

## THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF VIRUDHUNAGAR HINDU NADAR COMMUNITY - A STUDY

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### **Abstract**

*The Purpose of this paper is to disclose the stating the historical background of virudhunagar Nadar and merchanties of its people we can have a detailed idea about the Nadar's socio- cultural background. The virudhunagar Nadar community, who inhabited in pavalali- was under one among the 72 palayams-controlled by poligars- under the madurai nayak kings- now the establishment of virudhunagar city has become well known for the toils of Nadar's society, and their persistent effort in making wise administration in retaining the social activities in marriage, education, business, spirituality, politics, festivals, water management and entertainments. Thus the author specifies how the virudhunagar Nadar society has raised their status as well as others economical and socio- cultural status to the new heights in this 21<sup>st</sup> century and supported to the development of our nation.*

**Keywords:** Poligars, Bridegroom, Agmark, Philanthropic, Ancestral, Conglomerate.

### **Introductation**

**G.E.Howard** regards “**History to be past sociology, and sociology present History.**” It is evident that our present forms of social life, our customs or ways of living have their roots in the past and they can, therefore, be best explained when they are traced back to their sources. This can be possible only with the help of history. Thus the following sources would help the reader to have a clarity on the history of virudhunagar Hindu Nadar community. Virudhunagar forms part of the pandya nadu, was ruled almost continuously by the pandiya kings till the 16<sup>th</sup> century A.D. epigraphical records of the early and later pandyas refer to “14 nadu”, among them “sengudi naddu” presently called as virudhunagar. In 1529, the nayak kings dominated madurai [the capital of pandia nadu]. Part of the region was under their direct rule. The tenkasi pandiyas controlled Srivilliputtur and Rajapalayam while Aruppukkottai and Kariapatti were under the setupathi rulers of ramanathapuram. This is attested by the presence of inscriptions of the Vijayanagara kingdom and Nayak kings ruled these region. Vishvanatha nayak divided the kingdom into “72 palayams” and delegated the power to collect taxes in these zones to the “poligars”. The poligars were also under obligation to render military service to their nayak overlords in times of need. The Madurai nayak rule came to an end in AD 1736. The poligars became independent rulers of their domains. Seithur, Kollamkondan, Elayirampannai and kollapatti in virudhunagar district were important regions controlled by poligars, the poligars of virapandya kattabomman and the marudu brothers in virudhunagar district. They organised a confederacy of poligars to fight against the British. The 1<sup>st</sup> December 1801 proclamation of edward clive, the governor of Madars, reduced the poligars of Sivaganga and Ramanathapuram to the status of “**zamindars**”. Pandalkudi, Palayampatti, Sennalkudi,

Kollapatti, Elayirampennai, Chinnavadi, Sevalpatti, Mannarkottai, "**Pavali**" Seithur and Kollamkondan were the *zamins* in this area. From the 19<sup>th</sup> century AD, District Collectors and Judges were appointed by the British to control the area. In 1910, the district of Ramanathapuram was created for reasons of administrative convenience by carving out territories from Madurai and Tirunelveli districts. In 1985, the Ramanathapuram district was trifurcated to create Ramanathapuram, Sivaganga and Virudhunagar districts.

### **Historical Background of Virudhunagar**

Virudhunagar town is the head quarters of the district of the same name. Located on the national highway (NH7) from Madurai to Kanniyakumari, this town was called *virudhugalvetti* during the British time. According to the local legend, around 400 years ago, a warrior, who was in possession of a number of flags in token of having conquered many others, challenged the residents of his town. A resident accepted the challenge and in the ensuing fight, killed the warrior and seized the flags. From then onwards the town was known as *virudhugalvetti*. "**Virudhugal**" means banners. This was changed to **virudhupati** in 1875. On 6<sup>th</sup> April 1923 the council named the town **Virudhunagar**. Its history as an important trading town goes back to the British times, when merchandise from Virudhunagar was exported overseas through the ports of **Kulasekarapattinam, Tuticorin, Vaippar and Devipattinam etc.,**

