

Department of Employment and Training

TNPSC GROUP II MAINS - UNIT II

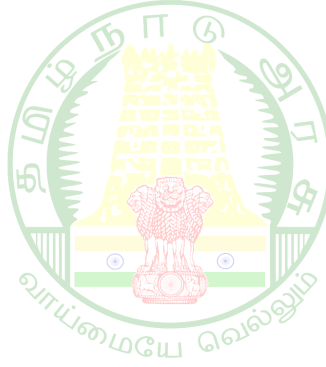
Course: TNPSC Group II Mains Material

Subject: Tamil Society

Topic: Tamil Nadu State Government Symbols - Experts in Cultural Fields - Folk Dances, Folk Music, Folk Drama, and World Tamil Conferences.

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**Director,
Department of Employment and Training.**

Symbols of Tamil Nadu

Tamil Nadu, originally part of the Madras Presidency under British rule, became a distinct state in 1956. Its symbols reflect the state's rich heritage, unity, and cultural pride. These official symbols include emblems, songs, and other elements that collectively represent Tamil Nadu's identity and ethos.

State Emblem

- The state emblem of Tamil Nadu was adopted in 1949 during the tenure of Chief Minister Omandur Ramasamy Reddy.
- **Designer:** R. Krishna Rao, an artist from Madurai and a former principal of the Government College of Fine Arts and Crafts, Chennai, designed the emblem. He was approached in 1948 while serving as a professor of applied arts.
- **Description:**
 - Features the **Lion Capital of Ashoka**, excluding the bell lotus foundation.
 - Flanked by two **Indian flags**.
 - Includes a depiction of the **Srivilliputhur Temple Gopuram**, symbolizing Tamil Nadu's architectural heritage.
 - Encircled by inscriptions in **Tamil script**:
 - **Top:** தமிழ் நாடு அரசு (*Tamil Nadu Arasu* - "Government of Tamil Nadu").
 - **Bottom:** வாய்மையே வெல்லும் (*Vaymaiye Vellum* - "Truth Alone Triumphs"), a Tamil translation of the national motto *Satyameva Jayate*.
- **Unique Feature:** Tamil Nadu's emblem is the only one in India to include the national flag and a temple tower.

State Motto

- **Phrase:** "Vaaymaiya Vellum" (*Truth Alone Triumphs*).
- **Origin:** Derived from the *Mundaka Upanishad*, a part of the sacred Hindu Vedas.
- **Change:** Translated into Tamil in 1969 during Chief Minister C. N. Annadurai's tenure.

State Anthem

- **Title:** *Tamilttāy Vālttu*.
- **Writer:** Manonmaniam Sundaranar.
- **Composer:** M. S. Viswanathan.
- **Adoption:** Officially adopted as the state anthem on **23 November 1970**. Played or sung at official government functions, educational institutions, and public events.
 - Daily sung in schools across Tamil Nadu during morning assemblies.
 - State functions begin with *Tamilttāy Vālttu* and conclude with the Indian National Anthem.

State Day: Tamil Nadu Day

- Tamil Nadu was established on **1 November 1956**, following the linguistic reorganization of states.
- **Renaming:** On **18 July 1967**, the state was officially renamed from Madras State to Tamil Nadu.
- **Celebrations:**
 - In 2019, the Tamil Nadu government announced **1 November** as Tamil Nadu Day to mark the state's formation.
 - In **July 2022**, this was shifted to **18 July**, aligning with the renaming of the state, under the leadership of Chief Minister M. K. Stalin.

State Sport: Kabaddi

- Kabaddi is a traditional contact team sport deeply rooted in Indian culture, particularly in Tamil Nadu. It is recognized as the **state sport**.
- **Gameplay:**
 - Played between two teams of **seven players** each.
 - The objective is for a single player, called the **raider**, to:
 - Enter the opposing team's court.
 - Touch out as many players as possible.
 - Return to their own half within **30 seconds** without being tackled.
 - Points are scored:
 - By the raider for tagging opponents.
 - By the opposing team for stopping the raider.
- **Significance:** Kabaddi symbolizes teamwork, strategy, agility, and endurance, reflecting Tamil Nadu's emphasis on physical fitness and traditional sports.

