



Tribal Rituals in Tamil Novels

¹ M.Kathiravan, ² Dr. T.R. Hebzibah Beulah Suganthi,

¹ Research Scholar, ² Assistant Professor,

¹ Department of Tamil,

¹ SRM Institute of Science and Technology, Chengalpattu, India

Abstract : Tribal people have been living in a specific area for generations. They have faced various hardships in their livelihood system. Thus, ritual is an integral part of their lives as they face hardships such as enslavement, displacement, prevention of hunting, sexual assault, imprisonment as a result of new factors that arise in the society against nature in their daily lives.

IndexTerms - Value, Tamil Culture, Ritual.

INTRODUCTION

Since the beginning of the world, Tamil society has had its own unique characteristics. Those who have a cultured heart are said to be cultured. Kalithogai calls this "cultured by singing and praying". In this way, the tribes have been living by observing their own customs, rituals and beliefs. Among them, worship of God means creating images of natural objects and considering God as the owner of those images and performing rituals from birth to death. This article aims to identify the cultural elements found in these ritual systems.

Tamil Tribes

Tribes or tribes are people who have lived in a particular area for generations. These people have their own language, customs and beliefs. They live their lives self-sufficiently using the plants, vines, trees and animals that are considered native to the lands they live in.

"Kaltonri manṭonrok kolatte vaḷoṭu

mun tonriya mutta kuṭi"(purapporuḷ venṇāmālai -35)

The world's oldest inhabited tribes are also found in the Karandhaipadalam. They are more than forty different tribes in Tamil Nadu. The tribes of Tamil Nadu constitute 3.5 percent of the population of Tamil Nadu. 24 types of tribal people such as Malaikuravar, Irular, Kadar, Kurumbar, Thodar live in 38 districts of Tamil Nadu. The tribes mostly live in mountainous areas. They do not rely much on the money economy. They have their own language, family and social customs. Scholars believe that most of the languages are closely related to Tamil and belong to the Dravidian language family.

Birth Rituals

In the novel Cholagar Totti, the people of the Irular tribe first put two drops of mountain honey in the mouth of a newborn child. Only after tasting the mountain honey does the child drink the mother's milk. They offer offerings to Jadaiswamy as a way of expressing gratitude for the birth of the child. A purification ritual is performed for the birth of a child. The three days after the birth of a child are considered to be impure. It is considered that the impurity is removed only on the fourth day. To remove the impurity, the house is swept with cow dung on the day after the birth of the child. They invite the five clans and perform the purification. The five clans also apply holy water to the mother and child and perform the purification ritual. **(Balamurugan..2024: - 21)** In this novel, the people of Cholagar Totti have performed the birth ritual using the available materials.

Flower Ritual

When a woman is in the Cholagar Totti, she is made to bathe and sit in a shed. A hut made of kanampul is built for the ritual. This hut is usually built by the mother's brother. She is kept in that hut for four days. On the fifth day, she is made to bathe. She is made to wear new clothes and brought home with songs. She is invited into the house by putting a drop of cow dung on her tongue. The kanampul hut is set on fire. The people who have given birth to the woman host a feast for the Totti people. **(Balamurugan .2013: 116-117)** As mentioned in the Cholagar Totti novel, in the Vanam novel, if someone in the Thanikandi Irular community is in the flower bed, they build a hut in the yard of the house. They cut green bamboos and make them into sheets and set them up like a retaining wall. They build a hut by attaching coconut fronds to bamboo sheets. This hut is built like a small house. In that hut, a flower-like frog is placed on a tripod. The woman is bathed and dressed in new clothes. She is kept alone in that hut for eight days. After eight days, they consider the impurity to be removed and welcome her back into the house. Finally, the impure hut is burned. **(Aattanathi 2010:55-57).**

Marriage Ritual

The marriage ritual is a ritual in which a man and a woman become husband and wife in the presence of the community. The Cholagar Totti people do this by giving a gift to the woman, saying, "Instead of asking the woman's family directly whether

she will come for a wife, she will come for a grain of seed." The gift is decided according to their convenience. If the eldest son dies, his wife is married to the second son. A pavilion is set up at the entrance of the wedding house with nine sticks of white cobra and nine green bamboos. The pavilion is located in the height of the palace. The entire surface of the pavilion is filled with cobra leaves and a string of wild jasmine is tied on the heads of both the bride and groom. The mappilai procession starts towards the bride's house to the sound of beenachi and tappu. The mappilai procession starts from the Manirasan temple. The boys dance to the music. The groom stands at the entrance of the bride's house. The bridegroom is seated on a bamboo tray with a betel leaf, comb, mirror, saree, and thali. The bridegroom is made to sit on the naga leaf pavilion. The bride's friend puts black and white dots on the groom's face. The kolkaran says, "Komata, let the next thing happen." A bamboo basket called a mana is filled with garbage. The groom is made to come and kick the basket three times with his hind leg without looking at it. It is said that the evil eye is removed when the garbage is thrown down. The groom goes into the bride's house, joins her little finger with his little finger, and brings her to the naga leaf pavilion. The kolkaran, standing on a ladder, raises the stick of the ancestors and mutters a mantra, after which the groom ties the thali. The bride's maternal uncle feeds the groom a meal prepared with jaggery and tamarind at the bride's house. Rice and spicy mutton gravy prepared by the groom's family are served to everyone. They eat and enjoy the leaves made from the leaves sewn together with small sticks. The men enjoy smoking cannabis. The bride and groom are left alone at the bride's house. That night, they light a bonfire and celebrate with dancing, singing and music until dawn. (Balamurugan..2024: 64-66).

