

TAMIL WIKIPEDIA

A STUDY OF CHALLENGES AND
POTENTIALS IN RELATION TO SOCIO-
CULTURAL CONTEXT OF THE
TAMIL COMMUNITY

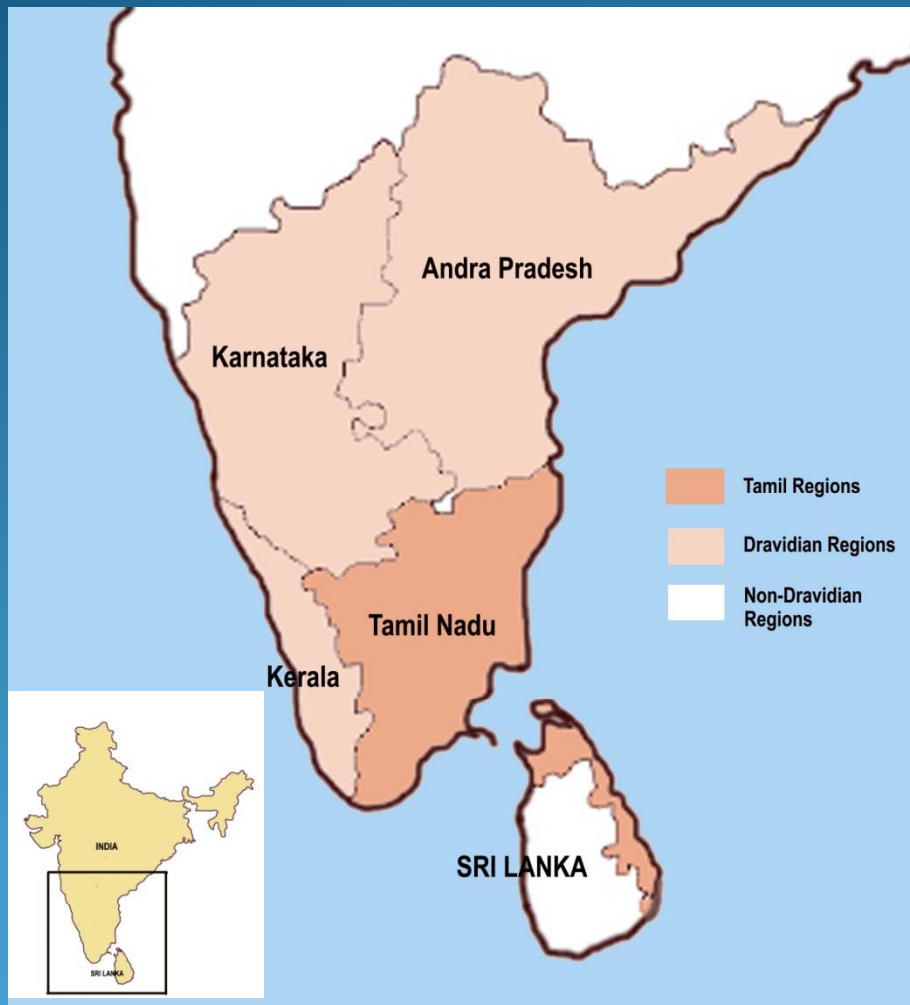
By

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Tamil Community



- **Native Regions:**
 - Tamil Nadu state of India
 - Northern and Eastern Provinces of Sri Lanka
- **Other Countries:**
 - Colonial Period Migrations
 - Malaysia, Singapore, South Africa and some others
 - Recent Migration
 - UK, USA, Canada, Australia and Other European Countries
- **Population:**
 - approx. 70 million

Tamil Community

Language

- Belongs to Dravidian Family of Languages
- One of the Oldest Living Language of the World
- 19th Most Spoken Language in the World
- Literature and Grammatical Works spanning more than 2000+ Years

