Kashi Tamil Sangamam 5.0

Mains: *PIB Analysis*

About Kashi Tamil Sangamam

- Kashi Tamil Sangamam celebrates the age-old civilisational bonds between Tamil Nadu and Kashi, the two ancient seats of learning.
- Many people from the two states have visited Kashi and Rameswaram as part of their religious traditions, reflecting the cultural bonds between the northern and southern parts of India.
- Many people from Tamil Nadu have lived around Hanuman Ghat and Kedar Ghat for generations. Swami Kumaragurupara of Dharmapuram Adheenam came to Kashi from Tamil Nadu and built the Kedareshwar Temple at Kedar Ghat.
- The 200-year-old Kumaraswamy Mutt and Markandeya Ashram are situated at the same ghat.
- Tenkasi in Tamil Nadu is called the Kashi of the South. Banaras Hindu University has a chair dedicated to Mahakavi Subramania Bharati.
- The broader objective of the Sangamam, set out when it was announced in 2022, is to bring the two knowledge and cultural traditions closer, create an understanding of shared heritage and deepen the people-to-people bond between the regions.
- The first Kashi Tamil Sangamam was held in 2022, during Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav.
- Over its four editions, it has facilitated exchanges of knowledge, language, traditions and lived experiences between the two regions.
- The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, has called it a "vibrant programme which deepens the spirit of 'Ek Bharat, Shreshtha Bharat'".
- In each edition, students, teachers, artisans, scholars, spiritual leaders and cultural practitioners from Tamil Nadu have spent a week to ten days in Kashi.
- They have visited the temples of Kashi, places with Tamil links and the nearby cities of Ayodhya and Prayagraj.
- The participants also met their Kashi counterparts at seminars, talks, cultural programmes, sporting events and exhibitions.
- The Sangamam is organised by the Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Education, in collaboration with IIT Madras, Banaras Hindu University, the Central Institute of Classical Tamil (CICT), Chennai, and the Government of Uttar Pradesh. Several Central Ministries and Departments are also partners, among them Culture, Railways, Tourism and Textiles.

Kashi Tamil Sangamam 5.0: Thirukkural Payilvom

- The fifth edition of the Sangamam will be held from 28 November to 12 December

2026 on the ***theme "Thirukkural Payilvom – Thirukkural Abhyas Karen"*** (Let's Learn Thirukkural).

- The Thirukkural is the classical Tamil text of ethics and conduct.
- Its author, Thiruvalluvar, set it in three parts: Aram (virtue), Porul (wealth), and Inbam (love).
- The text has 1,330 couplets, and CICT has translated it into 25 Indian languages, including all 22 languages of the Eighth Schedule to the Constitution, in addition to several foreign languages and Braille.
- The aims of the fifth edition are:
    - To bring the ethical and moral wisdom of the Thirukkural closer to the youth and to learners across the country.
    - To encourage the reading, understanding and application of the values of the text in everyday life, through educational engagement, multilingual resources and wider public outreach.
    - To promote wider understanding of the Thirukkural among students from diverse academic disciplines and linguistic backgrounds.

