#### **Tamil**

# தமிழ் எழுத்து

Spoken in: India and Sri Lanka with significant minorities in Singapore, Malaysia, Mauritius, and South Africa.

Region: Asia

Total speakers: more than 74 million

Genetic Classification: Dravidian Southern Tamil-Kannada Tamil-Kodagu Tamil-Malayalam Tamil

Official language of: India, Sri Lanka and Singapore

Tamil is a Dravidian language spoken in Indian, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Vietnam, Singapore, Canada, the USA, UK and Australia. It is the first language of the Indian state of Tamil Nadu, and is spoken by a significant minority of people in north-eastern Sri Lanka.

There are twenty-two current dialects of Tamil, including Adi Dravida, Aiyar, Aiyangar, Arava, Burgandi, Kasuva, Kongar, Korava, Korchi, Madrasi, Parikala, Pattapu Bhasha, Sri Lanka Tamil, Malaya Tamil, Burma Tamil, South Africa Tamil, Tigalu, Harijan, Sanketi, Hebbar, Tirunelveli and Madurai. Other known dialects are Kongu and Kumari.

The earliest known Tamil inscriptions date back to at least 500 BC.

Currently SSWAHS Health Care Interpreter Service employs 4 Tamil sessional interpreters.

#### Tamil alphabet

### Vowels and vowel diacritics



#### Non-standard consonant-vowel combinations



## Consonants

**Grantha letters** 

ுஃ = āytam - turns p into f and j into z, e.g. பீஃ fī [fi:] ஜிஃ zi [zi]