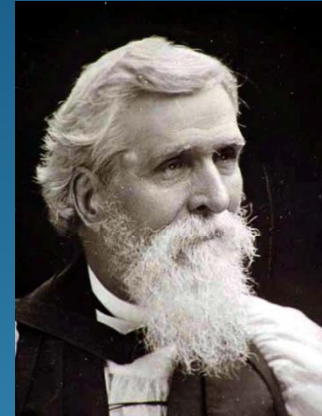


A palmyrah leaf manuscript of the oldest grammatical work in Tamil

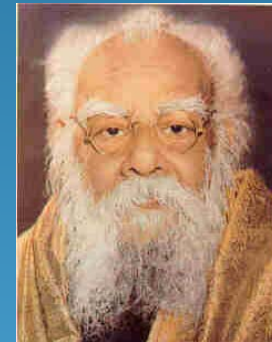
Tamil Community

Socio-Cultural Background

- Relatively Independent and Unique Early Culture
- Religious and Cultural Influence from North
- Sanskrit Domination
- Caldwell's Contribution
- Tamil Nationalism
- Colonial Rule and English
- Rapid Development and Tamil
- Post-Independence and Globalization



Robert Caldwell,
Father of Dravidian
Linguistics



E. V. Ramasami,
Architect of the self
respect movement



Maraimalai Adigal,
Father of Pure Tamil
Movement

Tamil Wikipedia

Current Status

- Completed of 6 ½ years.
- More than 23,000 Articles
- 19,200 Registered Users
- 50,000 – 95,000 Views/day
- 85 Active Contributors (May 2010)



Tamil Wikipedia

Current Status – Statistical Information

	Articles					Database	
	count		mean	larger than		size (MB)	words (M)
	official	>200 ch	bytes	>0.5 kb	>2.0 kb		
May 2010	23k	22k	3320	83%	28%	200	8.6
Rank (World)	69	53	11	19	29	31	42
Rank (India)	5	2	2	2	2	2	2
Top	hi (55k)	hi (35k)	kn (4497)	ml (84%)	ml (32%)	hi (213)	hi (13.3)

Tamil Wikipedia

Challenges and Socio-Cultural Background

- Contributor Participation
 - Low Level of Participation
 - Required Technology not Available or not Affordable
 - Not Familiar with Relevant Tools
 - Many Don't Know about Tamil Wikipedia
 - Socio-Cultural Reasons
 - Imbalance in Geographic Distribution
 - Low Level of Participation from Native Regions.

Tamil Wikipedia

Challenges and Socio-Cultural Background

- Imbalance in Geographic Distribution of Contributors

Geographic Distribution of Tamil Wikipedia Users						
Location	Population (%)		Users (%)		Edits (%)	
India	94.3	98.6	43.6	59.0	24.1	35.3
Sri Lanka	4.3		15.4		11.2	
Other	1.4	1.4	41.0	41.0	64.7	64.7

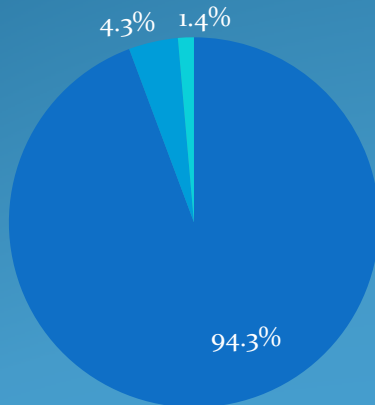
Tamil Wikipedia

Challenges and Socio-Cultural Background

- Imbalance in Geographic Distribution of Contributors

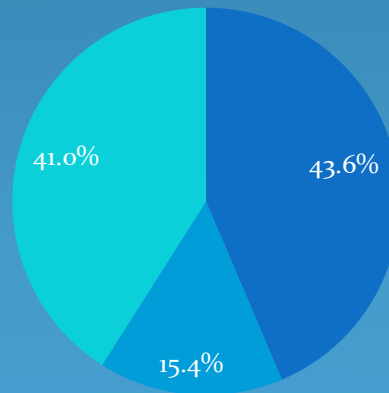
Population

■ India ■ Sri Lanka ■ Others



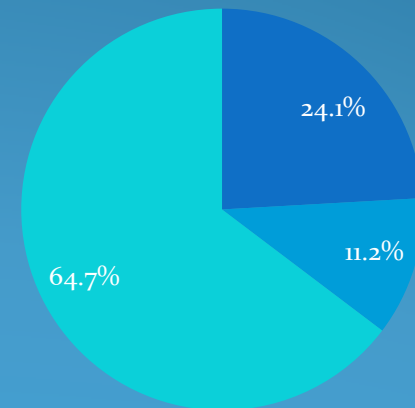
Users

■ India ■ Sri Lanka ■ Others



User Edits

■ India ■ Sri Lanka ■ Others



Tamil Wikipedia

Challenges and Socio-Cultural Background

- Language Issues
 - Terminology & Its Social Significance
 - Lack of Terms for New Concepts and Things
 - Tendency to Avoid Foreign Terms
 - Search for Pure Tamil Terms
 - Controversies