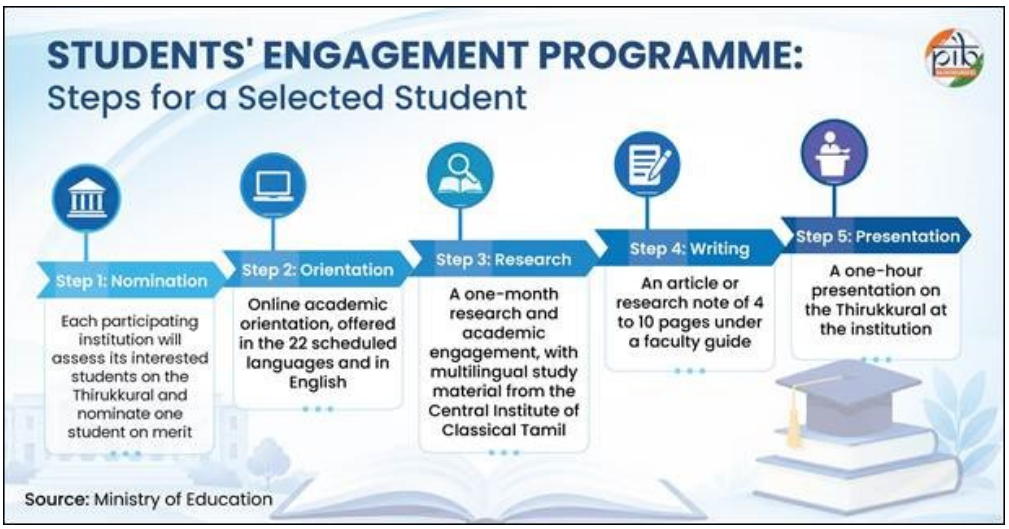


Key Initiatives of Kashi Tamil Sangamam 5.0

Students' Engagement Programme

- A nationwide Students' Engagement Programme will be undertaken through 1,000 Higher Education Institutions to promote wider understanding of the Thirukkural among students from diverse academic disciplines and linguistic backgrounds.
- It will include structured study, research and campus-based activities.
- Each participating institution will assess its interested students on the Thirukkural and nominate one student on merit.
- The selected students will attend an online academic orientation, offered in the 22 scheduled languages and in English.
- A one-month research and academic engagement will follow, with multilingual study material from CICT. Each eligible student will be entitled to a stipend of ₹10,000, subject to the programme guidelines and completion of the prescribed requirements.
- Each student will write an article or research note of 4 to 10 pages under a faculty

guide, and give a one-hour presentation on the Thirukkural at the institution.



Thirukkural Teaching in Schools and Colleges of Uttar Pradesh

- During the Sangamam, 50 teachers from Tamil Nadu will visit Uttar Pradesh and teach the Thirukkural in schools and colleges.
- Thirukkural experts from Tamil Nadu will also visit schools and colleges in Varanasi.
- They will introduce students to the core values of the text through orientation modules, interactive sessions and quizzes.

Reading Sessions in Schools

- The National Book Trust, in association with the Rashtriya e-Pustakalaya, will conduct interactive sessions in schools in Varanasi on reading habits, storytelling and creative activities.

Inauguration, Conference and Cultural Programme

- Kashi Tamil Sangamam 5.0 will be inaugurated on 28 November 2026, and its valedictory function will be held on 12 December 2026.
- The students selected under the Students' Engagement Programme will join both functions online.
- Banaras Hindu University will co-host a National Conference on the Thirukkural, with the Bharatiya Bhasha Samiti as a partner.
- The Ministry of Culture will provide cultural troupes, screenings of the Thirukkural short films and cultural showcases at the venues. Handicraft and handloom outlets from Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh will be set up for the delegates at the main venue.

Digital and Public Outreach

- Kashi Tamil Sangamam 5.0 will also use technology to make the teachings of the Thirukkural accessible to a wider audience across India.
- The Thirukkural Multilingual App of CICT carries all 1,330 couplets with translations into the 22 scheduled languages.
- CICT's programme for the edition also includes short animated videos and films on

selected couplets, and Thirukkural audiobooks.
- Couplets with translations are planned for passenger information systems and signboards at railway stations, airports and highway toll plazas, in coordination with Indian Railways, the Airports Authority of India and the National Highways Authority of India.

Delegates and Itinerary

- Around 1,400 participants from Tamil Nadu, organised into seven groups of around 200 persons each, will undertake an eight-day journey.
- It comprises four days of travel and four days of visits and structured programmes.
- The itinerary covers Varanasi, Prayagraj and Ayodhya, with cultural, academic, domain-specific and spiritual engagements.
- The participants come from seven categories:
    - Students
    - Teachers
    - Writers and Media Professionals
    - Agriculture and Allied Sectors
    - Professionals and Artisans
    - Women
    - Spiritual leaders
- During their stay in Varanasi, delegates will visit prominent religious, historical and cultural sites, including Kashi Vishwanath Temple, Sarnath or BHU, Ramnagar Fort and Bharat Mata Temple.
- The itinerary also includes Ganga Aarti, Ganga Snan, academic sessions and cultural programmes.
- Delegates will subsequently visit the Triveni Sangam in Prayagraj and Shri Ram Temple in Ayodhya.
- A special Tamil heritage circuit will take delegates to Mahakavi Subramania Bharati's ancestral house, Kedar Ghat and Kashi Madam in Little Tamil Nadu, along with an academic interaction at BHU's Tamil Department.