State Dance Form: Bharatanatyam

- **Origins:**
 - **Bharatanatyam**, also known as **Paratanāṭṭiyam**, originated in Tamil Nadu.
 - It is one of the **eight classical dance forms** recognized by the Sangeet Natak Akademi and the **oldest classical dance tradition in India**.
 - It evolved from **Sadiraattam**, a dance form exclusive to temple rituals, which was renamed **Bharatanatyam** in 1932 by E. Krishna Iyer and Rukmini Devi Arundale.
- **Cultural Themes:**
 - Bharatanatyam expresses **South Indian religious themes** and **spiritual ideas**, especially of **Shaivism** and **Hinduism**.
- **Features:**
 - **Posture:** Fixed upper torso with bent legs and knees flexed (**Aramandi**).
 - **Gestures:** A rich vocabulary of sign language using hands, eyes, and facial expressions.

- **Traditions (Banis):** Unique styles specific to gurus or schools, often named after their places of origin.
- **Historical Context:**
 - The **colonial British government banned Bharatanatyam** in 1910, viewing it as inappropriate.
 - Revival efforts by E. Krishna Iyer and Rukmini Devi Arundale modernized and popularized the art form.
 - The **Thanjavur Quartet**—brothers Chinnayya, Ponnayya, Sivanandam, and Vadivelu—formalized the structure of modern Bharatanatyam during the 19th century.
 - Its theoretical roots are found in:
 - **Kootha Nool** (Tamil text).
 - **Natya Shastra**, a Sanskrit text attributed to **Bharata Muni**.

State Animal: Nilgiri Tahr

- **Scientific Name:** *Nilgiritragus hylocrius*
- **Tamil Name:** Nilgiri Varaiyaadu
- **Habitat:** Endemic to the Nilgiri Hills and the southern regions of the Western and Eastern Ghats in Tamil Nadu.
- **Characteristics:**
 - The only species in the genus *Nilgiritragus*.
 - Related to sheep of the genus *Ovis*.
 - Stocky with short, coarse fur and a bristly mane.
 - Males are larger and darker than females, weighing 80–100 kg and standing about 100 cm tall at the shoulder.
 - Both sexes have curved horns, up to 40 cm in males and 30 cm in females.
 - Mature males develop a light grey "saddleback" patch on their backs.

State Bird: Common Emerald Dove

- **Scientific Name:** *Chalcophaps indica*
- **Tamil Name:** Maragadhappuraa
- **Range:** Native to the tropical and subtropical regions of the Indian Subcontinent and Southeast Asia.
- **Other Names:** Green Dove, Green-Winged Pigeon
- **Description:**
 - Stocky, medium-sized pigeon, 23–27 cm long.
 - First described in 1743 by English naturalist George Edwards, who referred to it as the "Green Wing'd Dove".

State Insect: Tamil Yeoman

- **Scientific Name:** *Cirrochroa thais*
- **Tamil Name:** Tamil Maravan
- **Habitat:** Found in the tropical forest areas of Tamil Nadu, Sri Lanka, and India.
- **Family:** Nymphalidae
- **Significance:** Known for its vibrant colors and unique patterns, representing the state's biodiversity.

State Flower: Flame Lily

- **Scientific Name:** *Gloriosa superba*
- **Tamil Name:** Chengaandhal
- **Description:**
 - Belongs to the Colchicaceae family.
 - Herbaceous perennial with a fleshy rhizome.
 - Climbing plant that uses modified leaf-tip tendrils, growing up to 4 meters.
 - Leaves are lance-shaped, 13–20 cm long, and alternately or oppositely arranged.

State Fruit: Jackfruit

- **Scientific Name:** *Artocarpus heterophyllus*
- **Tamil Name:** Palaapalam
- **Characteristics:**
 - Largest tree fruit, weighing up to 55 kg, 90 cm in length, and 50 cm in diameter.
 - A mature tree can produce 200 fruits annually, with older trees yielding up to 500 fruits.
 - Composed of hundreds to thousands of individual flowers; the fleshy petals of unripe fruits are edible.

