

# THE HISTORICAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE KALLAR TERRITORY – A STUDY

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## **Abstract**

*In the present study, stating that the origin and historical background of kallars territory. Now-a-days, it is coined as Mukkulathor and that comprises the cluster of three identical clans of kallars, maravar and agamudaiyar. Here, the investigator has discussed to enhance the knowledge of kallars society and its features. They are numerically strong in the southern district of Tamilnadu.*

**Keywords:** *Accomplishment, Mukkulathor, Territory, Ochchamma, Bejewelled, Goddess, Undeniably and Infanticide.*

## **Introduction**

The kallars can be said to be the longest living human tribe in India and one of the oldest in the world. They were most conservative section of the kallars and love of tradition. It is true in the sense that they had been in love with his tradition and had voluntarily anchored themselves to the ancients so that with them custom had been a deity to worship and conservatism had been their watchword. There is a very close connection among the three clans in their appearance, custom, manner, tradition and war like qualities. According to tradition, these people formed the important and strategic sections of the armies of the Tamil kings and Chief in olden days when fighting was even more an important profession than agriculture and supported a large population. But at present all the three have taken up farming. In spite of the alleged common ancestry, these three classes in early times formed themselves in to distinct castes and inter- marriage between the kallars and the other two was not allowed. However this trend has changed to a great extent in the 20<sup>th</sup> century mainly due to the concept of Mukkulathor. Now this article discuss about **Social life of kallars, Forms of Marriage, Position of women, Ceremonies, Birth ceremonies, Puberty ceremony, Female infanticide, Death ceremonies, Inheritance and Amusement.**

## **Maravars**

The maravar were constitute in the present Ramanathapuram, Tirunelveli and Pudukkottai district at the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The ramanathapuram district, known as the Maravar country, the place where the maravar really settled and from there they had migrated to tirunelveli country of the nayak kingdom of Madurai. The leader of the maravar was the Sethupathy or Raja of Ramnad.<sup>1</sup> According to the traditional myth the maravas of ramnad region helped sri rama in his war against the demon ravana and as a

token of gratitude for their service , Rama gratefully exclaimed in tamil maravan and that they have been called Maravans and thenceforth they were hailed as Deva or Theva meaning gods.

### **Agamudaiyars**

The agamudaiyars are found in thanjavur , Madurai and Tirunelveli district. Since their profession is agriculture ,they are found in most of the district of tamilnadu such as chengalpat, North Arcot, Salem, Coimbatore and Tiruchirappalli. They are much less in number then they were some 30 years ago may be due to the fact that they have risen in the social hierarchy and have identified themselves as vellalas. But in Tanjavur , the number has nearly doubled due to the assumption of the name by the Maravans and kallans. In their manners and customs thry closely follow the Vellalas. Agamudaiyars are not so ferocious and martial as the maravars or kallars.Because of their economic prosperity, they have adopted a more respectable attitude to life. They are comparatively a peace loving people.

### **Kallars**

The encyclopedia of Indian Tribes and castes describes the kallars as a dark race of small stature and of many distinctive peculiarities pointing them out as having sprung from an aboriginal tribe. In view of their concentration in the district of Thanjavur, Trichirappalli, Pudukkottai and Madurai, this area is sometimes referred to as Kallarnadu or Kallaham. They are also found settled in certain portion of Ramanathapuram and Tirunelveli district. The life of kallars is principally governed by geographic and economic factors. Because of the inflow of the river Cauvery, the district of Thanjavur and Tiruchirappalli are blessed with fertile soil and copies water. Hence the kallars of these wet land areas have mostly taken to agriculture, subsistence living and with no scope for socio- economic betterment.

### **Social Life of Kallars**

The kallars led a simple life. Living on dried out lands ,they could not afford to spend much on their diet. Hence they were poorly fed and coarsely dressed and lived in utter misery. As a conservative, illiterate, superstitious and custom- ridden group, they were caught in a vicious circle of poverty and ignorance. They were superstitious to the extent that even before strting on their depredatory excursion, they used to observe omens and consulted their house hold gods through flowers. If white flower instead of red flower was picked up a child of tender years, they took it as a sign of success.These kallars had undoubtedly developed a healthy social life right from the beginning when they settled down in Tamilnadu. They lived to a larger extent as joint families in village , inhabited by their own caste and therefore had close clan feelings.

