INTRODUCTION

Origin of Philosophy

To seek happiness and enjoy it is an inborn instinct of the human beings. Largely in the midst of happiness the searching mind is completely overruled by heart and the probing activities of the mind cease to function with its usual force. On the other hand, the worries which equally affect the mind, altogether arouse the mind to investigate the origin and nature of the worries, their causes, the power that operates the universe etc. The introspection leads to generalisation and later to what we may call philosophisation. A body of such generalisations and philosophisations, established by the common experience of the members of the society and proved by logical reasoning form the nucleus of the basic tenets of the later philosophical systems. By this way different schools of philosophy came into existence through long period of history.

The origin of philosophy may in turn be due to a quest for knowledge of a few intelligent people. Philosophy is actually an attempt to satisfy the man's desire for knowledge, which springs from the rational nature of man. Tracing the origin of Indian Philosophy Dr. S. Radhakrishnan sees such an effort in the lives which are bound up with human nature and form their speculative interests.
of our ancient seers and sages, who lived in the forests in pursuit of true knowledge. The huge forests with their wide leafy avenues afforded great opportunities for the devout soul to wander peacefully through them, dream strange dreams and burst forth into joyous songs. World-weary men go out on pilgrimages to these scenes of nature, acquire inward peace, listening to the rush of winds and torrents, the music of birds and leaves, and return whole of heart and fresh in spirit. It was in the āśramas and tapōvanas or forest hermitages that the thinking men of India meditated on the deeper problems of existence. The security of life, the wealth of natural resources, the freedom from worry, the detachment from the cares of existence, and the absence of a tyrannous practical interest, stimulated the higher life of India, with the result that we find from the beginnings of history an impatience of spirit, a love of wisdom and a passion for the saner pursuits of the mind.

The scientists are engaging in such a venture. What the scientists try to unravel the mystery of nature is a kind of searching the philosophy behind all the movements of the universe. In fact the modern branches of science have been developed from philosophy, which was at the early period a synthesis of all human knowledge. Philosophy in the time of Plato meant all those sciences which are bound up with human nature and form the core of man's speculative interests.
In regard to this aspect, the situation in ancient India was no different from that of ancient Greece. Our old poets-philosophers were encyclopaedic in learning and many of them were experts in Medicine, Astronomy, Alchemy etc. The Sankhya philosophy which explains its philosophy in mathematical terms and the Jainism, which talks about atoms as the indivisible constituent of putkalam show the association of Indian philosophical systems with the stages of scientific thinking.

Philosophers now recognise more than ever the value of science for philosophy and science, have come to see that philosophy is no alien subject but a necessary sequel to science. The philosophy of science (including the history and methods of science) has been recognised to be a prominent branch of philosophy in the West. Prof. Dingle shows that philosophy will exert the same healthy influence on science as criticism does on literature.

Etymology of the word philosophy and their equivalents in Sanskrit and Tamil

The word philosophy is derived from the composite Greek noun 'philosophia', which means the love or pursuit of wisdom. Herodotus uses the corresponding verb philosophhein when writing of Solon's travels in search of knowledge;...... philosophy was in origin a very general word for the pursuit of mental excellence. Pythagoras is said to have been the first to call himself a
philosopher (philosophos) but we know so little for certain about him that we cannot tell what nuances of meaning the word had in his usage. In the platonic dialogues it is often used by Socrates to describe a man engaged in the sort of inquiry that he himself pursued:...

The Sanskrit word 'taJvAv means the real thing. The taJvAv is of two kinds Siddha taJvAv and Jada taJvAv. The soul and god are included in the former while the latter includes the physical world.

In Sanskrit the term 'dar}na' is used to describe a system of philosophy, doctrine or sastra. The term 'dar}na' comes from the word 'dr}s' to see. This seeing may be either perceptual observation or conceptual knowledge or intuitional experience. It may be inspection of facts, logical inquiry or insight of soul. Generally, 'dar}nas' mean critical expositions logical surveys, or systems. We do not find the word used in this reference in the early stages of philosophical thought, when philosophy was more intuitional. It shows that 'dar}na' is not an intuition, however much it may be allied to it. Perhaps the word is advisedly used, to indicate a thought system acquired by intuitive experience and sustained by logical argument. Giving these explanations Dr. Radhakrishnan sums up as follows:
Darshana means any scientific account of reality. It is a spiritual perception, a whole view revealed to the soul sense."