State Tree: Palm Tree

- **Scientific Name:** *Borassus flabellifer*
- **Tamil Name:** Panai Maram
- **Description:**
 - A genus of fan palms, native to tropical regions of Africa, Asia, and Papua New Guinea.
 - Leaves are fan-shaped, 2–3 meters long, with spines along the petiole margins.
 - Fruits are spherical, 150–250 mm wide, and contain one to three large seeds.

Folk Dance

Karakattam:

One of the most cherished traditional art forms, practiced for centuries.

- It involves balancing a **pot** or **small vessel** on the head while dancing rhythmically to the accompanying music.
- Instruments like **Naiyandi melam**, **nadaswaram**, **thavil**, and **pambai** are used.
- Both men and women perform this art form together.
- In **Silappatikaram**, the term “**Kudakkoothu**” is believed to refer to Karakattam.
- This art form is popular in districts like **Madurai**, **Dindigul**, **Tiruchirappalli**, **Thanjavur**, **Coimbatore**, and **Tirunelveli** in Tamil Nadu.

Mayilattam:

- A dance where a performer conceals themselves within a peacock-shaped structure.
- The dance mimics the movements of a peacock to the rhythm of **Naiyandi melam**.
- Mayilattam often complements **Karakattam** performances.

Kavadiattam:

- Involves dancing while carrying a **Kavadi**, a decorated bamboo structure balanced across the shoulders.
- The ends of the Kavadi are adorned with **peacock feathers** and other decorative elements.
- A significant part of Tamil culture, symbolizing devotion and spirituality.

Oyilattam:

- A group dance where participants wrap themselves in a single-colored cloth like a **turban** and wear anklets.
- Performed with vigor and grandeur.
- Both **youths and elders** participate together, symbolizing unity and enthusiasm.

Devarattam:

- Considered a dance of the celestial beings.
- Performed exclusively by men.
- Accompanied by instruments like the **Deva Dundhubi**, which resembles the **Urumi** drum.

Servaiattam:

- Similar to Devarattam in performance style.
- Uses instruments like **Servai Palagai** and **Semakkalam**.

Poikkal Kuthirai Attam:

- A dance where performers wear a **wooden horse costume**, creating the illusion of riding a horse.
- Often performed in **king and queen costumes**.

- Instruments like **Naiyandi melam** and **nadaswaram** are used.
- Known as **Kachchi Ghodi** in Rajasthan and **Kuthirakali** in Kerala.

Thappattam:

- The history, economic usage, and cultural contributions of Thappattam need detailed exploration.
- The origin and evolution of the **Thappu** drum, its nomenclature, and its rhythmic patterns should be comprehensively documented.

Parai:

- The historical context of the **Parai drum**, its references in Tamil literature, and its social significance should be highlighted.
- The role of **Parai music** in traditional Tamil ceremonies and rituals is essential to note.

Puli Attam:

- An in-depth analysis of the artistic expression of **Puli Attam** (Tiger Dance) and the cultural background surrounding it is necessary.

Therukoothu:

- The culture, origins, and association of Therukoothu with religious worship and societal narratives should be detailed.
- Further documentation of its widespread applications and the artistic potential of its performance styles is recommended.

Folk Songs

- Folk songs are a reflection of a community's civilization, culture, and art.
- They are sung by rural people during work to prevent fatigue and express their life experiences.
- These songs record people's emotions and memories naturally, without embellishment.
- Despite their antiquity, they still resonate with the essence of the soil and maintain their melodic charm.
- They are known by various names such as **Nadodi Paadal (Nomadic Songs)**, **Pamara Paadal (Common Folk Songs)**, **Marabu Vazhi Paadal (Traditional Songs)**, **Etti Ezhutha Kavithai (Oral Poems)**, **Makkal Paadal (People's Songs)**, **Paramparai Paadal (Heritage Songs)**, and **Nattaar Paadal (Community Songs)**.
- **Forms of Folk Songs:**
 - **Lullabies (Thalaattu Paadal)**
 - **Ritual Songs (Themmaangu Paadal)**

