrit plays seems to be a later stage, due to the Prakrit change of *m* to *v*. The oldest texts have *Damiḷa*. *Damiḷa* and *Daviḍa* were Sanskritized to *Dramila*, *Dramiḍa*, and *Draviḍa*, respectively. Varāhamihira (sixth century A.D.) probably used the form *Dramiḍa*, though the printed editions of his *Bṛihatsamhitā* read *Draviḍa*. According to Professor Kern some manuscripts read *Dramiḍa*, and this form must evidently be adopted, considering the fact that *Draviḍa* is the usual form in Sanskrit which would not be likely to be changed to the less known *Dramiḍa*. Tārānātha, in his history of Buddhism in India, mentions the *Dramilas*, and his sources must, therefore, have exhibited that form. 'Dramila' also occurs in old Malayālam versions of the Purāṇas, and in inscriptions, such as the pillar inscription of King Maṅgalēsa, from Mahākūṭa near Bādāmi (597-608). Classical authors know the word under forms such as *Damirice*, *Dimirica*, and perhaps *Δυμιρίκη* (Ptolemy). *Dramiḍa* was again borrowed by Tamil under the form *Tiramiḍa*.

The form *Tamul* is due to the French missionaries and should be disregarded.

No plausible explanation of the word has as yet been given. Bishop Caldwell thinks *Draviḍa* to be the original form. This is not, however, probable, *Damiḷa* being the form the word assumes in the oldest Aryan literature. Adelung compared Tamil with the name of the river *Tāmraparṇī*. The native Tamil scholars state that Tamil means 'sweetness' or 'fragrance.' If *Tamiṛ* is the original form of the word, it would perhaps be allowable to consider *iṛ* as a suffix and compare the base *tam* with the reflexive pronoun. Compare the German name *Schwaben*, lit. 'own country.'

The language is also known under other names. The Telugus and Kanarese call it *Aravam*, the Kanarese also *Tigalar* or *Tigular*. The old Portuguese, who did not distinguish between Tamil and Malayālam, called both the Malabar language, and Tamil was long known under that name in Europe.

I may add that various parts of the Tamil country were known to the Aryan Indians at an early period under names such as Pāṇḍya, Chōḍa or Chōla, Chēra, and so forth.

Tamil is spoken all over the south-eastern part of the Indian Peninsula and the northern half of Ceylon. On the peninsula its eastern frontier is the Bay of Bengal and towards the west it extends to the Western Ghats. It is the prevailing language south and east of a line drawn from the sea a few miles north of Madras through Chingleput and North Arcot, leaving the smaller, northern half of that latter district to Telugu. The line thence runs through

Area within which spoken.

the north-western corner of Salem, where Tamil meets with Kanarese, to the Nilgiri and the Western Ghats, and thence southwards, leaving Malabar, Cochin, and the greatest part of Travancore to Malayalam. Tamil is spoken in the last mentioned state on the western side of the Ghats, from Cape Comorin to the neighbourhood of Trivandrum.

Tamil is bounded to the north by Telugu, to the west by Kanarese and Malayalam, and to the south and east by the sea.

Linguistic Boundaries.

Tamil settlers have, in early times, brought the language to Ceylon; they are found everywhere in the Dekhan, and form the majority of the so-called Klings in Further India and the Malay Archipelago. We find them as coolies in Mauritius and the West Indies, and so on. 'In short,' says Bishop Caldwell, 'wherever money is to be made, wherever a more apathetic or a more aristocratic people is waiting to be pushed aside, thither swarm the Tamilians, the Greek or Scotch of the East, the least superstitious and the most enterprising and persevering race of Hindüs.

Malayalam was in old times considered as a form of Tamil. It is, however, now universally admitted to be a distinct language, and it will, therefore, be separately dealt with. Tamil itself is, by no means, uniform over the whole area where it is spoken as a vernacular. We are here only concerned with the colloquial language, the so-called *Koḍun-Damiṛ* and can therefore only mention the fact that the classical language of Tamil literature, the so-called *Sen-Damiṛ*, differs widely from the modern form of speech.

Dialects.

There are many distinct provincial dialects of Tamil. We do not, however, know much about them. Three dialects only were distinguished at the Census of 1891, Yerukala or Korava, spoken by a wandering tribe; Irula, a caste dialect in the Nilgiris and adjoining districts; and Kasuva, the dialect of a jungle tribe between the base of the Nilgiris and the Moyar River. Yerukala or Korava is also spoken in the Bombay Presidency, and a short account of that dialect will therefore be found below on pp. 318 and ff. Two other dialects spoken by vagrant Gipsy tribes, the so-called Kaikāḍi, and Burgāḍi will be added.

According to the returns of the Censuses of 1891 and 1901, the number of speakers of Tamil in those districts where it is spoken as a vernacular were as follows:—

Number of speakers.		were as follows:—	
Madras Presidency—			
		Census, 1891.	Census, 1901.
Madras	. . . .	270,970	318,993
Chingleput	. . . .	863,094	965,388
North Arcot	. . . .	1,214,930	1,242,429
Salem	. . . .	1,395,130	1,560,102
Coimbatore	. . . .	1,297,174	1,442,804
Nilgiri	. . . .	28,038	39,121
South Arcot	. . . .	1,882,159	2,063,343
Tanjore	. . . .	2,095,135	2,118,667
Trichinopoly	. . . .	1,157,689	1,219,782
Madura	. . . .	2,081,102	2,258,359
Tinnevelly	. . . .	1,627,915	1,770,125
Travancore	. . . .	448,322	492,273
Cochin	. . . .	44,777	54,171
Pudakkottai	. . . .	358,770	360,362
Total Madras Presidency	. . . .	14,760,205	15,905,919
Ceylon	. . . .	9,0844	951,740
GRAND TOTAL	. . . .	15,711,049	16,857,659

The figures from Ceylon are those given for the Tamil race in the island at the Censuses of 1891 and 1901.

Outside the territory where Tamil is spoken as a vernacular the number of speakers returned were as follows:—

Madras Presidency—

	Census, 1891.	Census, 1901.
Ganjam . . . . .	701	1,372
Vizagapatam . . . . .	1,479	2,303
Godavari . . . . .	1,525	4,046
Kistna . . . . .	2,695	3,741
Nellore . . . . .	26,984	38,430
Cuddapah . . . . .	6,262	4,939
Kurnool . . . . .	2,074	1,350
Bellary . . . . .	11,792	11,747
Anantapur . . . . .	2,411	4,716
Malabar . . . . .	106,399	109,893
South Canara . . . . .	1,150	1,096
Ganjam Agency . . . . .	3	3
Vizagapatam Agency . . . . .	14	58
Godavari Agency . . . . .	164	147
Banganapalle . . . . .	17	18
Sandur . . . . .	24	49
<b>Total Madras . . . . .</b>	<b>163,694</b>	<b>183,908</b>
Ajmer-Merwara . . . . .	...	29
Andamans and Nicobars . . . . .	...	851
Assam . . . . .	...	2,497
Beluchistan . . . . .	..	49
Bengal Presidency . . . . .	...	2,274
Berar . . . . .	...	459
Bombay Presidency . . . . .	...	9,909
Burma . . . . .	71,401	99,576
Central Provinces . . . . .	4,250	6,277
Coorg . . . . .	19,048	5,189
North-West Frontier . . . . .	...	589
Punjab . . . . .	...	145
United Provinces . . . . .	...	766
Baroda . . . . .	...	85
Central India . . . . .	...	1,130
Hyderabad . . . . .	29,266	27,514
Kashmir . . . . .	...	392
Mysore . . . . .	159,392	226,472
Rajputana . . . . .	...	61
<b>TOTAL . . . . .</b>	<b>447,051</b>	<b>568,172</b>

The figures for the minor Tamil dialects are as follows:—

	Census, 1891.	Census, 1901.
Korava . . . . .	55,116	52,626
Irula . . . . .	1,614	932
Kasuva . . . . .	316	241
Kaikāḍi . . . . .	8,289	14,598
Burgapḍi . . . . .	265	673
<b>TOTAL . . . . .</b>	<b>65,600</b>	<b>69,070</b>

By adding the figures given above we arrive at the following estimate of the number of speakers of Tamil in India and in Ceylon :—

	Census, 1891.	Census, 1901.
Tamil spoken at home by . . . . .	15,711,049	16,857,659
Tamil spoken abroad by . . . . .	447,051	568,172
Tamil dialects . . . . .	65,600	69,070
<b>TOTAL</b> . . . . .	<b>16,223,700</b>	<b>17,494,901</b>

Of these totals, 950,844 and 951,740, respectively, were enumerated in Ceylon. The number of speakers of Tamil in the Indian peninsula were, therefore, 15,272,856 in 1891 and 16,543,161 in 1901.