In Tamil the word 'kaatci' has a corresponding meaning to that of the Sanskrit word darshana. Kaniyan PuunkunRanaar (PuRam, 192:11) has used this word in the sense of philosophy. The philosophy is referred to as kaatci (352), keyyaRivu (true knowledge) (354) meypporu1 (true thing), (355) and cemporul (the best thing) (358) in KuRal.

**Scope of Philosophy**

The earliest of Greek thinkers whose names were afterward included in histories of philosophy recognised no divisions of knowledge... In the history of western philosophy we find that the detailed study of many of the particular problems with which philosophical speculations originally started became the subject matter of special sciences (Physics, Chemistry, Botany, Astronomy, Geology, Physiology and Anatomy etc.) in course of time.

'At the present day western philosophy has for its main branches

(a) Meta-physics, which discusses the general problems regarding reality - man, nature and God.
(b) **Epistemology or theory of knowledge**, which enquiries into the nature of human knowledge as to how it develops and how far it is able to grasp reality.

(c) **Logic**, which discusses the laws of valid reasoning and other incidental problems,

(d) **Ethics**, which investigates the problems of morality, such as the standard of moral judgement, the highest goal of human life and other cognate problems and

(e) **Aesthetics**, which deals with the problems of beauty.

Another recent development of philosophy in the West called Axiology, is devoted to the discussion of the problem of values. Sociology is also sometimes regarded as a branch of philosophy and often discussed along with Ethics. Psychology has been so long a very important branch of philosophy, but the tendency now is to treat it as one of the special sciences like Physics and Chemistry and give it a place independent of philosophy.

Though the basic problems of philosophy have been the same in the East as in the West and the chief solutions have striking similarities, yet the methods of philosophical enquiry differ in certain respects and the processes of the development of
philosophical thought also vary. Indian philosophy discusses the different problems of Metaphysics, Ethics, Logic, Psychology and Epistemology, but generally it does not discuss them separately. Every problem is discussed by the Indian philosophy from all possible approaches, metaphysical, ethical, logical, physiological and epistemological. This tendency has been called by some thinkers like Sir B.N. Seal, the synthetic outlook of Indian Philosophy.¹²

**Indian Versus Western Philosophy: Chief differences¹³**

1. The philosophic speculation in India had been started before time immemorial by the unknown sages and seers, whereas in the West the philosophic inquiry was started by some known philosopher of known age.

2. The Western philosophy started with an inquiry of the outer world, whereas Indian philosophy originated with the investigation of soul and its nature and the enquiry of the outer world was started later only to supplement the researches of soul and its nature.

3. In Western countries, the philosophy was largely a hobby of a few higher ups. But Indian philosophy was started with an intention to find a solution to the human miseries. Indian philosophers neglected even food and dress for
for the sake of investigation of truth. Dr. Radhakrishnan has the following to say about the aims and directions of Indian philosophy:

"Indian philosophy has its interest in the haunts of men, and not in supra-lunar solitudes. It takes its origin in life, and enters back into life after passing through the schools."

4. In the west the theories of philosophy are divested from practical life. But in India the true kinship between life and theory is realised and the philosophy becomes a way of life, an approach to spiritual realisation. There has been no teaching, not even the Sankhya, which remained a mere word of mouth or dogma of schools. Every doctrine is turned into a passionate conviction, stirring the heart of man and quickening his breath.

5. In the West the religion and philosophy have always been considered as different, whereas in India the two are not differentiated from each other.

Schools of Indian Philosophy

According to a traditional principle of classification, the schools or systems of Indian philosophy are divided into two broad classes, namely, orthodox (āstika) and heterodox (nāstika).
Samkhya, yoga, Nyaya-vaisesika, Mimamsa, the three main schools of Vedanta associated with the names of Sankara, Ramanuja and Madhva and Saiva-Siddhanta are the chief orthodox systems. These are regarded as orthodox (āstika), not because they believe in God, but because they accept the authority of the Vedas. The Mimamsa and the Sankhya do not believe in God as the creator of the world, yet they are called orthodox (āstika), because they believe in the authoritativeness of the Vedas. Under the other class of heterodox systems, the chief three are the schools of Materialists like the Carvakas, Buddhists and Jains. They are called heterodox (nastika) because they do not believe in the authority of Vedas. The following table will show the inter-relationships and differences of the schools of Indian Philosophy.

