THE CLAN DEITY WORSHIP IN VIRUDHUNAGAR WITH SPECIAL TO SANGLIKARUPPASAMY WORSHIP - A CULTURAL VIEW

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Introduction

In India, more than 80% of the people are of Hindu religion and devotees to their clan deity. The main purpose of this study is **"to understand the worship of the clan deity Sanglikaruppasamy at Virudhunagar, the temple of that clan deity is constructed and the prayer offered by Virudhunagar Nadar's".** This article details discuss some aspects like the story of Virudhunagar, the rituals, the prayer offerings, worship of clan deity and its features.Before it was authentically named as "**Virudhunagar**", this renowned town had been called by different names. The Tamil word "**Virudhu**" refers to the flag or title that stands for the symbol of triumph.

Virudhuketti: [Virudhu-Reward/Medal] [KETTI- GRIP]

During the 15th century, a renowned valiant named **'Karuppan'** lived. He wore an anklet in his ankle as a symbol of victory. Once, a famous wrestler challenged Karuppan to wrestle with him. Karuppan held him so firmly that he might not escape from his grip, and the opponent was defeated, so Karuppan was rewarded. Since Karuppan won and was rewarded by gripping the undefeated famous wrestler, the town of Karuppan was entitled as "**Virudhuketti**".

Virudhuvetti: [Virudhu: Medal / Vetti-Slaughtered]

To take revenge, the envious foe slaughtered the victorious Karuppan. So the town Virudhuketti was renamed as Virudhuvetti.

Virudhupatti: [Virudhu- Medal] [Patti- Hamlet]

When this town previously was called as "**Saluppapatti**", the people of Nadar came from Paavali and resided at present Virudhunagar. In that meantime, some robbers tried to loot the possessions of Nadars four times. So the Nadars planted a tall lamp stand to protect themselves. The robbers' trials were defeated by the Nadars. So, they entitled their dwelling place as "Virudhugal Patti", later the name Virudhugalpatti was transformed into "Virudhupatti".

Virudhunagar [Virudhu–Medal / Nagar – City]

In the beginning of 20th century, there were 6 important towns in the district of "Ramnad". In the course of time Virudhupatti was much populated and the trade and commerce also developed drastically, so on the demand of Virudhupatti people the then chief minister Mr.Panagal Raja declared renaming Virudhupatti as Virudhunagar on 29.10.1923.

Nadars of Virudhunagar

The inhabitants of the Nadar community who lived in pavali are first settlers. In 1701 and 1702 there was a severe famine in Tirunelveli area. So people living in the area were forced to migrate to Virudhunagar. It is said that some of the Nadar community migrated to this place. Nadar, who lived in the eastern coastal areas, is said to have migrated to develop their business in the 19th century AD. After the Sivakasi riots (1899) Nadar community has settled in Virudhupatti largely. Nadar of Vembar settled in the middle of the eighteenth century. The descendants are from Keppilingambatti. Tholandivagaiyarah is from a nearby place of Rajapalayam near Thalavaipuram.

The Temples of Virudhunagar

The temples in Virudhunagar are 400 years old. From the eighteenth century BC, the people of this village worship the clan deity.

Temples

1. The temple of Lord Vinayaka
2. Shiva Temple
3. Sri ValasubramanianSwamy Temple
4. Sri Ranganathaswamy Temple
5. Veilukunda Amman Temple
6. Mariamman Temple
7. Sri Soundamman Temple
8. Kaliamman Temple
9. Thirupugalsamy Temple
10. Karuppasami Temple
11. Muniyasami Temple
12. Anjaneya Temple

Meaning of Clan Deity (Kuladevata)

The worship of the Village Deity, or grama-devata, as it is called in Sanskrit and in Tamil, forms an important part of the conglomeration of religious beliefs, customs and ceremonies which are generally classed together under the term Hinduism.

Kuladevata (Kula-devata) or Kuladevi stands for "family deity, that is a mother Goddess" within Hinduism as distinct from personal ishtadevata and village deities.

In Practice

The word Kuladevata is derived from two words: Kula, meaning clan and Devata, meaning deity. Thus, it can be said that Kuladevatas are deities which are worshipped by particular clans. The deity can be a male, female, animal or even an object, like a holy stone.Hindu families make a pilgrimage to the Kuladevata or Kuladevi temple to obtain the blessing of the deity after an auspicious occasion such as a wedding. Kuladevatas are worshipped in several sects of Hinduism.

In Tamil Nadu, Goddess Kamakshi, Goddess Renukamba and Lord Muruga are family deities among many others. Goddess Padrakali is the tutelary deity of Nadars. Majority of the Nadar settlements will have a temple for Goddess Padrakali.

