

**Q1. What are the key features and themes of Sangam literature? Discuss. In the context of Sangam literature, what do you understand by 'akam' and 'puram'?**

### **Approach**

Students are expected to write about sangam literature first and then its key features and themes. And also highlight upon what is Akam and Puram in sangam literature.

### **Introduction**

Sangam period is the period in the history of ancient southern India (known as the Tamilakam) spanning from c. 3rd century BC to c. 4th century AD. It is named after the famous Sangam academies of poets and scholars centered in the city of Madurai. Sangam literature is the name given to the earliest available Tamil literature. It is dated between 400 BCE and 300 CE, although most of the work is believed to have been composed between 100 CE and 250 CE. The word 'Sangam' literally means association. Here, it implies an association of Tamil poets that flourished in ancient southern India.

### **Body**

Key features of sangam literature:

- Sangam literature which combines idealism with realism and classic grace with indigenous industry and strength is rightly regarded as constituting the Augustan age of Tamil literature. It deals with secular matter relating to public and social activity like government, war, charity, trade, worship, agriculture etc.
- The earliest script that the Tamils used was the Brahmi script. It was only from the late ancient and early medieval period, that they started evolving a new angular script, called the Grantha script, from which the modern Tamil is derived.
- Some of the contents of the Sangam literature are corroborated by the writings of some Greek and Roman classical writers of the first and second century A. D, leading us to fix the period of Sangam age roughly between third century B.C. to third century A.D. So, most of the Sangam literature also must have been produced during this period. The Sangam literature was finally compiled in its present form in circa A.D. 300-600.
- Sangam writings are possibly unique in early Indian literature, which is almost entirely religious. Many of the poems, especially on heroism, display great freshness and vigor and are singularly free from the literary conceits of much of the other early and medieval literatures of India.
- The Sangam literature themes includes: