



A DISCOURSE ANALYSIS ON ‘THIRATTU SONGS OF PUBERTY CEREMONY’ OF KAANIKARAR TRIBAL AT KANNIYAKUMARI DISTRICT

Dr. G. ARUL SELVI

Assistant Professor & Head

MGR Educational and Research Institute University

Poonamallee High Road, Vishwas Nagar

Maduravoyal, Chennai - 600095

Tamil Nadu, INDIA

ABSTRACT :

This article concentrates on ‘*Thirattu songs of Puberty Ceremony*’ of kanikkarar who are living in Southern part of Travancore at Kanniyakumari District. Particularly the tribal has life circle rituals in many phases. Puberty ceremony one among them. Usually Thirattu songs will be singing during the puberty ceremony. The ceremony marks the transition of girls who have reached puberty and are now mature enough to understand their responsibilities towards family and society. While celebrating this ceremony the Kanikkarar women use to sing ‘Thirattu Songs’ for the matured girl. The singing women mostly belongs to matured girl’s relatives. They belong to the siblings of matured girl’s father and other relatives. There will be at least 5 to 7 women who sing ‘Thirattu Songs’.

Kanikkarar tribal has life circle rituals like the ceremony of birth, puberty, wedding, baby shower and death. It is not possible to research all their ceremonies the researcher has chosen only about the puberty ceremony. There are songs which are called ‘*Thirattu*’ take place in puberty ceremony. Particularly those songs will be taken place in ‘*Araikkalyanam*’ ritual of puberty rite. Araikkalyanam is part of a ritual followed during the puberty ceremony. Each and every line of ‘*Thirattu songs*’ has been concentrated and explained in detail by using ‘*Discourse analysis*’.

The areas of research are Thachamalai and Thottamalai which comes under Vilavancode Taluk near Pechipparaiat Kanniyakumari District. The main objective of this study is to get knowledge of the puberty ceremony and its Thirattu songs of kanikkarar tribal.

Key words: *Kanikkarar, Puberty ceremony, Araikkalyanam, Thirattu, Discourse Analysis*

INTRODUCTION :

Kanikkarar tribal who are living under western ghats of Kanniyakumari District. Kalkulam, Vilavancode, Thovalai are the main Taluks where they living at Perunchani, Pechipparai, Manalodai, Keeripparai, Pathukani.

The uniqueness of kanikkarartribe is their culture and heritage. Those culture and heritage mostly get placed in their life circle rituals. A life circle ritual is a ceremony to mention a change in a person's biological or social status at various phases throughout life. Such practices we can found in many societies and often based on traditions of a community like weddings, funerals, baptisms, etc.

A ritual can be a sequence of activities involving gestures, words, actions, or objects, performed according to a set of sequence. Gluckman (1962) distinguishes there are four kinds of ritual like magic action, religious action, substantive of constitutive ritual and factitive ritual. It may be categorized mythological reenactment, rites of passage and family rituals. The kanikkarar has the life circle rituals like mythological reenactment, rites of passage and family rituals. Those rituals will be followed by them from their birth to death.



Kanikkararfamilly :Thottamalai, Near Pechipparai, Kanniyakumari district

DEFINITIONS:

KAANIKKARAR :

The term '*Kaan*' represents that '*land*'. '*Kaanikkaran*' is the name came from '*Kaan*' represents that hill and forestland. This particular tribal community living in hills area so they are called '*Kanikkarar*'. *Kaanikkaran* means '*Propreitor of land*'.

ARAIKKALYANAM :

Araikkalyanam is a Tamil word can be divided into '*Arai + kalyanam = Araikkalyanam*'. '*Arai*' means '*Half*' and '*Kalyanam*' means '*marriage*'. This word is directly representing that 'the girl is ready for getting married'. It is a sequence of activities involves words and actions which is happening during the puberty ceremony as a part of it.

THIRATTU SONGS :

'*Thirattu*' is the Tamil word represents that '*attending puberty*' (Tamil Agarathi.com. dictionary, Thirattugai, ThogaiNool). So the girl who matured where happening puberty ceremony and songs which are called 'Thirattu songs'. Particularly those songs are taking place when doing Araikkalyanam ritual for her as part of puberty ceremony.

DISCOURSE ANALYSIS :

The rationale of the study is that discourse analysis on '*Puberty ceremony and its Thirattu song of Kanikkarar*'. The term "discourse" is largely defined by what it is not or what it is set in opposition to (Mills 3). Discourse is, therefore, often characterized by its difference from a variety of terms such as text, sentence and ideology. Each of these oppositional terms marks out the meaning of discourse. For instance, Micheal Short opine that "Discourse is linguistic communication seen as a transaction between speaker and hearer, as an interpersonal activity whose form is determined by its social purpose. Text is linguistic communication (either spoken or written) seen simply as a message coded in its auditory or visual medium' (Hawthorn 189).

The term "Discourse Analysis" was first introduced by the American structural linguist, Zellig Harris in 1952 as a way of analyzing connected speech and writing (Paltridge 2). Discourse Analysis looks at the language together with all these features in order to interpret meaning. Discourse analyst analyze not only spoken discourse such as conversations, speeches, dialogues, songs. etc., but also written discourse such as novels, plays, stories, etc.

Tribal songs are as the performing art which has been included in performing arts. The life circle rituals are taking place according to seasonal changes of body. There are songs takes place in life circle rituals of Kanikkarar life from birth to death.

They have songs like Lullaby, Thirattu, Seenikilichal, Rain Koduthi, Aavi worshipping, Swinging, Moral, Traditional games, Story, etc,. This research paper is tried to do discourse analysis onlyon 'Thirattu' song of 'Kanikkarar' tribal community.

OBJECTIVES :

- To emphasize the puberty rites of kanikkarar tribal who are living in southern part of Tamil Nadu.
- To know the actual meaning of kanikkarar's Thirattu Song by using discourse analysis.
- To know the uniqueness of 'Arikkalyanam' rites which takes place in their puberty ceremony.
- to get the knowledge of puberty ceremony and its 'Thirattu' songs of kanikkarar tribal.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY :

Discourse analysis is a research method for studying written or spoken language in relation to its social context which has been concentrated in this study. The oral literature is one of the source of verbal communication or spoken language which is used by Kanikkarar tribal in many phases and it has lot of information about the life

style of kanikkarar community and their life circle rituals. Particularly one of the ritual Puberty ceremony and Thirattu songs have taken in this research paper.

DIFFERENT MEANINGS OF PUBERTY :

Kanikkarar matured woman is called in different meanings namely, '*Mechoodu*' (*matured girl*), '*ThannaihaanArithal*' (*knowing about herself*), '*Thirandathu*' (*reached her age*), '*Vayatharithal*' (*knowing about her age*). "Thirattu" is the song will be taking place during puberty ceremony.

PUBERTY RITES OF KANIKKARAR :

A TENTATIVE SHED :

When a girl attends puberty in kanikkarar tribal community will be stayed in a separated shed along with her cousins. The information about matured girl goes from her mother to father. The father and his brother-in-laws needed to prepare a shed for matured girl for puberty rite. Whomever matured in their community will have a separate and tentative greenery house. This particular tentative house will be maintained only for 7 days after her puberty. The girl will be stayed in the house along with her cousin. The food for matured girl will be cooked separately in the house itself. The scenery of her shed will look like in green color. The shed will be nearby her house.



The material of shed is braided coconut leaves, eerthai straws, tharuvai grass and green bamboo ryes. Those things will be covered with bamboo rays. The prepared small bamboo ropes will be used to tie the coconut straw, eerthai straw, tharuvai grass with bamboo ryes. The measurement of shed are 7 feet width and height. Usually the flat ground will be prepared by father and cousins to make a tentative shed. The shed looking like square shape and the 4 side of walls has green bamboo ryes. Each wall has 14 green bamboo ryes. and 14 braided coconut leaves.

Back and both side of left and right walls carries totally 14 green bamboo ryes. 7 will be tied in straight and 7 in horizontal level like layers by using small bamboo ropes. This shed will be used only for 7 days after attending puberty. It will be destroyed when the girl comes out from the house in the 7th day along with cousins.

PUBERTY CEREMONY OF ARAIKKALYANAM :

‘*Araikkalyanam*’ is a part of puberty ceremony which will be done by the relatives on 6th day after matured. While this ceremony the girl will be sitting on a big and broad size of stone inside the house. She will be made to take bath in center place of the house. The aunties of matured girl who involves more in this ritual. They are at least 7 members. If the matured girl has only 5 or less than that, they can have other cousins to fill the member 7.

7 mud pots with turmeric water will be used by 7 cousins in this ceremony. Pots are made by mud with 5 liters in size. The water is looking like yellow in color. Each one of them will have a pot of water and pour on her head. The purpose of using turmeric water is that to make the girl clean. When the water covers her body the elders who are around the girl will clap louder continuously at least for 10 minutes. The noise of circumstances makes the ceremony enjoyable and reveals that the girl is ready for getting marriage as well. The matured girl can come out from the greenery house after 7 days of her maturation. Particularly in the 7th day she will be made to take bath near the pond along with her cousins.

