8.2.2 Tamil Design Guide

Introduction
In this section a brief introduction to Tamil culture and history is given.

Introduction to Tamil culture
It is said that

"Before the birth of stones and sand,
Brave Tamil man was born"

The above poem portrays the heritage of Tamil language. The treasured literature and grammar, outline of sangam literature, devotional literature, other literary categories, the grammar treatise of Tholkaapiyar, structure of the language and the five divisions of grammar are some of the topics covered in this handbook. Moreover, the huge number of Tamil speaking people cutting across countries, the birth and growth of the language, the letters, the rules, the sound variations and the origin of special characters, symbols for Tamil calendar, Tamil numbers, time, land and cultural divisions, and coinage of words have also been dealt with.

India
India is one of the biggest democratic peninsulas of the world. It is surrounded in the east by the Bay of Bengal, in the west by Arabian Sea and in the south by Indian Ocean while in the north is the mighty Himalayan Ranges. New Delhi stands as the capital of this country. The countries that surround it are Pakistan, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Nepal, China, Tibet and Bhutan. The country spreads across 32,87,263 square kilometers with a population of around one hundred crores.

India consists of twenty-nine states and union territories such as Andaman and Nicobar islands, Lakswadeep islands, Daman and Diu, D adra Nagar Haveli and Pondicherry. India has eighteen official languages but however around 1652 languages are spoken all over the country. The eighteen official language are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Language</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tamil</td>
<td>Oriya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telugu</td>
<td>Sanskrit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kannada</td>
<td>Nepali</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malayalam</td>
<td>Bengali</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hindi</td>
<td>Kashmiri</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marathi</td>
<td>Assamese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urdu</td>
<td>Punjabi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gujarathi</td>
<td>Kondani</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

History of Tamil
All the south Indian languages belong to a single group known as the family of Tamil language. Dr.Caldwel called this group of south Indian languages as Dravidian languages. The Dravidian family of languages are further subdivided into southern, central and northern Dravidian languages. Tamil, Malayalam, Kannada, Kudagu, Thulu, Thoada and Koatha belong to southern Dravidian languages. Telugu, Koandi, Koo, Koalami, Koodi, Koandha. Koanda, Naayakki and Bengo belong to central Dravidian languages. Kuruk, M aalotho andParakuy belong to Northern Dravidian language. Southern Dravidian languages including Tamil and Malayalam are being spoken in Tamilnadu, Kerala and Karnataka. Central Dravidian languages like Telugu are being spoken in Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa and Maharashra. Maalotha is being spoken in Rajmahal Hills of West Bengal.

The Tamil Speaking People
Tamil Nadu is the main land of Tamil speaking people. More than 8 crore Tamils live in Tamil Nadu and Pondicherry. About one crore Tamils live in the other states of India. Outside India, Sri Lanka, Burma, Malaya, Singapore, Indonesia, South Africa, Fiji, Mauritius islands are some of the
countries having a large number of Tamil speaking people.

**Tamil Grammar**

Tamil grammar can be divided into five parts namely ezuthu (Letter), sol (Word), porul (Meaning), Yaappu (poetic structure) and aNi (Poetic decoration). The first book on Tamil grammar was Agathiyam but the scripts of Agathiyam were never available. So Tholkaappiyam was accepted as the first book on Tamil grammar. Tholkaappiyam is classified into three adhigaarams basically as ezuthadhigaaram, solladhigaaram and poruladhigaaram and each adhigaaram has 9 chapters allocated to it.

The birth and categorisation of Tamil characters along with the listing of Tamil characters and the maathraas of Tamil are some of the aspects described in ezuthadhigaaram. Single letter words, multi letter words, sandhi rules, classification of words according to origin, and syntactic categorization of words are some of the features detailed in solladhigaaram. In poruladhigaaram some of the topics discussed are the meaning of words, conventional usage of words, metaphors, classification of nouns based on human and non-human aspects, words expressing emotions and classification of living things based on number of senses.

**Characters in Tamil**

There are 12 vowels, 18 consonants, 216 consonant vowels and one aaydham in the Tamil language and hence there is a total of 247 characters in Tamil.

**Vowels**

There are twelve vowels in Tamil. They are, அ, இ, ஊ, ஒ, ஓ, எ, ஐ, ஒ, ஔ, கங், கங், கங்

**Kinds of vowels:**

Depending on the duration of utterance the vowels are classified into two, namely மண் (kuril) and பண் (nedil)

The classification is as follows.

Short Vowels (kuril) : கங், மங், கங், கங், கங்

Long Vowels (nedil) : கங், கங், கங், கங், கங், கங், கங்

**Consonants**

There are eighteen consonants in Tamil. They are: க, ப, ச, த, ந, ஹ, ப, ம, ப, த, ந, ஹ

vallinam (வல்லினம்) க, ப, ச, த, ந, ஹ

mellinam (மெல்லினம்) ப, ம, ப, த, ந, ஹ

idayinam (இட்யைனம்) ப, ம, ப, த, ந, ஹ

**aaydham**

There is one aaydham type of character in Tamil namely க

**Special Characteristics of some Tamil characters**

Some Tamil characters display semantic functions in addition to functioning in their normal way.

**Demonstrative Letters (suttu)**

The three short vowels அ, இ & ஐ are used to indicate proximity in other words point to objects and hence are called pointing characters of suttezhukkāl.

ammaaNāvan (அம்மானாவன்) - the student

immaram (இம்மரம்) - this tree

upputhakam (பூப்தகம்)

**Interrogative Characters (vinaa)**

When எ, ஐ & ஒ convey a question semantically then they are called interrogative characters.

**Prolongation (aLabedai)**

In poetry, to adjust the maathras to make the poem fit the structure, certain long vowels and long consonant vowels raise their vowels to an extra
maathraa(ala). This property of Tamil is called 
albedai.

**Position of Characters in a Word**

The twelve vowels and the ten consonant vowels 
such as അ ഔ ഏ ഓ സ ന ഷ ഃ സ ശ are all allowed to 
occur at the beginning of words.

The twelve vowels, eleven consonants ക ള മ ത ന ത സ യ ല ല ട and shortened അ ഔ ഏ ഓ സ ന ഷ ഃ 
are all allowed to occur at the end of words.

**Other Symbols and words in Tamil**

Tamil has special symbols and words to represent 
days of the week, months of the years, division of 
period into years depending on historical 
significance, numbers and punctuations.

**Days of week**

The seven days of the week are:

- Nyaayiru - Sunday
- Thingal - Monday
- Sevvaay - Tuesday
- Budhan (aRivan) - Wednesday
- Viyaazhan - Thursday
- VeLLi - Friday
- Sani (kaari) - Saturday

**Months of the year (maatham / thingal)**

The names of the months now in use are not Tamil 
names; They are later year changes. The Tamil 
names are given in brackets.

- chiththirai (mezham) - April-May
- vaigaasi (Vidal) - May-June
- aani (aadavai) - June-July
- aadi (kadagam) - July-August
- aavaNi (madangal) - August-September
- purattaasi (kanni) - September-October

- aippasi(thulai) - October-November
- kaarththigai(naLi) - November-December
- maargazhi (silai) - December-January
- thai (suRavam) - January-February
- maasi (kumbam) - February-March
- panguni (meenam) - M arch-April

**Number**

There are special symbols in Tamil for denoting 
numbers. They are:

- 1 ഇ
- 2 ക
- 3 മ
- 4 റ
- 5 ഖ
- 6 ല
- 7 േ
- 8 ബ
- 9 യ
- 10 ണ
- 100 ര
- 1000 ର

**Punctuation**

There are special words in Tamil to indicate the 
different punctuation marks.

They are:

- Comma (kal puLLi)
- Semicolon (arai puLLi)
- Colon (mukkal puLLi)
- Full stop (mutru puLLi)
- Question Mark (vina kuri)
Exclamation Mark (uNarchi kuri) - !
Double Quotation (irattai mErkoL) - “ ”
Single Quotation (otrai mErkoL) - ’ ’
Brackets (adaipu kuri) - ( )
History Mark (varalatru kuri) - :-
Hyphen (otrai samakkuri) - -
Plus Sign (siluvai kuri) - +
Star Mark (natchathira kuri) - *
Braces (irattai iNaippu kuri) - { }

Phonetic Rules
There are rules that specify certain phonetic considerations like sound variations for similar sounding characters, duration for the sounding of maathraas, etc.,

Sound Variations
ô (la), ø (La), y (zha) - variations
la
This sound ‘la’ is produced when tip of tongue gently runs over the upper jaw’s front teeth.
example : palaa, pal
La
This sound ‘La’ is produced when tongue-tip bends to touch the upper jaw’s central portion.
example : paLLam, koL
Zha
This special sound ‘zha’ produced when tongue-tip proceeds further bending as if to reach the inner tongue.
example : vaazhai
Ra, ra variations
ra
This is called idayinam ra which is produced by the tongue tip touching the frontal edge of the upper jaw.
example : maram, karam

Ra
This is called vallinum Ra. It is produced in the same way as ra but with more pressure.
example : aRam, muRam
n’a, na, nna variations
n’a
Dental sound ‘n’a’ is produced when upper teeth is pressed by tongue tip.
example : n’anRu
Na
Tongue twist sound ‘Na’ is produced with the rear side of tongue-tip touches the upper jaw.
example : kaN, aNai
na
Proximity teeth sound ‘na’ is produced when tongue-tip goes near the teeth but doesn’t touch the teeth.
example : manam
vallina letters sound variations
Unlike other indian languages, Tamil has single glyphs for ka, cha, ta, tha, pa, Ra. But their sounds vary depending on the context where they occur. They have normal sound while occurring in the beginning of a word, strong sound when preceded by their consonants, soft sound while occurring in the middle of a word and a special sound when preceded by their ina ezhuthukkal ñ, ñi, ñi, ñ and ñi.
kappal - ka (when comes at the beginning of a word)
akkaal - (when preceded by its consonant ñ)
thangam - ga (when comes in words preceded by ñ)
pahal - ha (when occurs in the middle of a word without prefixing ñ or ñ)

Samething happens with æ, ë, ì, æ, ì, ï, ë, ì, and ë letters also
Variation in duration for maathraas

Maathraas can be pronounced with short or long duration
- short vowels - single maathraa
- long vowels - two maathraa
- Consonants - half a maathraa
- aaydham - half a maathraa

Word

If a single letter or a group of letters together has a meaning then it is termed as a word.

There are two types of classifications - literary & grammar.

Literary types
- iyar chol : Natural Tamil words in common usage
- thiri chol : Deformed words used in literature
- vata chol : words with Sanskrit origin
- thisai : words from other languages

Grammar types
- Noun (peyar chol)
- Verb (vinai chol)
- Participle (idai chol)
- Attribute (uri chol)

Noun Types
- Noun of things (porul peyar)
- Noun of place (idappeyar)
- Noun of date year etc (kaal appeyar)
- Noun of parts (chinai peyar)
- Abstract noun or noun of qualities (kuNappeyar)
- Verbal noun or noun of action (thozhilpeyar)

Types of verb
- Direct verb (therinillai vinai mutru)
- Indirect verb (kuRippu vinai mutru)

Participle (idaichchol)

The words that come in between noun and verbs but on separation which may or may not have meaning by itself are called participle words.

Gender Markers

There are markers to indicate gender which are added to words to form appropriate gender forms.

- Male - an, aan
- Female - aL, aL, i
- Plural Human - ar, aar, pa, maar
- Singular Non human - thu
- Plural Non human - a, kaL

Attribute (Urichchol)

This is neither a noun nor a verb but it adds on to the meaning and have one or more than one properties associated with it.

Word Doubler (Irattaik kiLavi)

If a meaningless word doubles itself in a sentence it is called a word doubler.

Example : vazha vazha, sala sala

Word chains (adukkuth thodar)

Two meaningfull words which doubles due to fear or rapidity are termed as word chains.

Example theethee, OduOdu

Word Coining (PuNarchi)

When two words join together it is called coining. The first word is called static word and the next word is called joining word. Static word's ending and the joining word's beginning merge together to form such coinages.