- **Children's Songs (Vilayaattu Paadal)**
- **Group Songs (Kummi Paadal)**
- **Lamentation Songs (Oppaari Paadal)**
- **Work Songs (Thozhil Paadal)**
- **Worship Songs (Vaazhappattu Paadal)**
- **Connection to Folk Art Forms:**
 - Folk songs enhance and complement various art forms like **Villupaatu, Bommalattam (Puppet Shows), Therukoothu (Street Theater), Karagattam, Oyilattam, and Kummiattam.**
 - These songs bring out the emotional depth and vibrancy of these artistic expressions.
- **Example Song (Daughter Mourning Her Mother):**
 - "If placed on the ground, my golden feet will ache.
If laid on the floor, my silver anklets will hurt."
 - "You cradled me on your chest and taught me to walk.
You rocked me on your shoulders, guiding my steps."
 - "You fed me with ghee, and I will never forget your love.
You nurtured me with milk, and I will never forget your care."
 - "Now the shadow of a pot cools me, but it can't match a mother's love.
Though water quenches thirst, it can't compare to a mother's care."
- **Sundara Kavirayar (18th Century Poet):**
 - Sundara Kavirayar was a poet of the late 18th century, renowned for recognizing the value of farming.
 - Supported by figures like Arunachala Duraikann of Ettayapuram, his works celebrated the life and importance of agricultural practices.
- **Meaning (Riddle Song):**
 - The song describes an entity with **ten legs, three heads, six eyes, and four mouths**, all observed in one place, bringing joy and astonishment.
 - It symbolizes two oxen yoked to a plow with a farmer guiding them, illustrating the grandeur of farming.
- **Explanation:**
 - **Ten legs:** The eight legs of two oxen and the farmer's two legs.
 - **Three heads:** The heads of the two oxen and the farmer.
 - **Six eyes:** Four eyes of the oxen and the farmer's two eyes.
 - **Four mouths:** The mouths of the oxen, the farmer, and the plowshare's furrow mouth.

Drama Art in Tamil Nadu

Uniqueness of Tamil Drama

- Tamil language holds a unique distinction not found in other languages, celebrated as **Muthamizh**—encompassing literature, music, and drama.

- Drama, or **Nadaga Tamil**, is a vital third segment of this division, developing progressively from ancient times to the modern stage.

Origins and Evolution

- Tamil drama has ancient roots, originating from **role-playing instincts**. Humans have an innate desire to imitate others, which laid the foundation for drama.
- Early forms include **wooden puppet shows**, which evolved into **leather puppet shows** and **shadow plays**, becoming popular forms of folk entertainment.

From Puppetry to Live Acting

- Initially, inanimate objects like puppets were used to enact stories.
- Over time, live human actors took the stage, donning costumes and performing with song and dance.
- This evolution led to sophisticated forms like **Natya (classical dance-drama)** and modern **Nataka (drama)**, shaping today's theatrical traditions.

References to Drama in Literature

- **Silappatikaram:**
 - Mentions the existence of drama halls and dramatic performances.
 - Describes "**Koothu**", a term referring to both **Natya** (dance) and **Nataka** (drama).
 - Differentiates **Nattiyam** (dance to a tune) from **Nadagam** (enactment of a story).
- **Adiyarkunallar's Commentary:**
 - Provides insights into different forms of **Koothu** and drama texts in his commentary on Silappatikaram.
- **Tolkappiyam:**
 - The ancient Tamil grammar text alludes to elements of **drama performance**.

Notable Contributions to Drama

- **Ilango Adigal and Parithimar Kalaigal:**
 - Authored works on the rules, methods of writing, and acting techniques for drama.
- **Swami Vipulananda and Maraimalai Adigal:**
 - Conducted research on Tamil drama, as seen in their works "**Mathanga Soolamani**" and "**Sakuntalam**".
- **Pammal Sambandha Mudaliar:**
 - Authored "**Nataga Tamil**", a significant study of professional Tamil theater.

Development Over Centuries

- **17th Century:** Introduction of **Nondi Nadagams** (moralistic plays):

- These plays featured a flawed character who eventually reformed after enduring hardships.
- **18th Century:**
 - Creation of **musical dramas**, such as "**Nandanar Charithram**" by Gopalakrishna Bharathi.
 - Most plays were based on epics like **Mahabharata** and **Ramayana**.
- **19th Century:**
 - Rise of **social reform plays**, reflecting societal changes and promoting progressive ideas.
 - Simplified formats replaced long overnight performances, reducing the duration to three hours.

Street Theatre (Theru Koothu)

Street theatre, or *Theru Koothu*, is a traditional form of folk theatre performed in rural Tamil Nadu, often centered on mythological stories, historical events, and moral values.

- It combines music, dance, and dialogues to entertain and educate audiences.

The Role of the Kattiyakkaran

The *Kattiyakkaran* (Narrator/Compere) plays a pivotal role in *Theru Koothu*.

- **Introduction and Coordination:**
 - Introduces characters and organizes the flow of the play.
 - Ensures the story progresses cohesively.
- **Engagement with the Audience:**
 - Adds humor and addresses societal issues to captivate the audience.
 - Acts as a bridge between the characters and spectators.

Responsibilities

- Guides actors by offering cues and humorous remarks.
- Keeps the performance engaging by incorporating contemporary events and satirical elements.
- Enthusiastically manages the play throughout the night.

Costumes and Makeup

- Vibrant outfits, such as colorful upper garments and skirts, accompanied by accessories like crowns, shoulder pads, and chest ornaments.
- Female characters may wear sarees with minimal jewelry for authenticity.

Themes Explored

- Folk tales, mythological stories, and epics like *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana*.
- Social awareness topics infused with humor and wit.

Autonomy in Performance

- The *Kattiyakkaran* ensures flexibility in storytelling by adjusting the length and content of the play.
- Directly interacts with the audience, reflecting their thoughts and concerns.

Alternative Names

The *Kattiyakkaran* is also referred to by names such as *Komali* (Clown), *Kaavalkaran* (Guardian), *Buffoon*, *Sabaiyalangaran* (Ornament of the Stage), and *Vidushakan* (Jester).

Voice of the People

- Serves as the voice of the common people, representing their emotions and opinions.
- Carries the play's essence until the conclusion, leaving a lasting impact on the audience.

Notable Personalities in Tamil Drama

1. **Sankaradas Swamigal (1867 - 1922)**
 - Merged traditional music and dance with modern Tamil theatre.
 - Introduced the **Boys Company**, a children's drama group.
 - Focused on dialogues and characters derived from ancient stories.
 - Emphasized songs as an integral part of his plays.
 - Known as the leader of Tamil drama.
2. **Madurakavi Bhaskara Das (1892 - 1952)**
 - Dramatist during India's freedom struggle.
 - Spread nationalist messages through songs in his plays.
 - Adapted to colonial restrictions by embedding political themes in his works.
 - Plays like **Bhagat Singh's execution** and **Mahatma Gandhi's non-violence** were key themes.
 - Works gained international recognition through **His Master's Voice** records.
3. **Bammal Sambandhanar (1873 - 1964)**
 - Known as the father of Tamil drama.
 - Introduced realistic social themes and dialogues in Tamil theatre.
 - Created the **anti-story drama** genre.
 - Translated plays and made significant contributions to modernising Tamil theatre.
 - Famous works include **Manokara**, **Sabapathi**, and **Chandrahari**.
4. **Balamani Ammayar (Late 19th Century)**
 - Led the first all-female drama troupe with 70 women.
 - Focused on social reforms through her plays.
 - Introduced **petromax lamps** on the drama stage.
 - Organized special trains like **Balamani Special** to transport audiences to her performances.

- Known as "Nadaga Arasi."
- 5. **R.S. Manohar (1925 - 2006)**
 - Known as the 'guardian of Tamil drama'.
 - Gained fame for his college drama performances, changing his name to **Manohar** after his role in *Manohar*.
 - Contributed significantly to the recognition of Tamil theatre.
 - Remembered for his influential role in the development of Tamil stage acting.