### **Forms of Marriage**

To preserve the purity of the community, caste endogamy was emphasised. They did not like to inter-marry with other division of the kallars and performed to marry only among themselves, thus proving to be a subcaste of the kallar caste. They preferred kin

marriage strengthened the existing relation between two groups and reinforced the integration between them. Further as the relatives tend to take interest in the welfare of the fellow relatives, affinal relations with them were preferred. At the same time clan exogamy was observed. Almost all the young people of a particular clan which is known as karai were classificatory sisters and brothers were forbidden as spouses. To them, a kallari boy marrying a kallari girl alone was considered to be a regular union. If any one of them happened to belong to a non kallari community, such union was denounced as irregular and they were abhorred as puzhukkai kallars, a derogatory term to denote their impurity too. Such impure kallari could have matrimonial ties only with those who were also branded like themselves.

### Position of Women

The position of kallari women was far superior to that of the women of other caste. It is unbelievable to note that such a turbulent race had given so much importance to its womenfolk. Most surprisingly women were regarded as the leaders of the community. The name **ochchamma** denoted important women leader and **pappamma**, idol of women lineage. When they got married women were given much importance to. Financial management was entrusted to them. Even though the male was dominant outside, at home he had the tendency to abide by the words of his wife. Generally the kallari women were known for their hospitality, affection, frankness, sharp reaction to wrongs etc..

### Ceremonies

A kallari always believed that birth, growth, puberty, marriage and death were most important stages in a completed life cycle and naturally tended to tie up those stages with elaborate ceremonies. This tendency could be seen even today with their banners and cutout culture. In all these ceremonies the relatives were obliged to make prestations. The obligation was **more** strenuous on the part of the maternal uncle. It is also obligatory to give back the moi (gifts) to the donor on similar occasions in future.

### Birth Ceremonies

In the early times the kallari never attached any special importance to the sex of the child since they believed that birth was not in their hands. The marriage bond was strengthened only with the birth of the first child. Up to that period marriage, the jewels were to be kept by the wife and the husband had no right to dispose them. But after the birth of the child the wife could not refuse her husband the jewels. Hence child birth was considered an important event and so elaborate ceremonies were observed with feasts and festivities.

### Puberty Ceremony

Girls puberty was called ruduway or rusuway which was determined purely by nature. The ceremony was called sadangu. It was individual and purely a family function and the girl was secluded for sixteen days in view of hygiene in a separate hut, a temporary

shelter, erected specially for this purpose by the maternal uncle's side. Except dhobi and barber, all others kept themselves away from the family of that girl. On the 16<sup>th</sup> day the temporary shed, usually a thatched hut, was burnt by the people of the maternal uncle and thereby ending the quarantine. Through a ceremony called sadangu kalithal the girl and her family could become free from pollution. It was observed on a grand scale and relatives, mainly maternal uncle, used to make prestation. In fact the maternal uncle was obliged to meet the expenses incurred during in this ceremony since he had a rightful claim on the girl as a bride for his son.

### **Female Infanticide**

Thus right from the birth prestations had to be made to the girl children which would reach its culmination during their wedding and post wedding period. These elaborate customs with a passage of time became an economic burden on the girl's parents. As a result the birth of another female child was not at all entertained. Hence they began to follow the inhuman practice of female infanticide. In fact this cruel practice is still in vogue in the taluk, one of the Usilampatti, poverty being the basic reason for it.

### **Death Ceremony**

The kallars usually buried the dead. The kallar either buried or cremated them. Usually they burnt the dead. Here again an elaborate and noisy ceremony with mind captivating music was observed. Funeral palanquin was prepared with flowers since they considered it the most respectable way of bidding farewell to the dead. Accompanied by the music the corpse was taken to the cemetery. In principle the mourner was invariably a male either a deceased man's younger son or a deceased women's elder son. In the absence of male children, the mourner could be the women's husband or brother's son for a man.

### **Inheritance**

**In the event of death of a man** (father) his property was inherited by his younger brother. If he was issueless, as per traditional law, women did not have a right for inheritance of property except for some personal object. In the case of widow, they were entitled for a share for their maintenance and in case of unmarried sister a share was kept aside to meet her wedding expenditure.

### **Amusements**

The kallar were fond of adu-puli attam – a game more or less like chess. Right from their childhood, they were trained in martial arts such as silambam, boxing, wrestling, etc., and thus trained to be valiant. Their manly sports of jallikkattu which was also known as manjuvirattu, or bull-baiting, would speak for itself as to their intrepidity and invulnerability. Cock fight was also another favorite pass time for them.

## Conclusion

According to the article speak about kallars achievements, because they were the most conservative, and lovers of tradition. It is true in the sense that they had been with tradition and had been voluntarily anchored themselves to the ancients .So now that their custom and tradition of social life, marriage, position of women, ceremonies, female infanticide, amusements are enlighten the kallar society.

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