Earlier Editions

- The first four editions of Kashi Tamil Sangamam, held between 2022 and 2025, strengthened cultural, linguistic and historical ties between Tamil Nadu and Kashi.
- Building on this legacy, the fifth edition seeks to further deepen people-to-people connections and celebrate the shared heritage of the two regions.

Kashi Tamil Sangamam 1.0 (November to December 2022)

- The first edition was held from November to December 2022. Over 2,500 people from Tamil Nadu, representing 12 different walks of life, travelled to Varanasi, Prayagraj and Ayodhya on eight-day tours.
- The event was organised at BHU, Varanasi.
- The Prime Minister inaugurated it at Varanasi on 19 November 2022.
- The delegates took part in seminars and site visits to meet people of similar trades, professions and interests.

- A month-long exhibition of handlooms, handicrafts, One District One Product items, books, documentaries, cuisine and art forms of the two regions was put up in Kashi, alongside academic exchanges, seminars and discussions between experts and scholars.

Kashi Tamil Sangamam 2.0 (December 2023)

- The second edition was held from 17 to 30 December 2023 at Namo Ghat in Varanasi, and was inaugurated by the Prime Minister.
- It featured the first real-time, app-based translation of the Prime Minister's speech into Tamil for the visiting delegates.
- The programme for the edition provided for eight-day tours of Varanasi, Prayagraj and Ayodhya by train.
- The delegates were to travel in seven groups, each named after a sacred river such as the Ganga, Yamuna, Saraswati, Sindhu, Narmada, Godavari and Cauvery.
- It included stalls of art, handlooms, handicrafts and cuisine of Tamil Nadu and Kashi, cultural programmes at Namo Ghat and academic exchanges on literature, ancient texts, philosophy, spirituality, music, dance, drama, yoga, Ayurveda and modern innovations.

Kashi Tamil Sangamam 3.0 (February 2025)

- The third edition took place from 15 to 24 February 2025. It highlighted the legacy of Sage Agasthyar and linked the Indian knowledge tradition with contemporary discourse.
- Around 1,000 delegates from Tamil Nadu took part, along with an additional 200 students from various Central Universities.
- The programme for the edition included, for the first time, a visit to the Mahakumbh at Prayagraj and to the newly inaugurated Ram Mandir in Ayodhya.
- An exhibition on Sage Agasthyar, with seminars, workshops and book releases on his scholarly work, was planned in Kashi.
- The edition was in line with the emphasis of the National Education Policy 2020 on integrating Indian Knowledge Systems with modern systems of knowledge.
- The edition featured performances by over 869 artists and 190 local folk and classical groups, and drew nearly 2 lakh visitors.

Kashi Tamil Sangamam 4.0 (December 2025)

- The fourth edition, held from 2 to 15 December 2025, focused on the theme “Tamil Karkalam - Let us learn Tamil”.
- It brought together over 1,400 delegates from Tamil Nadu across seven categories.
- A key highlight was the arrival of 50 trained Tamil teachers and coordinators in Varanasi to teach basic Tamil to more than 1,500 students across 50 schools.
- Under the Tamil Karpom initiative, Tamil learning study tours to Tamil Nadu were held for 300 college students from Kashi.
- The edition also featured the Sage Agastya Vehicle Expedition from Tenkasi to Kashi, highlighting the shared cultural and civilisational heritage of the two regions.
- Indian Railways operated seven special trains for delegates, while translations of the

ancient Tamil text Tolkappiyam into four Indian and six foreign languages were released.
- The edition concluded with a valedictory function at Rameswaram on 30 December 2025.

Carrying Forward a Shared Civilisational Legacy

- Kashi Tamil Sangamam reflects India's longstanding tradition of cultural exchange, where language, literature, knowledge and shared practices have connected communities across regions.
- By bringing people together through direct interaction and learning, the initiative seeks to deepen mutual understanding and strengthen the bonds between Tamil Nadu and Kashi.
- With its focus on the Thirukkural, the fifth edition extends this engagement beyond the traditional setting of the Sangamam to educational institutions and young learners across the country.
- By encouraging the study of a classical Tamil text across linguistic and regional boundaries, it seeks to make India's literary and philosophical heritage more accessible to a wider audience.
- In doing so, Kashi Tamil Sangamam continues to advance the spirit of Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat, fostering national integration through shared knowledge, cultural understanding and people-to-people connections.

Reference

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