Tamil was the first Dravidian language to develop a literature of its own. It would be out of place here to give an account of Tamil literature.

#### Literature.

Suffice it to note that native tradition refers the commencement of literary activity in the Tamil country to Agastya, the mythical apostle of the Dekhan. The oldest Tamil grammar, the so-called *Tolkāppiyam*, is ascribed to one of his pupils. Its age has not as yet been finally settled. It includes quotations from older authors and contains several poetical excerpts which show that Tamil had already a literary history of its own. The beginning of Tamil literature proper seems to be due to the labours of the Jains. It is relatively independent of Sanskrit, and has attained to a high degree of perfection, especially in the numerous ethical apothegms. The *Kural* of Tiruvalluvar, *i.e.*, the sacred Valluvan or Pariya priest, which teaches the Sāṁkhya Philosophy in 130 poetical aphorisms, is considered as one of the gems of Tamil literature. The author is said to have been a Pariah, and he cannot, according to Bishop Caldwell, be placed later than the 10th century. His sister, called Auveiyār, 'the venerable matron,' is one of the most highly admired Tamil poets.

Another great ethical poem, the *Nālaḍiyār*, is perhaps still older.

We shall further mention the romantic epics *Chintāmaṇi*, by an unknown Jaina poet; the *Rāmāyaṇa* by Kambar; the old dictionary *Divākaram*; the classical Tamil grammar or *Nannūl* of Pavaṇanti, and so forth.

For further information the student is referred to the authorities mentioned below.

The art of printing<sup>1</sup> was introduced into India by the Goa Jesuits about the middle of the 16th century. A seminary and church dedicated to St. Thomas seem to have been built by the Jesuits at Ambalacatta, now a small village inland from Cranganore, and a few miles to the north of Angamali.

Sanskrit, Tamil, Malayālam, and Syriac were studied by the Portuguese Jesuits residing there with great success, and several important works were printed, of which, however, we have only the names left us, as recorded by F. de Souza and others, and still later by Fr. Paulinus. The last tells us that—"Anno 1679 in oppido Ambalacatta in lignum incisit alii characteres Tamulici per Ignatium Aichamoni indigenam Malabarenssem, hisque in lucem prodit opus inscriptum: *Vocabulario Tamueloo com a significação Portuguesa composto pello P. Antem de Proença da Comp de Jesu, Miss: de Maduré.*" The first Malabar-Tamil types had been cut by a lay brother of the Jesuits, Joannes Gonsalves, at Cochín, in 1577. Ambalacatta was destroyed by order of Tipu, when his army invaded Cochín and Travancore.

According to Bishop Caldwell, 'the title of the book printed in 1577 was the *Doctrina Christiana* which was followed the next year by a book entitled the *Flos*

<sup>1</sup> The remarks on the art of printing in India have been taken from a paper contributed by the late Dr. Burnell to *Trübner's Record* for the 31st October, 1872, as quoted by Bishop Caldwell,—*A Comparative Grammar of the Dravidian Languages*. 2nd Edition. London, 1875. Grammar pp. 14 and ff.

# LINGUISTIC SURVEY OF INDIA

---

COMPILED AND EDITED BY

G. A. GRIERSON, C.I.E., PH.D., D.LITT., I.C.S. (RETD.)

© MOTILAL BANARSIDASS  
BUNGALOW ROAD, JAWAHAR NAGAR, DELHI-7  
NEPALI KHAPRA, VARANASI, (U.P.)  
ASHOK RAJ PATH, (OPP. PATNA COLLEGE) PATNA (BIHAR)

*With kind permission of Govt. of India.*

FIRST EDITION 1927

REPRINT 1967

**Price Rs. 1250/- (\$ 200) for the complete set.**

PRINTED IN INDIA BY SHANTILAL JAIN, AT SHRI JAINENDRA PRESS,  
BUNGALOW ROAD, JAWAHARNAGAR, DELHI-7 AND PUBLISHED BY  
SUNDARLAL JAIN, MOTILAL BANARSIDASS, BUNGALOW ROAD,  
JAWAHARNAGAR, DELHI-7

MOTILAL BANARSIDASS  
DELHI :: VARANASI :: PATNA