Schools of Indian Philosophy

- Schools rejecting Vedic authority (Heterodox or Nastika eg. carvaka, Buddhism, Jainism)
- Schools not rejecting Vedic authority (Orthodox or Astika)

- Schools directly based on Vedic texts
- School based on Agamas in addition to Vedas (eg. Saiva-Siddhanta)

- Schools based on Independent grounds (eg. Samkhya, yoga, Nyaya, Vaisesika)
- Schools emphasising the ritualistic aspect of the Vedas (viz. Purva Mimamsa)
- Schools emphasising the speculative aspect of the Vedas (viz. Advaita vedanta, Visistadvaita vedanta, Dvaita Vedanta)
Development of Indian Philosophical systems

In India, the different systems of philosophy were developed parallelly and they have persisted through the lives and teachings of the active followers. Each school criticises and influences every other school.

The Vedas are directly or indirectly responsible for most of the philosophical speculations. In the orthodox schools, next to Vedas and Upanishads we find the Sutra literature marking the definite beginning of systematic philosophical thinking. A Sutra work consists of a collection of many sutras or aphorisms, which sum up and systematise the philosophic teachings of Vedas and Upanishads, handed down orally and arranged into different Chapters and sections according to different topics.

Eg. Brahma Sutra of Badarayana for Vedanta
Jaimini Sutra for Mimamsa
Gotama Sutra for Nyaya
Sutra of Kanada for Vaisesika
Patanjali Sutra for Yoga
Sivagnana Bodam for Saiva Siddhanta of Meykantaar (Tamil)

Then arose the various commentaries or Bhashyas on the sutras, which later proved the way for the rise of different schools in a particular system itself. Commentaries on commentaries and handbooks were written in later times. The history of
the development of the heterodox doctrines is also more or less the same. But, they started from the teachings of the founders of the philosophy.

The origin of philosophical speculation in South India

Prof. K.A. Nilakanta Sastri opines that in philosophy, as in religion, South India derived its initial impulse from the North, but in course of centuries made striking contribution to thought and practice. But a close look at the later history of philosophical systems in South India and whole of India points to the existence of some degree of indigenous philosophic speculations in the soil of South India even before the impact of Northern influences were felt.

The philosophic legacy of the Dravidians and of South India may be seen in the background of the claim of a good share in the philosophic speculations of the Upanidhads and the high philosophical attainments of the Indus culture, which is considered to be of Dravidian in origin.

Asko Paropola says that the decipherment of Indus script, which is Dravidian according to him, enables us to fully understand the background of classical Indian philosophy, the speculative thinking of the Brahma and Upanisad literature, which is based on hidden connection between different kinds of things. The term
Upanisad itself seems to be a translation of the Dravidian iitu, which means both equation and to 'set down'.

There are also views that the present Sanskrit Vedas are later translations of the original works, which were earlier written in Tamil and that the major part of the Sanskrit Vedas were written by Dravidians in Sanskrit.

Myths and legends of Gods and Heroes current among the Austrics and Dravidians, long antedating the period of Aryan advent in India (C. 1500 B.C.), appear to have survived the Aryan impact and to have been rendered into the Aryan language in late and garbled or 'improved' versions, accommodating themselves to the Aryan God and Hero-worlds; and it is these myths and legends of gods, kings and sages which we largely find in the Puranas. Prof. S.K. Chatterji elucidates in detail the extent to which the Aryan religion has been modified by Austric and Dravidian contacts and says that it is a sufficient indication of the profound influences exerted by the latter in the evolution of the Hindu religion. In the present day texture of Hindu culture and religion the warp appears to be the Dravidian and the weft Aryan. He further says that 'in culture, speaking in the Indian way, one may say that over twelve annas in the rupee is of non-Aryan origin.