There are three types of coinages. They are:
- Addition (th0ntral)
- Alteration (thirithal)
- Deletion (keduthal)
Addition
A new letter adds on when the coinage occurs.
Eg. poo + chedi = poochchedi

Alteration
A letter gets altered when the coinage occurs.
Eg. pon + kudam = poRkudam

Deletion
During the coinage one letter gets deleted.
Eg. maram + vEr = maravEr

Sentence (Vakkiyam - Thodar)
When words stand together to give some meaning on the whole they form a sentence.

Parts of Sentence
The various parts of the sentence are classified according to the roles they perform as follows:
- Subject (ezhuvaai)
- Predicate (payanilai)
- Object (seyappatuporul)
- Titles (adaimozhi)
- Punctuations (kurikal)

Semantic Classification
In Tamil nouns are classified as human and non-human. Life in general is classified as internal and external. In Tamil literature land and its culture are also classified. In addition there are classification for time and emotions. There is another classification on living things based on senses.

Classification of nouns
Nouns in Tamil are generally classified under human and non-human as given:

Human (uyarthiNai)
- Thevar (God)

Non-human and Object (ahRiNai)
- Living non-humans like animals, birds and plants
- Non-living non-human like stones, rocks etc.

Literary Life (porul)
The life found in Literature is termed as Literary life. It is divided into two:
- Internal-life (aham) - Internal-life (aham) talks more about the love and passion between the hero and heroine of the literature which are felt and known only to the couple and not elsewhere. Internal-life comprises of five ThiNais.
  - kurinchi - togetherness of hero and heroine
  - mullai - Heroine awaits arrival of the Hero
  - marudham - Short temporary misunderstanding between the pair
  - neydhai - heroine depressed since the hero has not returned.
  - paalai - departure of the hero from the heroine for the purpose of earning money.

Apart from these there are two other classes:
- kaikiLai (One sided Love)
- perun’dhiNai (mismatched Love)

External-life (puRam) - The portion of life that is declared publicity, the events that happen with the knowledge of public are all termed to be under External-life. There are ten parts of External-life where the first eight songs are about the war and the next two are about the external characteristics of the Hero.
vetchi - Kidnapping the cows from the enemy country
karandhai - fighting and getting back the kidnapped cows.
Vanji - march towards the enemy country to capture it.
kaanji - fight against the opposing marching troops to prevent them capturing the country
uzhinjai - surrounding the fort walls of the enemy country.
nochchi - saving the fort from the inside of the fort.
thumbai - head to head fight in an open ground
vaahai - the winner wearing a garland of the vaagai flower
paadaaN - singing in praise of the king who won the war
podhuvial - all the other aspects that were not sung in the above nine thinais.

Land and culture divisions

In Tamil Literature many songs are based on cultural differences and land is classified based on its geographic characteristics and culture. The division are:

- kurinchi - mountain area
- mullai - forest area
- marudham - agricultural area
- neydhai - sea surrounded area
- paalai - merge of kurinchi and mullai

Time (pozhuthu or kaalam)

Time is first divided as long time and short time. Long time is the year divided based on seasons and short time is a day divided based on hours.

- Long time (perum pozhuthu)
  the year is divided into periods of two months each based on seasons
  - iLavEnil - April May
  - mudhuvEnil - June July
  - kaar - August September
  - kuLir - October November
  - munpani - December January
  - pinpani - February March

- Short Time (chiru pozhuthu)
  - kaalai - 06-10 H rs.
  - n’aN pahal - 10-14 H rs.
  - Erpaadu - 14-18 H rs.
  - maalai - 18-22 H rs.
  - yaamam - 22-02 H rs.
  - vaiharai - 02-06 H rs.

Feelings (meypaadu)

Tholkappiyar divides feelings and emotions into eight categories

- Laugh (nahai)
- Cry (azhuha)
- Embarrassed (iLivara)
- Wonder (Marutkai)
- Fear (acham)
- Proud (Perumidham)
- Anger (Chinam)
- Happiness (Uvakai)

Classification of Life

Based on the sense Tholkaappiyar classifies life into six.

