
UNIT 5 – Computer Tamil and Online Tamil Dictionaries

Page 1: Introduction – The Digital Evolution of Tamil

The Need for Digital Tamil:

With the rise of computers and the internet, there was a strong push to bring native languages into the digital fold. Tamil, one of the **oldest classical languages**, entered the computing space in the early 1980s.

Challenges in Early Days:

- Lack of **standardized fonts**.
- Limited **keyboard layouts**.
- Encoding problems due to **non-Unicode systems**.

Early Initiatives:

- Software like **Murasu Anjal** helped popularize Tamil typing.
- **TAM, TAB, and TSCII** encodings were introduced for typewriting and publishing before Unicode became standard.

Vision:

- To make Tamil accessible across **word processing, email, websites, and apps**.
 - Promote **digital literacy** among Tamil-speaking users.
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Page 2: Tamil Fonts and Keyboard Layouts

Tamil Fonts:

- Early fonts were ASCII-based, making cross-platform compatibility difficult.
- Common Fonts:
 - **Bamini** (widely used for typing)
 - **TAM and TAB**
 - **Unicode fonts** like **Latha, Vijaya, and Arial Unicode MS**

Keyboard Layouts:

1. **Tamil99:**
 - Developed by the Government of Tamil Nadu.
 - Most user-friendly for beginners.

2. **InScript:**
 - Standardized keyboard layout for Indian languages.
 - Supported by Windows, Android, and web platforms.
3. **Phonetic Transliteration Tools:**
 - Google Input Tools, NHM Writer, Sellinam: allow typing Tamil using English letters.

Software Tools:

- **eKalappai** – a free Tamil typing tool.
 - **Murasu Anjal** – supported email, publishing, and databases.
 - **Azhagi** – real-time phonetic typing and Unicode support.
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Page 3: Growth of Online Tamil Resources

Digital Portals and Libraries:

1. **Tamil Virtual Academy:**
 - Offers online Tamil courses.
 - Digital archives of classical Tamil texts.
2. **Project Madurai:**
 - A voluntary initiative to digitize Tamil literature.
 - Provides free downloadable eBooks in Unicode format.
3. **Thamizha Project:**
 - Creates and maintains Unicode-compliant Tamil fonts and open-source tools.

Educational Platforms:

- Websites and YouTube channels now offer **Tamil coding tutorials, typing classes, and language games**.
- Schools and colleges include **Tamil computing** as part of the ICT curriculum.

Applications:

- Mobile apps for typing, grammar checking, and dictionary usage.
 - AI-powered tools now allow **voice typing, OCR, and text-to-speech in Tamil**.
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Page 4: Online Tamil Dictionaries – Evolution and Features

Importance of Online Dictionaries:

- Help in learning, translation, and writing.
- Promote **literary enrichment** and **digital language preservation**.

Popular Online Tamil Dictionaries:

1. **Tamildict.com:**
 - English-to-Tamil and Tamil-to-English translations.
 - Provides examples and pronunciation.
2. **Tamilcube:**
 - Online dictionary, worksheets, and quizzes.
3. **Madurai Tamil Lexicon** (University of Madras):
 - One of the oldest and most comprehensive Tamil dictionaries now digitized.
4. **Shabdkosh & Spokensanskrit.org:**
 - Multilingual support with Tamil translations.

Key Features:

- Search using Tamil or English input.
- Example sentences and synonyms.
- **Audio support** for pronunciation.
- Grammar explanations and contextual meanings.

Integration:

- These tools are now embedded in **browsers, apps, and educational platforms**.
 - Support for **voice search** and **machine learning translation models** is increasing.
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Page 5: Future of Tamil in the Digital Era

Emerging Technologies in Tamil Computing:

- **Natural Language Processing (NLP)** tools for Tamil.
- **AI models** that translate, summarize, and answer in Tamil.
- **Voice assistants** like Alexa and Google Assistant understanding Tamil commands.

Innovation in Education:

- Tamil typing included in **coding bootcamps and data entry training**.
- **Tamil chatbots** developed for tourism, education, and government services.

Digital Preservation Efforts:

- Tamil literary works are being digitized for global access.
- **AI-based OCR** helps extract Tamil text from old palm manuscripts and scanned books.

Government and Institutional Support:

- Tamil Nadu Government has mandated **Unicode Tamil** in all departments.
- Initiatives like **Digital India** and **e-Governance** include Tamil language support.

Conclusion:

Tamil is not just surviving the digital age – it's **thriving**. With powerful tools, committed

communities, and government support, **Computer Tamil** is evolving into a vibrant ecosystem that connects tradition with technology.
