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## kasi tamil sangamam

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The month long old KASHI TAMIL SANGAMAM 2022 came to a glorious end on 16th December. It is an initiative by Bharat government as a part of “Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav” and to uphold the Spirit of “Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat”. It was conceived, conceptualized, ideated, initiated and implemented like a military operation by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi. His office was monitoring 24 x 7 basis.

It is also to debunk the pseudo Tamil Chauvinists’s opt repeated canard that BJP and PM Modi are anti-Tamil, against Tamil language and are trying hard to impose Hindi on the people of Tamils. It is a master stroke of the Modi Sarkar to revive the cultural, historical, civilizational and spiritual links between Varanasi, known popularly as Kasi and Tamil Nadu. TN Governor RN Ravi says “Centuries of colonization took a heavy toll on our nation’s fabrics. Concerted attempts have been made to mutilate and distort the very idea of Bharat. Vested interests interpreted her long celebrated diversities as differences”.

The Kasi Tamil Sangamam was mooted by a high-powered panel for the promotion of Indian language (Bharat Basha Samithi-BBS) set up ministry of education. BBS chairman Chamu Krishna Sastri prepared concept note at the end of September and final decision was taken to hold the event in October 20. Union Education Minister Dharmendra Prathan and UP CM Adityanath have instructed officials to treat the visitors from TN as the “PM’s personal guests”. IIT Chennai extended technical support for the event with its director prof.dr. V. Kamakoti monitoring personally.



PM Modi inaugurated the event on 19th last month, referring kasi as the cultural capital of Bharat. He said ancient Indian philosophers like Adi sankarar, Kanchi senior seer Chandrasekara Saraswathi, Ramanunjachariar travelled to Kasi to spread and to expand their religious learnings. In Tamil Nadu, there are places with names like Tenkasi, Sivakasi etc. PM

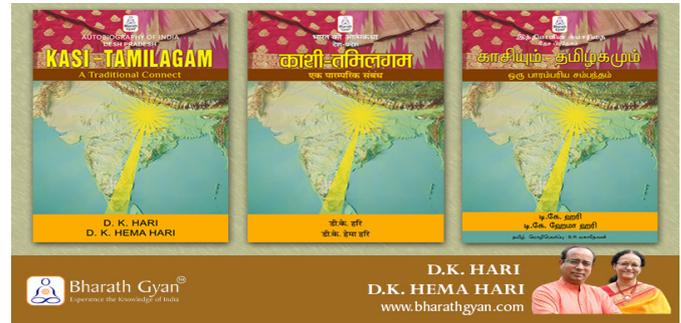
released translation of the Thirukkural in 13 languages and announced a chair dedicated to the Tamil poet Subramanya Bharathi at Banaras Hindu University (BHU). Chamu Krishna Sastri said “ the inter mingling of visitors from TN and the locals shows innate oneness as well mutual affection despite language barriers. The 100-150 years old concept of Dravidian identity is just a political narrative to hoodwink the mass. KTS has a striking similarity with BJP’s Ram Mandir issue.



A note from the Bharat government says “Kasi , which is one of oldest living cities of the world endowed with a civilizational and cultural continuum that is unparalleled. Like Kasi, Tamil Nadu is another cradle of culture, arts , crafts, literature with a wealth of knowledge available in Tamil, one of the classic, language. While ancient and traditional knowledge systems exist across all regions of India, across all ages and in multiple languages, Tamil Nadu and Kashi, and the area around it, are two of the oldest and most important of such centers. Both these centers have been fountainheads of knowledge in the intellectual, cultural, spiritual and artisanal realms. Varanasi, known popularly as Kashi in Tamil Nadu, is one of the oldest living cities of the world, endowed with a civilizational and cultural continuum that is unparalleled. Knowledge, philosophy, culture, devotion to Gods, literature, Indian arts and crafts have all flourished in this holy city. Tamil Nadu on the other hand is another cradle of culture, arts, crafts, literature, with a wealth of knowledge available in Tamil language, which is the most ancient language in the world”.



