Tamil Kalam - Teaching Tamil over the Web

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Introduction

This paper talks about the novel venture called Tamil Kalam and the lessons learned from this initiative. Tamil Kalam is a portal for teaching Tamil and providing Tamil learning resources for worldwide Tamils. It is a valuable resource to the students as well as the teachers of Tamil. It gives valuable tips and techniques to read and write Tamil, interesting anecdotes and little known facts about Tamil.

Tamil Kalam teaches to read and write Tamil in an easy manner. Tamil alphabets that are easy to write are introduced in sequence. Words are formed with the letters introduced. Alphabets that are introduced in lesson 1 are formed in anti-clockwise manner. From lesson two onwards, alphabets are formed in clockwise manner. As alphabets and words are introduced for reading, lessons for writing practice also are given at intervals. So as one learns the alphabets and words, one will be able to read and write the words introduced.

Tamil Kalam has a lot of multimedia content to augment the instructional material. Images, sounds, songs galore in the site. However, Tamil Kalam is also designed to work well with a narrow bandwidth. The images used are optimised and the audio files are compressed to download quite quickly.

Tamil Kalam also has reading and writing exercises so that the users can practice extensively to read and write Tamil. Another feature of Tamil Kalam is the numerous quizzes given
throughout the learning material. These quizzes programmed in JavaScript are given as match
the following type questions, true or false questions among other formats. Thus users are
constantly encouraged to test their learning of Tamil using the site.

1. பி எல்லாம்

2. ரைவாலர்கள் பாடல்கள் குழுக்கள் பாடல் புதிய காச்சிகள் அடமண்டைப்

3. மூன்று பாடல்கள் பாடல் புதிய காச்சிகள் அடமண்டைப்

4. சந்திகள் பாடல்கள் பாடல் புதிய காச்சிகள் அடமண்டைப்

Since the launch of the site in December 1999, Tamil Kalam has added Tamil Learning
content every two weeks. Tamil Kalam is used by Tamils and others interested in learning
Tamil from all over the world. More importantly, the elementary school teachers in
Tamilnadu are using this resource to introduce the computer to students while teaching Tamil
in a novel and interesting manner.

Contrary to the norms of portals, this initiative is a low budget affair with contribution from
many quarters. Tamil Kalam lessons are developed by Prof. V. Ganapathy and Thiru. E.
Gomathy Nayagam of Chennai. Both are experienced teachers and authors of Tamilnadu
Tamil Textbooks for schools. The initiative is funded by the Elementary School Teachers
Federation. The portal is created, maintained and enhanced by KaNini Consultants Pvt. Ltd.