THIRATTU SONG :

The girl relatives particularly elders are used to sing ‘*Thirattu Song*’ while doing the ‘*Araikkalyanam*’ puberty ceremony. Thirattu songs take place only in 7th day. Those songs analyzed and explained by discourse analysis which are follows:

Song 1 :

“Engavuda poyathentra kannithirupempilla

Kannithirupempilla thannathan arinjavaru

Pillanipadappodu olimaranja pempilla

Naalirandunaathimaru vilichathanae seiyinathu

Thoora irukkinangi valakilukidu

Aduthuirunthavaru valakilukkavum seiyinathu

Kaiyilpidichilakkum naalirandu nathimaru”

The aforementioned song is a ‘Thirattu Song’ gives those information as follows which is explained line by line.

Discourse Analysis :

Lyric : ‘*Engavudapoyathentra kannithirupempilla*’

Explanation : ‘Hey matured girl, where did you go?’

Lyric :Kannithiru penpilla thannathan arinjavaru

Explanation : ‘You are a matured one and you know all well about you clearly now’

Lyric : ‘Pillanipadappodu olimaranja pempilla’

Explanation : ‘We think that you are hided near our agriculture land’

Lyric : ‘Naalirandu naathimaru vilichathanae seiyinathu’

Explanation : ‘We are four sisters-in-law of your mother and calling you’

Lyric : ‘Thoorairukkinangi valakilukidu’

Explanation : ‘If you are far away from us please let us know’

Lyric : ‘Aduthuirunthavaru valakilukkavum seiyinathu’

Explanation : ‘We get the sound of your friend’s bangles by shaking the hands’

Lyric : ‘Kaiyilpidichilakkum naalirandu nathimaru’

Explanation : ‘We sisters-in-law of your mother will pull out you from where you are hiding now’

The sisters-in-law of mother of the girl thought of that the girl is hiding with her friends. But actually she will not be with them. She is alone. She only will be made all the sounds like beating the mosquitoes, shaking bangles everything. That’s what about the above song. (5)

The Greenery house which is made by using coconut leaves and bamboo and castor sticks along with the relatives of matured girl once they arrived. The girl makes to sit on the broad stone which is placed inside the greenery house. The women relatives are coming near the girl with clan and put prepared fried rice on her navel. And they pour water from top of the greenery house and it falls on matured girl. On that time sisters of girl’s father and elders makes casting continuously. These information encompasses on the below song,

Song 2 :

‘Amanakkam kambuvetti pachappanthal kattavum seiyinathu

Appanoda porulukattithookkum naalirandunaathimaaru

Kannithirupempillay inapanthalil pudichiyruthinathu

Ezhukudam vellam korum pennintra nathinaa

Ezhukudam vellam kondu thalaiyiloothinathu

Ezhumozhivaagural solusolaa sinthinathu

Appam adaporulu kadichiarukkinathu

Panthalum pirichiyallo pennum ezhichinathu'

Discourse Analysis :

Lyric : '*Aamanakkam kambu vetti pachappanthal kattavum seiynathu'*

Explanation : 'The small greenery house with coconut leaves is to be ready with the castor sticks'

Lyric : '*Appanoda porulukatti thoorkum naalirandu naathimaaru'*

Explanation : 'We the siblings of your father arranging greenery house for you'

Lyric : '*Kannithirupempillayin apanthalil pudichiyuthinathu'*

Explanation : 'Since you are a matured girl, we are making you to be in the house'

Lyric : '*Ezhukudam vellam korum pennintra nathinaa'*

Explanation : 'We have seven pots of turmeric water which is needed you to clean'

Lyric : '*Ezhukudam vellam kondu thalaiyiloothinathu'*

Explanation : 'We are using seven pots of turmeric water to pour on your head'

Lyric : '*Ezhumozhivaagural solusolaa sinthinathu'*

Explanation : 'We use the fried rice to put on your navel'

Lyric : '*Appam adaporulu kadichiarukkinathu'*

Explanation : 'We have snacks for you, have and evacuate the greenery house now itself'

Lyric : '*Panthalum pirichiyallo pennum ezhichinathu'*

Explain : 'Let the greenery house unused in this place and stand up from broad stone now'

The above song is sung by father's siblings of matured girl.

In the 7th day homemade coconut oil will be applied on girl's hair and put 7 different types of bindi on her forehead. The bindi will be prepared by using rice flour, turmeric, castor route. Rice flour shows the color white, turmeric represents yellow and the castor route color is mixed red and black. Those colors represent the birds and

animal's colors like cock, peacock, deer, etc. There will be 7 colors of bindi which is taken place totally. The below lyrics explains it.