DK Hari and Hema Hari in their specially brought out book “ Autobiography of India Desh Pradesh Kasi-Tamilagam – A traditional connect trace the links between Kasi and Tamil Nadu. “ The glow of Kasi can be felt across the Tamil Nadu too in names. People, local legends, the tone of measure, cultural expressions and so on. It helped them bond together to jointly keep the glow alive across times for generations to relish. We see a distinct connect between Kasi and Tamilagam, where perhaps Rishi Agastya is one of the first to have visited Tamilagam from Kasi . The link between these two regions goes back to Puranic times and is ageless and timeless. It represents a te connect between the Ganga fed land and the Cauvery fed land “ says the authors.



According government release, “ What is more important is the fact that these two manifestations of Indian Culture, though geographically distant, have had deep and vibrant links over centuries. Knowledge seekers from near and far used to come to Kashi, and places in and around like Prayagraj, Ayo-dhya, Gorakhpur, which are internally connected as Knowledge Hubs. Similarly, in Tamil Nadu, places like Kanchipuram, Puducherry, Madurai, Thanjavur, Rameshwaram, Srirangam, Kanyakumari, Thoothukudi, Tirunelveli, Tamraparani River have been excellent knowledge centres/ Ghatikasthanas and have contributed for various ancient industries like ship-building, pottery, weaving, idol making, river dams, mining, warfare, weaponry etc. The ancient connect between the two centres of knowledge is evident in many walks of life like similar themes in literature, presence of the name of Kashi in every village in Tamil Nadu etc. Many household in Tamilnadu adopted the name of Kailasanatha and Kashinatha for naming their children, like those who are living in Kashi and Uttar Pradesh. Hence exploring and re-discovering the links between these two centers can lead to the creation of important bodies of knowledge both in the intellectual and practical realms. Both Kasi and Kanchi in Tamil Nadu are the ancient knowledge cities of Bharat – Kasi for the north

and Kanchi for the south. There an interesting link between silk and knowledge which are intertwined. Devotees take soil from Rameswaram to mix with Ganga and take Ganga water to perform abhisekam to lord Ramanatha. In epic Ramayana, we find Lord Ram worshipped Viswa Lingam.



Yatris from North visit Rameswaram, Srirangam, Madurai, Kanchi and other temples while people from south go to Kasi, Gaya, Ayodhya, Madura, Badrinath, Haridwar, Kedarnath. It is intended to get Mukthi. Kanchi Seer undertook yatra in 1933 covering 2200kms on foot. In olden days, when no transport facilities were available, people used to walk months together to have darshan of lord. Some lived their fag end of life to die at Kasi to attain moksha. In Brahmin marriages, there is a ritual, where the father of the bride would request the bridegroom with folded hands to abort his Kasi yatra and accept his daughter and marry her.



To revive this age old link and tradition, PM Modi had inaugurated the Kasi Tamil Sangamam on 16th last month. Modi's love for Tamil Nadu, its language are unparalleled. He never missed an opportunity to praise the Tamil and quote scriptures like Thirukkural. With this Sangamam event, his government through ministries of Education, culture and Railways brought over 2,592 people from Tam-

il Nadu in 12 groups by train to Varanasi, Ayodhya, Prayagraj. They were divided into group of professionals, writers, common men, farmers, sportspersons, artisans etc. They were given a royal treatment from departure to Kasi and back to Chennai. En route they were accorded a rousing red carpet welcome by BJP functionaries. With armed escort, the visitors from Tamil Nadu were taken to Kasi Viswanathar Temple, Kala Bhairavar temple, holy dip at Ganga, and visit to Bharathiyar house and Ganga Aarathi from curise stationed opposite to it. From there, they visited Sanchi, Banaras Hindu University. At Prayagaraj, they arranged them to have a holy dip at the confluence of Ganga, Yamuna and Saraswathi rivers. At the end of the tour, the Tamil Nadu people were allowed specially to visit the Ram temple mandir complex, where construction works are in full swing and a darshan of Lord Ram. Most of the tourists, whom your correspondent spoke, praised the government, especially the PM Modi, ministries, IIT Madras, IRCTC, UP Yogi Adityanath government and others involved in this grand exercise for giving attention to minute details to avoid any convenience to them. "We felt like a royal king wherever we go all the seven days. We are lucky and it will remain fresh and vivid in our memories till our last breath", they said. Most of them felt the same way people from North India to be brought to Tamil Nadu to see the Tamil Nadu connection but the Dravidian stock government will not extend co-operation as it will help BJP to gain political mileage and eat into its savior of Tamil language monopoly.