The monuments of the megalithic culture (C. 1000 - 400 B.C) suggest the existence of some kind of abstract thinking of souls, worlds etc. in the early period of South India, though it may not be of a very high order.
The Sangam literature, the earliest extant written documents of South India records the great ideals and values that were held in high esteem by the ancient people. However in the time of the Sangam classics the major systems of philosophy like Miimaamsa, yoga, Buddhism, Jainism, were known in South India. The 'aRivars' referred to in Tolkaappiyam (Tol.PuRa.20:5) may be a sort of local philosophers like the later Siddhars. Siddha like mystics are also referred in Sangam classics (KuRun.130). The references of Sages meditating in the forests (Perumpaan.484-500) and of logicians (Malaipatu.112) were also found in Sangam classics. We do not know exactly how much they have contributed to the philosophic thinking of the South.

The Agamas, which form one of the important sources of philosophical speculation in South India in later times are considered to be the product of South India, though they were written in Sanskrit. The old manuscripts of the Agamas are found only in South India. Agamic religion and philosophy is based on temple worship, contrary to that of Vedic tradition, which knows nothing of temple worship except sacrifice and so the Agamas are considered to be Dravidian in origin. The agamic tradition might have the megalithism as one of its sources of origin.
It is a known fact that South India enjoys a pride of place in the history of Indian thought by having first formulated the schools like Purva Miimaamsa by Kumarila and Prabhakara and Vedanta by Sankara, Ramanuja and Madhva. We do not know to what extent the evolution and popularisation of Purva Miimaamsa by Kumarila and Prabhakara was due to the association of Vedic ritualism with the temple worship of Agamic tradition of South India. Ramanuja's Visistadvaita is said to have been influenced by the Pancaaraatra Agama tradition of South. The Tamil Saiva-Siddhanta considers Agamas as its primary source and the Vedas only as a secondary source.

Judging from the above facts it may not be unreasonable to say that the non-vedic Agamas are the consummation of the philosophic speculation which had existed in the early period of history that exerted considerable influence on the later day religion and philosophy of South India. But because of the fusion of the Vedic and local cultures and the consequent syncretism of religion and philosophy in later times, it is very difficult to distinguish in detail the distinctive and original contributions of the South in the field of philosophy.

Apart from the Vaidika philosophy, the non-vedic philosophies have also been enriched by the contributions of the South. Jains and Buddhists were there even in Sangam days.
They were in the height of their glory in the post-Sangam period. Their ethical works have no small influence on the evolution of Tamil thought. Manimeekalai records the high traditions of philosophical discussions in all systems prevalent in ancient Tamilnadu. Kaâ€’ci of Caattanaar’s period was centre of Buddhist learning attracting students and scholars not only from all parts of India but also from overseas. In a monastery at Kaâ€’ci, Aravana atikal (Acarya Dharmapaala?) taught Manimeekalai, the Buddhist logic and philosophy. The same Kaâ€’ci produced the great lustres of Buddhism in the persons of Dignaga, Dharmapala, Paramaartta, Bodhidharma - all contemporaries and Dharmakiirtti, who carried the flame of faith to the nook and corner of India and even to the Far East.23

Kaâ€’ci, Paataliputram (modern Tiruppaatirippuliyuur) and Madurai were the important Jain centres, where great Jain teachers lived and produced many works.

Philosophic literature of South India

South India expressed its philosophical revelations to the world in Sanskrit, as it was the fashion of the day and because of the pre-eminent position of Sanskrit in the intellectual and religious field. But Tamil as the language of the masses and with a continuous grammatical and literary tradition of a higher order had also been used for the propagation and exposition of philosophical thinking.
The Agama literature, one of the cardinal sources of Tamil Saiva Siddhanta was written in Sanskrit, though produced in South India. They date back to the pre-Christian era as far back as 1500 B.C. They are traditionally classified as Saiva-Agamas, Vaishnava Agamas and Sakta Agamas. The Saiva Agamas alone are 28 in number. The Agamas are first mentioned by Sundaramurti, and the Tirumāntiram of Trumuular (ninth Century) is the earliest work to reflect the theology of the Agamas in Tamil. Agamic terminology is also found in the writings of Maanikkavaacakar who frequently speaks of the Agamas as revealed by Siva and gives open and strong expression to his dislike of the Vedanta of Sankara.