### **The Native of Virudhunagar Nadars**

"**Pavali**" is the first inhabitants of the Nadar Community. Pavali is situated on the way to Sengundrapuram from Virudhunagar. It was one among the **72 palayams, controlled by poligars, under the Madurai Nayak Kings**. A dilapidated place of the poligars still stands in Pavali. A.D 1701 and 1702 a severe famine occurred in **Tirunelveli**. So the people living in the area were forced to migrate to survive the famine to settle in Virudhunagar. The Nadars who lived on the east coast in 19<sup>th</sup> **country** are migrants and had to settle in Virudhunagar. It was reported that they began to live in order to develop their business. After the **Sivakasi Riot (1899)**, the Nadar Community has settled in the Virudhunagar. Among the Nadar Community, the earliest settlers of this town were the **Aroor nadars**. Later **Kilakadai, Melakadai, Poosari, Sivanthi Vakayaras** also settled in Virudhunagar. In 18<sup>th</sup> century "**Pagalam**" Vakayaras from "**Vempar**", in 19<sup>th</sup> century middle "**Mundakkan**" vakayars also settled in Virudhunagar. Su.Pa.Vakayaras from "**Keppilingampatti**" and "**Tolandi**" vakayaras from Thalavaaipuram came afterwards settled in Virudhunagar. Now Nadar Community that belongs to **92 vakayaras** are living in Virudhunagar. The contribution of Virudhunagar Hindu Nadars in the development of the *Family, Marriage, Business, Education, Water conservation, Entertainment, Religious Practices & Festivals*.

### Virudhunagar Hindu Nadar Family

**"The family is the test of freedom; because the family is the only thing that the free man makes for himself and by himself."**-Gilbert k. Chesterton. *Family is the basic source helps an individual to learn the freedom to administrate and enrich not only himself but also the whole household and the same experience helps everyone to lead and coordinate the entire society.* A modern Nadar family is a nuclear type consisting of husband, wife and children. Joint family system has almost disintegrated though not completely extinct. The parental and family affinity still survives. Male domination is a common feature of the family system of virudhunagar hindu nadars. Generally girls are denied right over property. Each family spends a lot for the marriage of the daughters. Most of the parents would like to get their married to educated and well to do bridegrooms in the town. Married women are always fond of frequently visiting their parents. They are given all facilities and services at their parents'house. Initially the people who settled in Virudhunagar they stayed in Avvaiyar street, patti street, Gurunathankovil street, Sandhikuda street, Koolaiyankoil street and ull (inner) street. People follow many rituals and customs from birth to death.

### Marriage Ceremonies

The positive rationalistic ideas like equal opportunities for all, liberation of women from bondage and inter-communal marriage and institution of self-respect marriages with no Brahmin priest and rituals and their piety as well as clanish affinity are noteworthy practices of the hindu nadars of virudhunagar. Even today the marriages are performed without Brahmin priest, dispensing with Hindu rituals. A respected elder of the community, with no sacerdotal position, presides over the exchange of garlands and the tying of the tali which binds the couple together in marriage. Before the marriage a number of mini social functions such as **poovaithal, Nichayadhartham, Pown Urukuthal** are still observed. According to the Nadar Community the bride and groom have their own way of arranging the wedding hall individually. On the previous night of wedding, The Friends, Family members and groom go to the bride's place and fit up bangles for the bride's wrist. On the day of the Wedding, the groom will go to the place of the bride, with him the relatives and friends in a charioteers or car. The comfortable bridegroom band rides on the elephants. The Virudhunagar Nadar Community often wears **"Thali"** or **"mangalyam"** in the gold chain at the wedding. There is no way of writing **"Moi"** [money as gift] in their marriage.