Song 3 :

“Ezhunirampottarukum pennindra naathanaa

Enthuniram vachi pennina aniyanu

Maanuniramvachu pennina aniyatum

Mayiluniramvachu pennina aniyatum

Kokkuniramvachu pennina aniyatum

Kuruviniramvachu pennina aniyatum

Pennindra naathana pennina aniyatum

Pennindra petrathalla pennina aniyatum”

Discourse Analysis :

Lyric : ‘Ezhunirampottarukum pennindra naathanaa’

Explanation : ‘We have 7 colors of bindi’

Lyric : ‘Enthuniramvachi pennina aniyanu’

Explanation : ‘Those 7 colors of bindi you should have on your forehead’

Lyric : ‘Maanuniramvachu pennina aniyatum’

Explanation : ‘You should have bindi by representing the color of deer’

Lyric : ‘Mayiluniramvachu pennina aniyatum’

Explanation : ‘You should have bindi in the color of peacock’

Lyric : ‘Kokkuniramvachu pennina aniyatum’

Explanation : ‘You should have bindi in the color of egret’

Lyric : ‘Kuruviniramvachu pennina aniyatum’

Explanation : ‘You should have bindi in the color of sparrow’

Lyric : ‘Pennindra naathana pennina aniyatum’

Explanation : ‘We are your aunties who can put bindi on your forehead’

Lyric : *‘Pennindra petrathalla pennina aniy anum’*

Explanation : ‘Your mother should put bindi for you too after us’

The matured girl will take bath with her friends near the stream once over “**Araikalyanam**” ritual. After bathing she will be covered with a new white color towel. Her relatives give rice flour and her mother and grandfather offers the bangles and others will give different gifts. The following lyrics says about it.

Song 4 :

‘Pennintra petrathalla pennuku polivu kodukkanum

Pennintra ammachan pennuku polivu kodukkanum

Kaikkukai kaapu polivu kodikkanum

Vanthulla kaanipperu pennuku polivu kodukkanum

Ilikkuilikaapu polivu kodukkinathu

Kaaluku kaal minchi polivu kodukkinathu

Maavukoduthavaru polivu polinchavaru

Saathiramparanchi valithirinchi ponathuthan”

Discourse Analysis :

Lyric : *‘Pennintra petrathalla pennuku polivu kodukkanum’*

Explanation : ‘The gift should be given by her mother’

Lyric : *‘Pennintra ammachan pennuku polivu kodukkanum’*

Explanation : ‘The gift should be given by her grandfather’

Lyric : *‘Kaikku kai kaapu polivu kodikkanum’*

Explanation : ‘Bangles should be given by grandfather and mother’

Lyric : *‘Vanthulla kaanipperu pennuku polivu kodukkanum’*

Explanation : ‘Whomever coming from kaanikarar tribal community should give gifts to the woman’

Lyric : *‘Ilikkuilikaapu polivu kodukkinathu’*

Explanation : ‘Others should gift whatever they want’

Lyric : *‘Kaaluku kaal minchi polivu kodukkinathu’*

Explanation : ‘Others are gifting minchi (metti) for her toes’

Lyric : *'Maavu koduthavaru polivu polinchavaru'*

Explanation : 'Whomever given rice flour also gives more gifts'

Lyrics : *'Saathiramparanchi valithirinchi ponathuthan'*

Explanation : 'All will return to their home after doing the ritual ceremony for matured girl.'

CONCLUSION :

The oral literature of Kanikkarar tribal encompasses the various phases of their life. The oral literature has been used through puberty ceremony with songs and actions. It has interesting information regarding the matured girl.

Araikkalyanam ritual represents that the girl is getting ready for marriage and this information passes through puberty ceremony. Thirattu songs makes interesting sense about matured girl and the requirements of relatives. This ritual happens usually in the 7th day.

There are some changes in their life style because of new technology and inter-caste marriage with other non-tribal community most of their oral literature are not existing now. The '**Thirattu**' song one among them which will not be taken place during puberty ceremony in their life circle ritual. They couldn't be following the puberty ceremony as how they done it earlier with 'Thirattu' song.

The uniqueness of Kanikkarar tribe is their culture and heritage. Those culture and heritage is going beyond from them little by little. Some elders of kanikkarar women only knowing the Thirattu songs. The researcher could collect the songs through oral literature 6 years ago when doing data collection on Ph.D. But the actual meaning of those songs collected again recently from kanikkarar elders.

For knowing the actual meaning and information of those songs could be analyzed through discourse analysis to know the uniqueness and the traditions of kanikkarar.

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