

Topic Page: [Tamil Nadu](#)

Definition: **Tamil Nadu** from *Collins English Dictionary*

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1 a state of SE India, on the Coromandel Coast: reorganized in 1956 and 1960 and made smaller; consists of a coastal plain backed by hills, including the Nilgiri Hills in the west Capital: Chennai (formerly called Madras). Pop: 62 110 839 (2001). Area: 130 058 sq km (50 216 sq miles) Former name (until 1968):

Madras

Summary Article: **Tamil Nadu**

From *The Hutchinson Unabridged Encyclopedia with Atlas and Weather Guide*

State of southeast India, bounded on the north by Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh, on the west by Kerala, and on the east and south by the Bay of Bengal and the Indian Ocean; area 130,069 sq km/50,220 sq mi; population (2001 est) 62,110,800. The capital is Chennai (formerly Madras). There are cotton, leather, sugar-refining, oil-refining, and road and railway vehicle manufacturing industries. Tea, coffee, spices, sugar cane, and coconuts are grown, and there is a major fishing industry.

Geography There are coastal plains, including the Cauvery delta. Inland are the Nilgiri Hills and extensions of the Western Ghats. Rainfall is unreliable, derived mainly from the northeast monsoon. Features include hydroelectric power schemes at Mettur and Moyar, and coal-powered power stations at Neyveli and Ennore.

Economy The state has a good deal of mineral wealth including coal, iron ore, chromite, bauxite, limestone, and manganese. Cotton, leather, and sugar refining are the main long-established industries; newer industries include electrical machinery, tractors, rubber, cars, railway coaches, chemicals, oil refining, fertilizers, cement, cycles, tanning, and forestry. There is also a film industry. Most industry is concentrated in Chennai, as well as in Coimbatore, Salem, and Tiruchchirappalli.

Tea, coffee, spices, sugar cane, and coconuts are grown as cash crops; rice, millet, and groundnuts are also grown, largely as subsistence crops and frequently dependent on tank and well irrigation. The fishing industry is the second largest among the Indian states, after Kerala.

Language The principal language is Tamil. Telugu is spoken in the north by 10%.

History the present state was formed in 1956. Tamil Nadu comprises part of the former British Madras presidency (later province) formed from areas taken from France and Tipu Sahib, the sultan of Mysore, in the 18th century, which became a state of the Republic of India in 1950. The northeast was detached to form Andhra Pradesh in 1953. In 1956 other areas went to Kerala and Mysore (now Karnataka), and the Laccadive Islands (now Lakshadweep) became a separate Union Territory.

Early history The Dravidians inhabited the area from the 4th millennium BC; Tamil, India's oldest living language, developed from earlier languages brought by displaced peoples from north Asia. From the 4th century AD, the dynasties of the Cholas, Palavas, Pandyas and Cheras ruled the region, and extended its influence to Ceylon (Sri Lanka), Indochina, Malaya, Java, and Bali. In the 14th–16th centuries, the Vijayanagar empire ruled, and later smaller autonomous states emerged until a Muslim overlord, the Nawab of Carnatic, took power. In 1640 the British East India Company established what would

become its chief trading post at Fort St George, later Madras (now Chennai).

Culture The area has a unique Tamil-Hindu culture, characterized by the temples of Madurai, Bharat Natyam dancing, Vedic (see Veda) scholarship, and current Tamil literature and film-making.

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