### Trade and Commerce

Virudhunagar is the most important trading centre both in wholesale and retail in Virudhunagar district. The Nadars of virudhunagar improved their economic status through trade and business. M.S Periyasamy Nadar, V.V.Ramasamy, K.Kamaraj and many others played a major role in promoting the name and fame of the town. At commercial pursuit of the leading industries like V.V.V.Anantham, Idhayam Muthu and others attribute international fame to the town. The Hindu Nadars who constitute the major community in Virudhunagar, have their own custom and tradition. AGMARK Means Agricultural

Marketing. It was on the basis of the Royal commission on Agriculture. AGMARK introduced in India for the first time in 1933. Agriculture marketing in Virudhunagar was established in 1962 due to the earnest effort of K.Kamaraj, the chief minister of Madras. The merchants of Virudhunagar practiced honesty in their business. The people learn business practices and Techniques from Mumbai Merchants. From a business perspective, Virudhunagar is called little Mumbai. Until 1940, Virudhunagar was the centre of the trade for southern regions for circulating goods through business. The important business of virudhunagar Nadars like Cotton, pulses, Coffee, Cardamom, Oil, Chilly, Betel nut, Coriander, Tobacco, Grocery and Iron & steel business. The Poet **Marudhakasi's** song to commemorate the pride of Virudhunagar merchants is still hailed by the people of the world.

### Educational Development

**"Education has yet to be in the world, and civilization- civilization has begun nowhere yet."**- **Swami Vivekanandar**. To achieve the great growth of civilization, it is only through education that Virudhunagar has developed and excellence. Because the Virudhunagar Hindu nadar society by educating, The educational institution like school and college are the most important part of the Virudhunagar Hindu Nadars. The great leader **K.Kamaraj** Who was the former Chief Minister of Tamilnadu, and the former President of Indian Congress Party executed sincere measures to educate the people of Tamil Nadu and developed many fields of business and education to uplift all walks of people. Earlier, The Nadar Community was denied education. So in the **mid of 19<sup>th</sup> century**, the academy set up schools in Virudhunagar, Recruiting teachers and freeing up the education for all students. On **2<sup>nd</sup> Dec 1885** a school was opened in a roofing shed at *pottal* (open ground) of *mariamman temple*. **Virudhunagar Hindu Nadar Managing trust** established English medium school in the name of the *Hindu Primary School* on **26.11.1889**. On **1892** the Hindu Primary School becomes a Middle School. In 1895 it was renamed as *Kshatriya VidyaSala*. In the year 1956 the School shifted to Madurai Road. Kshatriya Vidya Sala School, it was promoted as Higher Secondary in the year 1978. This is one of the best school in south India. The following schools are run by Virudhunagar Hindu Nadar managing board. There are

- *Saraswathi vidyalaya*
- *SubramaniyaVidyaSala*
- *ThiruvalluvarVidyaSala*
- *KKVS Middle School*
- *Kshatriya Girls Higher Secondary School*
- *KVS Matriculation School*
- *KVS CBSC School*
- *KVS Centenary School*
- *Annamalaiammal Primary School*
- *P.S.Chithampara Nadar English School for girls.*

### Higher Education

Until 1947, there was no college in Ramanathapuram district. So in this situation Virudhunagar Hindu Nadar Senthikumar Nadar College came into existence on 11<sup>th</sup> August 1947 at Madurai Mill Bungalow near Railway Station with 104 Student and 10 lecturers at Virudhunagar. The Virudhunagar Hindu Nadars Association took over the responsibility encouraged by the generous donation offered by Senthikumara Nadar after whom the college has been named. This is flourishing as first Grade College in the district.

### Womens College

Virudhunagar V.V.Vanniapermal Nadar College for Women Started functioning from 27<sup>th</sup> June 1962 as a result of overwhelming public demand for collegiate education for women. The Virudhunagar Hindu Nadars senthikumara Nadar College Paripalana Sabai, is a body registered under the societies registration act shouldered responsibility of starting the college with the aid of its own funds and donation collected from Mahamai Tharappu and from the philanthropic people of Virudhunagar.