Tamil Nadu Experts in Cultural Fields

Meenakshi Chitharanjan

- **Profession and Expertise**
 - Renowned Indian classical dancer, teacher, and choreographer.
 - Exponent of the Pandanallur style of Bharatanatyam.
 - Founder of **Kaladiksha**, an institution promoting Bharatanatyam and preserving the Pandanallur tradition.
- **Training and Early Life**
 - Began training at the age of 4 under Pandanallur Chockalingam Pillai and his son, Subbaraya Pillai.
 - Performed her **arangetram** (debut performance) at the age of 9 in 1966.
 - Continued dance studies while pursuing education, even during relocations due to her father's job.
- **Contributions and Teaching**
 - Established **Kaladiksha** in 1991, a Bharatanatyam school, teaching over 100 students at a time.
- **Awards and Honours**
 - **Padma Shri (2008)** – India's fourth highest civilian award.
 - **Kalaimamani Award (1975)** – Government of Tamil Nadu.
 - **Natya Kala Sarathi (2014)** – Sri Parthasarathy Swami Sabha.
 - **Natya Choodamani** – Sri Krishna Gana Sabha.
 - Best Dancer Award (2004) – Madras Music Academy.
 - Awards of Excellence – Rotary Club and Probus Club, Chennai.
- **Professional Recognition**
 - Holds the highest artist grade at **Doordarshan**, India's national broadcaster.
- **Legacy**
 - Prominent contributor to classical dance, striving to preserve and propagate the Pandanallur bani of Bharatanatyam.
 - Acknowledged for her artistry, teaching, and dedication to classical traditions.

Rukmini Devi Arundale (1904–1986)

- **Birth and Early Life:** Born on February 28, 1904, in Madurai, Tamil Nadu, into a culturally rich Brahmin family. Her village, Thiruvayur, had strong ties to the saint Tyagaraja.
- **Marriage and Travels:** Married Dr. George Arundale, an educationist, in 1920. The couple traveled extensively in Europe, lecturing on Indian culture. During her stay in Australia, she trained in Russian Ballet under the legendary ballerina Anna Pavlova.
- **Influence on Dance:** Inspired by Anna Pavlova's advice, Rukmini Devi turned her focus to Indian classical dance, specifically Bharatanatyam. She studied under Pandanallur Meenakshi Sundaram Pillai and later under Gauri Amma and Muthukumar.
- **Contributions:** Rukmini Devi revolutionized Bharatanatyam by reintroducing it as a respected art form, removing its associations with temple devadasis, and giving it a refined stage presentation.
- **Legacy:** She is remembered as a cultural icon who restored the dignity of Bharatanatyam and popularized it globally.

Dr. Padma Subramanyam

- **Birth and Family:** Born on February 4, 1943, in Chennai, Tamil Nadu. Her father, K. Subramanyam, was a renowned film director and freedom fighter. Her mother, Meenakshi, was a versatile artist skilled in Sanskrit, Tamil lyrics, violin, veena, and harmonium.
- **Education and Early Training:** Trained at "Nrutyodaya," a dance school founded by her father in 1942. She is a multifaceted artist, excelling as a dancer, choreographer, singer, composer, research scholar, and author.
- **Contributions:** Padma Subramanyam is known for her innovative approach to Bharatanatyam, blending tradition with her own research on Natya Shastra.
- **Legacy:** Her work has brought new depth to Bharatanatyam, making her one of the most respected figures in Indian classical dance.

Anita Ratnam

- **Early Life and Training:** Trained in Bharatanatyam, Mohiniattam, and Kathakali. She received formal dance training from Adyar K. Lakshmanan and later earned a postgraduate diploma from Rukmini Devi Arundale's Kalakshetra.
- **Education and Career:** Completed her Master's degree in Theatre and Television from the University of New Orleans. Worked as a Television Producer in the United States for around ten years, earning nominations for Emmy and Ace awards.
- **Achievements:** Known for her contributions to the performing arts, Anita Ratnam is a celebrated cultural commentator, choreographer, and promoter of Indian dance internationally.

M. S. Subbulakshmi

Birth:

M. S. Subbulakshmi was born on September 16, 1916, in Madurai. Her full name was Madurai Shanmugavadivu Subbulakshmi.

Family Background:

Her parents were Subramania Iyer, a lawyer, and Shanmugavadivu Ammal, a renowned veena musician.

Musical Training:

M. S. Subbulakshmi learned music from her mother and made her debut at the age of 10 by recording songs for H.M.V. (His Master's Voice). Her gurus included Madurai Srinivasa Iyer, Mayavaram V. V. Krishna Iyer, and the famous Carnatic musician Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer.

Marriage:

In 1940, M. S. Subbulakshmi married Sadasivam, a freedom fighter. Under his guidance, she reached great heights in her musical career. Together, they met Mahatma Gandhi, and in memory of Kasturba Gandhi, M. S. Subbulakshmi organized five music concerts to raise funds.