- uni-sensed - grass, tree
- di-sensed - shell, snail
tri-sensed - ants, termite
• tetra-sensed - crabs, drangfly
• penta sensed - birds, animals
• hexa sensed - humans

Poetic Grammar (yaappu)
The protocols and exceptions for creating poetry is termed as poetic grammar. In this there are two types; asai and aNi.

asai
Letters join together to form asai.

There are two types of asai - nEr asai and nirayasai

Poetic Decorations (aN i)
aNi means beauty, these decorations are not only to just beautify the lines of the poetry but also for comparisons and adding extra meaning to the lines.

Tamil Literature
On the basis of time, Tamil Literature can be classified into three categories. They are:

• Sangam Literature
• Medieval Literature
• Modern Literature

Sangam literature emphasizes on love and bravery. Medieval Literature includes kaappiyams, devotional literature and short literature. In Modern Literature (19th century) liberty, social status, poverty and love are the main topics of discussion.

Sangam Literature
Sangam Literature normally written in the form of poetry can be classified into two categories. They are mElkaNakkku and KeezhkaNakkku

mElkaNakkku Noolkal
mElkaNakkku noolkal consists of eight books of small verses (ettuththogai) and ten books of long verses (paththuppaattu)

ettuththogai
1. n’atriNai
2. kurunthokai
3. pathitruppapaththu
4. paripaadal
5. aingurunooRu
6. kalithogai
7. aganaanooRu
8. puranaanooRu

paththuppattu
1. thirumuruakatrupatai - nakkeerar
2. porunaaraatrupatai - mutathama kaN N iyar
3. chirupaaN aatrupatai - nalloor naththanaar
4. perumpaaN aatrupati - katialoor
5. malaiyaturrukadaam - perungausikanar
6. kurinchipaattu - kapilar
7. mullaippaattu - napputhanaar
8. madhuraikaanchi - maankudi maruthanaar
9. n’edunelvaadai - nakkeerar
10. pattinappaalai - katialoor

KeezhkaNakkku Noolkal
This comprises of eighteen books on human morals.

1. n’aalatiyaar - SamaNa munivarkaL
2. n’aanmaNikatikai - Vilampi naakanaar
3. thirukkuraL - thiruvaLLuvar
4. pazhiamozi n’aanuru - mrunurai araiyanaar
5. innan’ aRpathu - kapilar
6. iniyavai n’aarpathu - poothensenthanaar
7. kaar n’aarpathu - kannan kuthanaar
8. kaLavazhi n’aarpathu - poikaiyaar
9. inthiNai aimpathu - maranporaiyanaar
10. thiN aimozhi aimpathu - kannansenthanaar
11. thiNaimaalai nootraimpathu - kanimethaviyaar
12. kaNNilai - pullangatanaar
13. thirikatukam - nallathanaar
14. chirupanchamoolam - kariyaasan
15. Elaathi - kanimethaviyaar
16. muthumozhi kaanchi - kudulurkilaar
17. aasaarakkovai - peruvain mulaiyaar
18. inthiNai ezhupathu - moovathiyaar

Devotional Literature

Kaapiyam describes the story of an incomparable hero and also consists of many sub-stories. Kaapiyam usually embodies the good qualities that a man should have, the necessary dos and donot's of the citizens of a country, love and about the means to obtain salvation.

Tamil kaapiyam can be divided into aimpem kappiyam (big) and ainchiru kaapiyam (small)

Aimpem kappiyam
The five aimpem kappiyams are:
- silappathigaaram - ilankO vadikaL
- manimEgalai - seeththalai chathanaar
- seevaga chinthaamaNi - thiruthakkathEvar
- vaLayaapadhi - ________
- kundalakEsi - nAkuthanaar

AinChiru kappiyam
The five ainChiru kappiyams are:
- uthayaN akumaara kaaviyam - ______
- n’agakumaara kaaviyam - ______
- yaoO dara kaaviyam - ______
- n’eeIakEsI - ______
- suUMami - thoolamozhithevar

Modern Literature

All literatures written after 19th century from the period of Mahaakavi Bhaarathi are known as modern literatures. Some examples are:
- Bhaarathiyaar kavidhaigaL
- Bhaaradhidhaasan kavidhaigL
- Kalki’s Novels