### Vocational Colleges

S.Vellaisamy Nadar Polytechnic College was started on 27.07.1958 at VHNSN College in V.N.M.ArunachalaNadar Hall. Now it is run in Separate place and this community also established Kamaraj Engineering College, and also started M.S.P.Nadar College of Education and VVV.Nurshing College for Women. In the twenty first century, Virudhunagar district has an important role to play in the education. The main reason for the development in education is the contribution of the Virudhunagar Hindu Nadar Community People.

### Religious Practices

Being pious people they worship number of deities. They worship of goddess they like mariamman is quite common among them Hindu nadars. There is also a belief among them nadars that their original ancestor where they adopted sons of kali. Ancestral worship also prevails among them. Another religious custom prevalent among them hindu nadars is the worship of family and clannish deities. Every group has its own ancestral temple. The worship of the village deity is done in Tamil Forms and it is an important part of the conglomerate of religious beliefs, customs and ceremonies. Not only folk deities but also great deities are worshiped, especially the deities like Lord Siva, Thirumal, Murugan and Vinayakar in Virudhunagar by Hindu Nadars. Pangunni pongal is a festival which is attended by not only the people of Virudhunagar but also eighteen villagers of Virudhunagar. The Parasakthi Sri Veilukandamman temple is one of the most trusted deities of Virudhunagar Nadar clan. The flowing temples are managed by Virudhunagar Hindu Nadar Uravin murai Trust.

- Vinayakar Temple
- Sivan Temple

- Srivala Subramaniya Swami Temple
- Sri Renganathar Swami Temple
- Sri Veilukandamman Temple
- Sri MariyammanTemle
- Sri Soundamman Temple
- Kaliyamman Temple
- Sri Thirupugal Swami Temple
- Karuppasamy Temple
- Muniyasamy Temple

### Water Management

**“World can’t exist without water”- Van sirappu.** To enforce the saying of **Thiruvalluvar**, to harvest the water, the Teppakulam (water tank) is located in the heart of the city, reflecting the culture of the people of Virudhunagar Hindu Nadar. The theppakulam was built in 1866 A.D with help of local and Nadars from out suits of Virudhunagar. Its length is 323 feet, wide 294 feet, deep 21 feet. Water capacity is 5crore liters. The pond’s lower arches were built in the year of 1920. The hall in the center of the Teppakulam was built by the Merchant K.C.R. Rengasamy Nadar on 03.11.1927. In early times, water was poured from the stone warehouse on the Madurai Satur Bypass Road, Peralikanmani and from the Kausika River. If the pool is full of water, there is a separate way to discharge the overflowing water. Tube wells were placed on the four sides of the pond. Water pumps have been installed both the sides of Thepakulam. Now Virudhunagar Theppakulam is maintained of Palasarakkukadai Makami. Now-a-days in Tamilnadu, many ponds are dried without water doing summer. But Virudhunagar Nadar People saved water in the Theppakulam all year around. The Theppakulam is celebrated for the 150<sup>th</sup> year anniversary (1866-1917) by Virudhunagar Palasarakkukadai Makamai on 12.10.2017.

### Conculsion

In the 21th century, the Virudhunagar Nadar community has made progress in all sectors; especially the former Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu Perunthalavar K.Kamarajar has stamped the pride of virudhunagar across India. Virudhunagar the home town of kamarajar has been providing educatin to poor students of all communities for over a hundred years. The famous oil industry Idhayam gin gelling oil and the well known chikkari coffee company that belong to virudhunagar have expanded its branches to overseas and spread the pride of virudhunagar commerce. Virudhunagar plays an important role in India’s market next to mumbai. Virudhunagar nadar community has been a guiding force for the advancement of other community. There is no doubt that virudhunagar is part of the nadar community’s efforts to make India a great power in the present day.



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