

because they have been greatly influenced by the Bhakti movement of the middle ages which has left its impact on the whole of northern India. Among such songs can be mentioned, the *Nirguṇa*, the *Purvi*, the *Parāti* and the *Devī* songs. Under the second category of songs we can count the type that is of a more independent nature. They are not connected with the tradition of the past but are the actual outcome of a modern society. The *Kajari*, the *Birhā*, the *Chaiti* and the *Bidesiya* may be included in this category. The third category of Uttar Pradesh or Bhojpuri folk-songs may be said to be those which are more clearly influenced by the music of various tribes scattered all over this region. Trilochan Pandey (*Bhojpuri Folklore and Music*) notes that, 'Tribal music has some of its own peculiarities. The ascent and the descent of the *swaras* in such folk songs may appear, at times, ridiculous to those who are accustomed to listen to the so-called "cultivated music". Out of the twelve notes employed in classical music, we find about nine of them being used in the ceremonial and ritual songs of this region.' Seven of these notes are pure (*suddha*) notes and the remaining two are the *Komal Gāndhār* and *Komal Niṣād*. Such songs generally employ the notes of *Kāfi* and *Khmaj thāts*. Other Bhojpuri songs like *Kaharvā* and the songs of washermen employ mainly the notes of *Vilāwal thāt*. The *rāgas* belonging to these three *thāts* are comparatively easy to grasp. Hence the tribal singers adapt them easily in order to intensify their different modes of expression.

GANAURI MAHTO
S.V.P. College
Bhabua (Bihar)

Archaeology and the Study of Sangam Society in Tamil Nadu

Earlier studies on Sangam literature concentrated exclusively on the cultural and political history of Tamils. They perceived a highly advanced society with the development of a full-fledged state apparatus. These works further treated the society as static and stagnant over a long period of time without any appreciable change. This tendency towards glorification needs to be corrected in order to understand the multi-faceted nature of the society. Except in certain favourable economic pockets Sangam society was in the nature of a tribal society gradually being transformed into a farming society wherein a complex state apparatus had not yet fully developed.

The development of any society is considerably influenced by

geographic and physiographic variations. These variations were classified into different ecological zones known as *tinai* by the early Tamils. *Tinai* literally means a situation. This could be either a behavioural or ecological situation. In the past three decades a rigorous analysis has been made on the concept of *tinai* and their inter-relationship. These studies are based extensively on the Sangam literature and its grammar. These studies have, however, failed to focus on the actual nature of the society. Recent discoveries in the field of archaeology, epigraphy and numismatics have thrown new light on several aspects of the society which have, by and large, been ignored by literature.

An attempt needs to be made to reconstruct our understanding of Sangam society. This could be based on Sangam literature but should be extensively supported by archaeological material obtained from excavated sites. It could use Tamil-Brahmi epigraphical records engraved on stone, metal, shell and pottery. The study of racial features drawing upon skeletal remains, and the manner in which natural resources like iron ore, semi-precious stones, etc., were exploited would further enrich such research.

The impact of the trans-oceanic trade and commerce on the contemporary society can be observed by the study of sea-level fluctuations, palaeo channel, river migration and siltation of river mouths which in fact disturbed the utility of the port, navigation and ship-building technology. Likewise the introduction of iron and steel technology transformed the nature of agricultural and industrial production. An increased production lead to a larger surplus and subsequent social stratification based on specialization. These data can be procured only through a field study and not from literature. The material support provided by the king pressurized the Sangam Age poets to speak more about the political authority of the king. This glorification left out the down-trodden classes. Therefore, the advancement that has been noted in the particularly favourable economic zones does not apply to the remote, economically weak and socially backward regions. The above discussion suggests that different social groups with a varied economic status were bound to coexist. This was because of the varying degrees to which they could exploit natural resources. An attempt is being made to reconstruct the varied nature of the society in different ecological zones based on archaeological and literary data.

K. RAJAN
Department of Archaeology
Tamil University Thanjavur