The wedding ceremonies are held in the month of Aavani. The groom's family takes the groom and goes to the bride's house to the music of Kothar. They bring the bride with gifts and two hundred rupees in cash. The entrance to the house is painted with red clay and renovated. When the bride arrives at the entrance of the house, an old woman draws water from a jug and pours it into the bride's hands three times. She also says the words, "Accept this family growth that is coming like water flowing from a jug." She offers the water to wet the bride's hands and feet. A garland of beads strung on gold wire is on a plate. The old woman takes the garland and puts it around the bride's neck and brings her inside. A carpet is spread outside the house. On the carpet, fresh rice and fresh milk are served. The groom's sister offers the bride water to wash her hands. The women and the Sumangalis prepare to draw fresh water from the waterfall in a new pot like gold surrounded by a veil. When the bride draws water from the waterfall and enters the house to the sound of Kothar music, she becomes the owner of her husband's house. (Rajam Krishnan. 2010: 166-167).

Birth Ritual

A birth ritual is a ritual that is performed to ensure that all events from a woman's conception to the time of delivery end in good fortune, but in the novel Sangam, a special ritual is performed. Moreover, if a Malayali woman from Kollimalai becomes pregnant with someone other than her husband during labor, the child will not come out during labor and the mother will be very sad. She must tell the midwife the truth about who she became pregnant with. The midwife will send a message to the diviner. The diviner brings the person who is responsible for the woman's pregnancy. A lamp is lit in the middle of the pregnant woman's house. This is called a good lamp. As instructed by the diviner, the person bows to the lamp. "I have done wrong, mother! Please bear with the pain. May I have a good child," he bows and takes the charcoal from the lamp and places it on the forehead of the pregnant woman. The Dharmakarta gives him a sickle and instructs him on what to do. The person who receives the sickle cuts the thatched roof above the door step three times and leaves without looking back. After this ritual is completed, the delivery is completed easily with the help of a midwife. (Chinnappa Bharathi 2008: 84-93)

Hunting Rituals

Primitive man fought with other humans to protect himself and his land. He loved physical strength. When he went hunting, he relied heavily on rituals and performed rituals. In the novel Kanaka, the worship of Palichi is performed in the month of Chithirai. It is when they gather to worship Kolasamy that they usually decide on important social events. (Lakshmi Saravanakumar-2015.25) They celebrated and shared the hunting items. At that time, songs, chants, and dances were performed.

Death Rituals

Funeral rites are a set of beliefs and practices used by a culture to remember and honor the dead. Thus, in the novel Vanam, when someone dies, the Irula people of Thanikandi call a servant called a vandari and send him to inform all the relatives of the village. The music of the musicians Borai, Kokal, Peekhi, and Jalra is heard. The clan members who come to hear the news of the death come with dry sticks or canes. The family of the deceased collects the sticks through the vandari. A sabbaram is built. Four sticks are planted one foot high. A pada is placed on top of those sticks. The pada is prepared in the shape of a crescent moon. Seven women gather and perform the ritual for the wife of the deceased. The thali of the Irula women is a self-made amulet made of moss. The black moss rope from the neck of the deceased's wife is cut and tied around the big toe of the deceased. Two of her hairs are plucked and tied around the big toe of the deceased. The Kurunaga, Kuppilik and Arumook clans sprinkle water from the Neeli canal on the body of the deceased. They go into the deceased's house and sprinkle both water and gomiya. The deceased is taken out in a funeral procession and buried. (Aattanathi 2010:22-30).

Conclusion

Since the emergence of man, we know that he has been developing in many fields such as science. But the tribals are the ones who follow civilization, lifestyle, rituals, etc. without knowing about any development. To know their lifestyle, we should make efforts like interviewing them, staying in their places, reading books like Cholagar Totti, Vanam, Kurinjith Theen, Sangam, Kanagan. In this article, the lifestyle and ritual news has been examined through tribal novels

REFERENCES

- [1] Balamurugan, S. 2013. Cholagar Totti. Opposite publication, Pollachi
- [2]. Attanathi, 2010. Vanam. New Century Book House, Chennai.
- [3]. Chinnapabharathi, 2008. Sangam, Thiruvarasupathippagam, Thi.Nagar, Chennai.
- [4]. Rajam Krishnan, 2019. Kurinjith Theen, Sri Senpaka Pathibagam, Thi,Nagar, Chennai.
- [5]. Lakshmi Saravanakumar, 2019, Kanagan, Evshu Prasuram, Anna Nagar, Chennai.