Tamil Wikipedia

Challenges and Socio-Cultural Background

- Language Issues
 - Geographically Separated groups and Language
 - Tamil Nadu Tamil and Sri Lankan Tamil
 - General Vocabulary Differences
 - Differences in Technical Terms
 - Differences in Transliterating English Words

Tamil Wikipedia

Meeting the Challenges

- Handling Language Issues
- Efforts to Improve Contributor Participation
- Popularizing Tamil Wikipedia
- Responses to Government Initiatives

Tamil Wikipedia

Meeting the Challenges

- Handling Language Issues
 - General Terminology Issues
 - Extensive Discussions
 - Terminology Help Pages
 - User Assistance
 - Developing Wiktionary
 - Issues related to Geographically Separated Groups
 - Agreement
 - Using Redirect Facility

Tamil Wikipedia

Meeting the Challenges

- Efforts to Improve Contributor Participation
 - Popularizing Tamil Wikipedia
 - Blogs and Online Medias
 - Print Media
 - Books
 - Seminars and other Similar programs
 - Radio
 - Familiarization
 - Workshops

Tamil Wikipedia

Meeting the Challenges

- Efforts to Improve Contributor Participation - Workshops



News about Wiki workshop in a local news paper



User Ravi explaining a point in a workshop



User Prof. V. K . Introducing Tamil Wikipedia



Workshop in Bangalore. User Sundar with participants



User Kalaiarasi introducing Tamil Wikipedia to a group of participants in Norway

Tamil Wikipedia

Meeting the Challenges

- Government Initiatives
 - Article Competition
 - Good Opportunity to Introduce Tamil Wikipedia to Large Number of Potential Contributors
 - Starting Point to Build Good Relationship with Government

Tamil Wikipedia

Meeting the Challenges

- Government Initiatives - Article Competition



News item in a popular news paper about article competition



Secretary to the Ministry of Information releasing the poster in a press conference

The poster is titled 'உலகத் தமிழ் இணைய மாநாடு' (World Tamil Internet Conference) and 'தமிழ்நாடு அரசு - தமிழ் விக்கிப்பீடியா இணைப்பு நடத்தும் விக்கிப்பீடியா தகவல் பக்கங்கள் போட்டி' (Tamil Nadu Government - Tamil Wikipedia Connection Organizing Wikipedia Information Page Competition). It features a photo of the Deputy Chief Minister and lists prizes such as a laptop, digital camera, and MP3 player. The website 'www.tamilinternetconference.org' is mentioned at the bottom.

The poster published by Tamil Nadu government for announcing the article competition



A first prize winner receiving her prize from the deputy Chief Minister



A second prize winner receiving his prize

Tamil Wikipedia

Meeting the Challenges

- Government Initiatives – Seminars & Workshops



A Panel discussion on Blogs and Wikipedia



User Theni M. Subramani presenting a paper on Tamil Wikipedia



Tamil Wikipedia users in the exhibition stall



Tamil Wikipedia workshop stall in the exhibition

Tamil Wikipedia

Meeting the Challenges

- Developing Sister Wikipedia Projects
 - Wiktionary
 - Wikisource
 - Wikinews

Tamil Wikipedia

Potentials

- Role as Encyclopedia
 - Producing an encyclopedia in traditional way (Print form) would be very costly and time consuming.
 - Publishing a Tamil Encyclopedia and revising it at regular interval is almost impossible.
 - Wikipedia has potential for overcoming such problems and provide an opportunity to create a comprehensive Encyclopedia.

Tamil Wikipedia

Potentials

- Role Beyond its Use as an Encyclopedia
 - Co-ordination Platform for the Use and Standardization of Terminology.
 - Facilitates Co-ordination between Various community Groups.
 - Helping to Widen Knowledge Domain.
 - Powerful Medium for Knowledge Transfer and Distribution.

Tamil Wikipedia

Future Plans

- Continuation of the Following:
 - Increasing number of useful articles
 - Increasing Useful Content
 - Improving the quality in terms of completeness, accuracy, verifiability and Images
- Campaigns to Increase the Contributor Participation
- Bringing in Suitable Technology to Make Contribution Easy