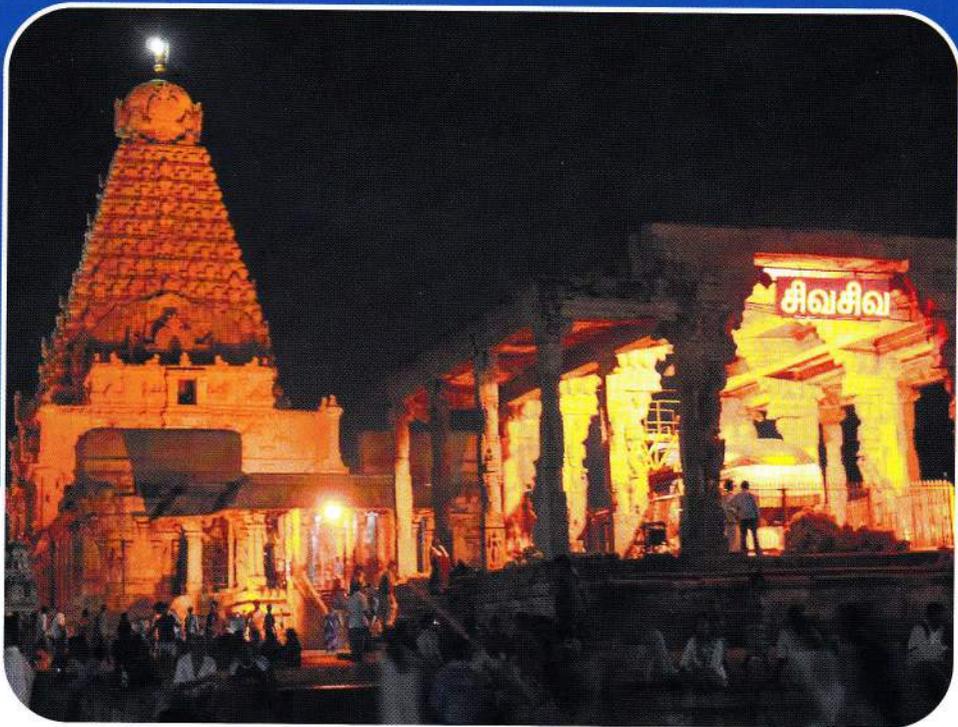




**THE HINDU**

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# Tamil Literature the mosaic of Indian Culture

**K**nowledge and intelligence are the essential qualities that distinguish a human being from other living creatures. While intelligence is innate, and in-born, knowledge is acquired. But both these noble qualities are motivated, nourished and cultured in academic bodies. These institutions of higher learning are widely known as Universities. Ancient India with

its hoary tradition and glorious past has a claim to have had a Sanskrit college during the reign of Pallavas in the sixth century A.D. and much earlier a University at Nalanda in the north of India. Much later in the 19th century, there arose the reputed Madras, Bombay and Calcutta Universities during the British paramourty in India. So, the concept of organised academic learning through the Universities is neither strange nor new to India. Even before the second millennium A.D., there had been Senatus Academicus known as First, Second and Third Cankams for the growth and development of Tamil, the oldest of the Dravidian languages in India.

The Tamil language, in the south of India is known for its antiquity, its richness of vocabulary and its great classical literature. For a long time, its depth, uniqueness and glory were not known to the world outside. The Location of the Tamil University was chosen to be in the outskirts of Thanjavur. This ancient capital of the later Chola dynasty and the granary of the South as it is known from time immemorial, was happily accepted as the site of the University. The Tamil Nadu State Assembly unanimously passed the Tamil University Act in the second week of September 1981 and the first Vice-Chancellor took office a week later, The University Grants Commission accorded a statutory recognition to the university in 1983.

The aims and objectives of this unitary type of university comprise a higher research in Tamilology and advanced study in various other allied branches such as Linguistics, Translation, Lexicography, Music, Drama and Manuscriptology. But this pure research-oriented University introduced academic research by offering M.Phil and Ph.D programmes in 1992 for a few disciplines such as

To speak of the academic outline of the Tamil University, mention may be made of the five faculties, headed by the Deans each.

The Language Faculty with major disciplines such as Literature, Linguistics, Folklore, School of Indian Languages, School of Philosophy and Tribal Studies.

The Faculty of Manuscriptology consists of the Departments of Rare paper Manuscripts, Palm Leaf Manuscripts, Epigraphy and Underwater Archaeology.

The Faculty of Developing Tamil includes the Departments of Tamil Studies in Foreign countries, Translation, Compilation, Sociology and Scientific Tamil

The Faculty of Arts consists of the Departments of Drama, Music and Sculpture.

The Faculty of Science has got in its fold the Departments of Siddha Medicine, Ancient and Earth Sciences, Architecture and the Computer Science.

The functions of each of the Department noted above and briefly enumerated in the order in which they are serialized below.

Both under the Departments and various projects funded by University Grants Commission, Ministry of Human Resources Development, Department of

Science and Technology, etc. various Encyclopaedias, Dictionaries and Compendiums have been compiled and published by the University in the last 26 years of service.



Language, Literature, Translation, Sculpture, History and Architecture. Due to the public demand, even Post graduate programmes had to be included in June 2003.