Musical Contributions:

M. S. Subbulakshmi achieved global recognition in 1966 when she performed at the United Nations General Assembly, captivating the audience with her mesmerizing voice. She also sang compositions written by the late Kanchi Paramacharya Chandrasekarendra Saraswati and former Prime Minister Rajaji for world peace.

International Fame:

She performed in countries like the United Kingdom, Russia, the United States, and France, spreading the glory of Carnatic music worldwide.

Awards and Honors:

- **Padma Bhushan** – 1954
- **Sangeet Natak Akademi Award** – 1956
- **Sangeet Kala Nidhi** – 1968
- **Padma Vibhushan** – 1975
- **Magsaysay Award** – 1974
- **Bharat Ratna** – 1998

Legacy:

M. S. Subbulakshmi made invaluable contributions to Indian classical music and culture. Her legacy continues to inspire countless musicians and music lovers around the world. The highest civilian honor of India, **Bharat Ratna**, was awarded to her in 1998.

T. Balasaraswati (1918–1984)

T. Balasaraswati (1918–1984) was a renowned Indian dancer and singer in the Carnatic tradition, particularly known for her mastery of bharata natyam, a classical South Indian dance form. Below are key points about her life and legacy:

- She began her training at the age of five under the renowned nattuvanar Kandappa Pillai.
- Her debut public performance, or arangetram, took place at the age of seven in Kanchipuram.
- **Artistic Growth:**
 - Balasaraswati became known for her exceptional skill in both nritta (pure dance) and abhinaya (expressive dance).
 - She gained widespread recognition in India during the 1930s, promoted by dancer and choreographer Uday Shankar.
- **Challenges in the 1940s:**
 - During the 1940s, her performances decreased due to health issues and the passage of the Madras Devadasis Prevention of Dedication Act (1947), which prohibited devadasis from performing in temples, associating their dance with prostitution.
- **Revival and Global Recognition:**
 - In the 1950s, interest in bharata natyam rebounded, and Balasaraswati played a key role in this revival.
 - She opened a dance school in association with the Music Academy in Madras, where she trained many new dancers in the traditional style.
 - In contrast to reformists like Rukmini Devi Arundale, Balasaraswati embraced the spiritual and artistic aspects of the traditional bharata natyam, including its depiction of divine love.
- **International Career:**
 - In the 1960s, Balasaraswati began performing internationally in East Asia, Europe, and North America.
 - She held residencies at several institutions in the United States, including Wesleyan University, California Institute of the Arts, and Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival.
- **Awards and Recognition:**
 - She received the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award in 1955 and the Padma Vibhushan in 1977 for her contributions to Indian arts and culture.
 - Balasaraswati was rarely filmed, but a short documentary, *Bala*, was made by filmmaker Satyajit Ray in 1976, and another by her grandson in 2006.
- **Legacy:**
 - Balasaraswati is remembered as one of the foremost exponents of bharata natyam, both in India and internationally, for her role in preserving and promoting the dance form. She not only brought bharata natyam to a global audience but also trained many practitioners of the art form.

World Tamil Conferences (WTC)

Official Title	Host City	Host Country	Year	Arranged By
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1st World Tamil Conference	Kuala Lumpur	Malaysia	1966	Thani Nayagam Adigalar
2nd World Tamil Conference	Chennai	India	1968	M. Bhaktavatsalam and C. N. Annadurai
3rd World Tamil Conference	Paris	France	1970	-
4th World Tamil Conference	Jaffna	Sri Lanka	1974	-
5th World Tamil Conference	Madurai	India	1981	M. G. Ramachandran
6th World Tamil Conference	Kuala Lumpur	Malaysia	1987	-
7th World Tamil Conference	Port Louis	Mauritius	1989	-
8th World Tamil Conference	Thanjavur	India	1995	J. Jayalalithaa
9th World Tamil Conference	Kuala Lumpur	Malaysia	2015	-
10th World Tamil Conference	Chicago	USA	2019	International Association for Tamil Research, FeTNA & Chicago Tamil Sangam

Practice Questions:

1. What is the significance of the World Tamil Conference, and how has its location evolved over the years?
2. How do traditional folk dances contribute to the cultural identity and social cohesion of a community?