Sanskrit was used by the great South Indian Acharyas Sankara and Ramanuja to expound their philosophical systems. Sanskrit continued to enjoy an eminent position in the field of philosophy in the medieval and late medieval period. But slowly Tamil came to be used more extensively for philosophical expositions, and even original works in philosophy were written in Tamil. In the medieval period the original works of Saiva-Siddhanta were written first in Tamil. The KoRRavankuti Umaapaticivaaccaariyaar wrote both in Tamil and Sanskrit. As Prof.T.P.Meenakshisundaranar remarked: "only through Tamil literature and culture an understanding of Tamil Saiva-Siddhanta and Vaishnavism is possible".26
**Saiva Siddhanta works in Tamil**

The trend to write full fledged philosophical literature in Tamil was first established in Chola period. From 12th to 19th Century a host of original works, commentaries on original works, guide books etc. were written in Tamil. The history of Tamil literature in this period is only the history of these works.

Fourteen works are traditionally considered as the basic literature for Saiva Siddhanta. But a number of other equally important works are also there. The first work of Saiva Siddhanta appeared in 12th Century A.D. and then there was a continuous succession of authors and works. The following are some of the Tamil Saiva Siddhanta works:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the work</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Period</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Tiruvuntuinyaar</td>
<td>Tiruviyalur Uyyavatateevvar</td>
<td>12 A.D.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. TirukkaliRRuppatiyaar</td>
<td>Tirukkatavur Uyyavatateevvar</td>
<td>12 A.D.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Civanaanapootam</td>
<td>Meykantaar</td>
<td>13 A.D.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Civanaana cittiyaar</td>
<td>Arulanati Civaaccaariyaar</td>
<td>13 A.D.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Irupaa irupahtu</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Umaivilakkam</td>
<td>Manavaacakaarkatantaar</td>
<td>13 A.D.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Civappirakaacam</td>
<td>Umapati Civaaccaariyaar</td>
<td>14 A.D.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
8. Tiruvarutpayan

9. Vinaa venpaa

10. PoerRip paRRotai

11. Kotikkavi

12. Nencvitu tuutu

13. caRkaRpa niraakaranam

14. UnmaaRi vilakkam

Other important works

1. naanaamirtam

2. tattuvappirakaacam

3. Catamanikkoovai

4. TukalaRupootam

5. Tattuva vilakkam

6. olivilotukkam

7. civaDeRippirakaacam

Umaapati Civaacc Sriaariyaar haR has also written Sanskrit works entitled Pouskara Bhaaasyam and Sata ratna Sankrakam. A fuller account of the Saiva Siddhanta and other works can be seen in the century wise history of Tamil Literature by M. Arunachalam (12th-15th Centuries).

These sastraic works of Saiva Siddhanta were preceded by devotional works of great saints in earlier centuries. They are compiled under the twelve Tirumuruais, which later provided a source for the sastraic works.
The earliest of the collections in the 12 Tirumurais goes back to 4th or 5th Century A.D. (i.e. Karrakaal Ammaiyaar). Tirumantiram, which is included as the tenth TirumuRai is dated between 4th and 6th Centuries A.D. It is the first Tamil work to give the theology of Agamas.

The devotional songs of Campantar, Appar, Cuntarar and Maanikkavaacakkar in the TirumuRais (1 to 8) form another part of the history of philosophical thinking in South India. They synthesised the philosophy of the Vedas with that of the indigenous tradition in Tamil and propagated it to the masses in chaste language, tinged with fine music.

In the Vaishnava tradition, the Naalaayira Tivviya Pirapantam, the collected works of the Aalvaars corresponds to the TirumuRai in Saivaite Tradition. Though Ramanuja, though wrote his works in Sanskrit, he had a great veneration for the Tamil Aalvaars and in fact he owed much to the life and teachings of the Aalvaars. In the medieval days Vaishnavaites preferred Sanskrit for their philosophical exposition, though they had great respect for Tamil. However translations like Bhagavat Gita of Sri Bhattanaar (C 13 A.D.) were produced. Numerous commentaries on Naalaayira Tivviyappirapantam, in a hybrid language of Tamil and Sanskrit called Manippiravaalam were also written in this period.
Vedanta works

Tattuvaraayar's (15 A.D.), Peruntirattu, Kuruntirattu, PaatutuRai etc. are works explaining Vedanta in Tamil works like Kaivalliyav navaniitam are also worth mentioning here. Viira Saiva tradition also produced many works in Tamil. Civappirakaacar, Caantaliinkar etc. wrote many works.

Works of other philosophical systems

Jains and Buddhists had also written works in Tamil to propagate their philosophy. Arunkalacceppu (12 A.D.), Civacamootanai (14 A.D.) are some of the Jain works. Cittaanat tokai, no longer extant now is said to be a Buddhistic work on philosophy.

Logical Kaaviya works

In the history of Jainism and Buddhism, we see logical works written in the form of Kaaviyaas. Kuntalakeeci (8th A.D.) which is no longer extant except a few verses, is said to have been written to uphold the Buddhistic doctrines against the Jainism. The Niilakeeci, a Jain work of 10th Century A.D. takes the arguments of Kuntalakeeci and controverts them in detail. Piikkalam, Ancanam, Tattuvataricanam, Kaalakeeci are said to be works of this nature. Other Kaaviyaas, like Jiivaka cintaamani (10th A.D.)
Cuulaamani (10th A.D.), Yacootara kaaviyam (13th A.D.), Meerumantira puraanam (14th A.D.), Naakakumaara kaaviyam etc. contain sections dealing with the philosophic tenets of their religion interspersed with the plot of the story. Similar sections are also available in Periyapuraanam (12th or 13th A.D.), Tiruvaatavuur Atikal puraanam (16th A.D.) etc. All these were intended to popularise the philosophical teachings to the common man.

All these attempts can be traced back to Manimeekalai (Canto 27), where we see the earliest attempt to present different philosophical concepts in Tamil in one place. It is not known whether Manimeekalai is the first attempt or it was one among the similar works in Tamil. Perhaps independent works, exclusively for the exposition of different philosophies must have been in Tamil. The later history of philosophical literature in Tamil presupposes such an effort in the early days. The fine technical terms used by caattanaar could have been the result of some preceding effort in Tamil philosophical writing.

Ethical works

Tamil has a rich tradition of ethical works, written by followers of different religious philosophies. The earliest of the works are collected under Patinenkiilikkanakku collections.
The following eleven works summarise the ethical codes of the ancient Tamils:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the work</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Religion</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Tirukkuṟaḷ</td>
<td>Tiruvalluvar</td>
<td>Jain</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Naalatiyaar</td>
<td>400 authors</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Paḷamoli</td>
<td>Munṟuṟai Araiyanaar</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Cīṟupancaṁuulam</td>
<td>Maakkaṟiyaacaan</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Eelaati</td>
<td>Kanieetāviyaar</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Tirikatukam</td>
<td>Nallaattanaar</td>
<td>Vaishnavaites</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Naanmanikkatikai</td>
<td>Vilampīṇākanaar</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Mutumolikkāñci</td>
<td>Kuṟtaḷuvkkilaar</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Innaa Naṟṟpatu</td>
<td>Kapilateevar</td>
<td>Vaidika</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Iniyavai Naṟṟpatu</td>
<td>Puutanceentanaar</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Aacaarṛkoovai</td>
<td>Peruvaayin Mulliyaar</td>
<td>Saivaite</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These works were written from a period starting from roughly 2nd A.D. to 9th A.D. Among these, the great kuṟaḷ, which transcends all the narrowness of the creeds and sects of religions is one of the greatest landmarks in the philosophical literature of the Tamils. About Kuṟaḷ Albert Schweitzer says that there hardly exists in the literature of the world collection of maxims in which we find so much lofty wisdom. After a comparison of Kuṟaḷ with other world ethical works he concludes: So a natural
and ethical world and life affirmation of this kind was present among the people of India at the beginning of our era, although nothing of it can be found in Brahmanism, Buddhism and Bhagavat Gita Hinduism. It gradually penetrates into Hindu thought through the great religious teachers who had sprung from the lower castes and lived among and felt with the people. 31

Naalatiyaar, Palamoli, Cirupaäcamuulam and Eelaati are written by Jain teachers and the rest by Vaishnavaites and Saivaites. So we see in all these works all the ethical concepts of the chief philosophical systems of India, except perhaps Buddhism.

**Sangam Classics**

The history of philosophic literature in Tamil will logically takes one to the Sangam classics, the earliest extant literature of the Tamils. A proper history of Tamilian thought should start from this literature. 32 The later growth and development of philosophical thinking can be traced back to this literature at least partially. The roots of Saiva Siddhanta, the choicest product of the Dravidian intellect, have been traced back to this literature by some scholars. 33 Though Sangam poetry is more secular, compared to the later works, it is not thoroughly void of any religion or philosophy as is made out by some scholars.
Sangam literature, being the earliest available record of the Dravidian race, reflects the state of culture and living, which is more materialistic in nature. This realistic attitude to life had its own philosophical roots. A positive view of life based on chivalry charity and love with a complete awareness of the transitoriness of the worldly things, characterises the earliest philosophy of the Tamils.

Most of the Sangam poets can be called as the earliest and indigenous poet philosophers of the land. The name of the Tamil poet Kapilar reminds us of the founder of Sankhya philosophy with the same name. The references to the logicians, and saints in Sangam literature indicate an awareness of philosophic thinking in these days. Sangam literature shows the influence of Vedism, Buddhism, Jainism, Sankhya, Yoga, and Mimamsa.

Though major portion of the Sangam poetry deals with love and war, evidences are not altogether lacking in Sangam poems to reconstruct the philosophy of ancient Tamils and to know the influences of other philosophies. Paripaatåtal and TirumurukaarRuppataj are singularly useful for a depth study of religion and philosophy. The puRam poetry, especially Kaañçittinai poems are of great use in gleaning the philosophy of the ancient Tamils. The poems by poets like Kaniyan PuunãkunRanaar and uulooccanaar are more illuminating.
The implicit references found in Akam poems are also useful in reconstructing the philosophy of the Tamils. With this idea in mind an effort is made in this thesis to reconstruct the religion and philosophy of Sangam Tamils.


4. Ibid. p. 314.

6. Ibid. p. 324.


10. Nandakrishnan, S. Ceylon, p. 43.

11. Ibid. p. 44.


REFERENCES

1. 'ellaa uyirkkum inpam enpatu taan amarantu varuuum meevar Raakum Tol.Poruliyal 29

2. ....immaic ceytana yaanaril nalvinai ummaip payankol oruani ulantu it tiruttaku maamanik koluntutan poontatu Cilampu.15:91-93

3. 'periyoor eettum perumpeyar iyavul' Muruku.274.

4. This is clearly illustrated in the life of Buddha who had been driven by the sight of the diseased, old man and a corpse to seek the philosophical revelation for the redemption of the human beings from the worldly miseries.


6. Ibid. p.31.


11. Ibid, p.44.


14. Radhakrishnan, S. op. cit. p. 25
   'The language of the Rg-veda is as yet purely Aryan or Indo-European in its forms, structure, and spirit, but its phonetics is already affected by Dravidian; and it has already begun to borrow words from Dravidian (and from kōl); not only names of objects previously unknown to the Aryans, but also a few words of ideas.........'
   also cf. Subramoniam, V.I. 'Dravidian words in Sanskrit' Tamil Culture, Vol. IX, No. 3 (1961) p. 4
   '......according to Burrow twenty Dravidian words are found in the Rig-Veda'.
20. Chatterji, S.K. 'Race movements and pre-historic culture'
   Ch. VIII in The History and Culture of the Indian People: The Vedic Age. (1951) p. 165
21. Ibid. (pp. 158-168) p. 164
22. Ibid 164.
24. Nilakanta Sastri, K.A. op.cit.p.93.....(Agamas) are taken to date from fifth to seventh centuries A.D. (Farquhar) or even from before fifth Century (Schomerus)·Lakshmanan, K. op.cit. p.358-359.
26. Meenakshisundaram, T.P. 'Introduction': In the History of Tamil Literature by Dr.M. Varadarajan (1972) Sahitya Academy
27. Venkataswamy, M.S. MaRaintu poona tamil nuulkal (1967)pp.159-60
28. Ibid. pp.159-60.
31. Ibid. pp.200-205
33. Lakshmanan, K. op.cit. p.361.