Worship of the kula-devata or kula-devi is considered to be of utmost importance. The kula-devata is the guardian of the family, of the lineage. Ancestors of the family have worshipped the deity and there is a bond between the family and the deity. Hence such worship bears fruits early. Worship of the kuladevata is said to appease the deity who is the sole protector of the family. One who worships his/her family deity is said to be protected by the deity in times of calamity.

Historical Background of Sangilikaruppasamy
Origin

Virudhunagar came under the rule of the PavaliZamin, about six kilometers northwest of the time when it was called Saluppapatti. To the north of Saluppapatti, many people of Nadar community went for trade with the bullock cart and chose the pavali. Under the biggest neem tree, they kept their bullock cart and would cook food and take rest. They also would make rope out of coconut fibers.In this situation, the adviser ThanapathyPillai suggested that the tree could be cut down to build a palace for Zamindar. The wooden cutters were staying there and they left pavali because they lacked space.

The villagers who left pavali came to the riverside of Saluppapatti. Those who led them were the KodangiSangili and the poet Anadhappan. They requested the Saluppar people to settle at Virudhunagar. But the Saluppars disagreed.

Thus there was a bitter disturbance between the two sects. There was a competition called "Modiyeduthal". If they take the privileges in the subsequent negotiations, the Nadargal can stay here. It was also concluded that the loser was a slave to the winner. The length of one foot is ten feet wide. At the tenth stage a hump will be placed. When the Modi is taken up by the mob, Modi will be thrown out of the stages. That footstep does not fall over, however, causing great pain as he was beaten. This is the way Modi should go through the 9th stage and take the tenth stage to take the kumpam of the competition. This is the competition called Modiyeduthal.

The head of the nadars, KodangiSangili won the competition, but the Saluppars cut his leg, of sangili, so that he could not win that competition when he was on the final tenth stage of the task. And so sangili fell down and was bleeding and crused the saluppars as "let the Nadars be lifted over salppar's clan. Kodangi would be possessed by Karuppasamy and so he was called as SangiliKaruppasamy.

Another Myth About Sangili Karuppasamy

Karuppasamy Nadar was a palm sugar seller in the town of Vembar near Thoothukudi. He will drop the goods at viruthupatti while carrying to Usilampatti market. Later he started trading at Viruthupatti itself. His name was famous till Rameshwaramfor his unique style of playing silambam.

Veeranan is also one of the famous Silambamplayer at sayalkudi. Veeranan and his six brothers have challenged karuppasamynadar to play silambam alone with them around Virudhunagar. The challenge of being a slave to the winner is challenging. The game started 9 times in the street, Veeranan and his brothers were beaten by Karuppasamy. In the current South Ratha street, the struggle was peculiar. When karuppasamy was playing he stepped on the banana skin and fell down on the street. He hit his forehead on the ground and collapsed valiantly. Veeranan and his brothers cried over karuppasamy. While karuppasamyplaying silambam he would wear salangai on the ankles. Hence Karuppasamy's name was called as SangiliKaruppasamy.

There are three different reasons for the creation of the SangiliKaruppasamy Temple at Virudhunagar. It is said that the temple was built in memory of the wrestler Karuppan, who was killed in wrestling, and in memory of the death of Sangili who was slaughtered by the Saluppars, and in memory of the death of Karuppasamy who died during the silambam play. There is no doubt that the temple was raised at the same place for the above three different causes. It is clear that the people would build a monument for the memorial of the warrior and the same would eventually become a temple.

It was believed that Karuppasamy was furious and so he was chained (sangili) with yagapoojas and blood sacrifices. And so he was named as Sangili Karuppasamy.
Note: Sangili is a Tamil word for the English term chain.

Administration of the Clan

This Sangili Karuppasamy temple is run only by Virudhunagar Hindu Nadar Kodangi Vagaiyara (clan). This clan deity is worshipped by 60 families and their descendants. The 60 families and their descendants are living in Virudhunagar, Chennai, Coimbatore, Thoothukudi, Tirumangalam, Madurai and Sivakasi.

At present (2019), Mr.Nithiyanandam is appointed as the treasurer of this temple.

Features of Worship

This clan deity belongs to the vegetarian tradition. No blood sacrifice is given in the worship in front of the temple. But goats will be offered as sacrifice for the clan deity in a separate place. Non-vegetarian meals will be served in a separate hall.

Offering

The people of Virudhunagar follow a custom of paying the initial offering to this clan deity SangiliKaruppasamy after 30 days of a child's birth or a calf's birth. Then they pay the offering to their respective clan deity. The parent of the child or the shepherd of the cow would pay money offering respectively to this clan deity SangiliKaruppasamy.

Pooja to the Clan Deity

Every Sivarathiri is observed as the (kuladeivam) clan deity's day of worship. The day falls in the Tamil month Maasi. The important pooja is done by the Hindu Brahmin priest called Iyar. On other days, the pooja is conducted by an appointed priest of the clan.On Maasi

Sivarathiri, the deity is invited by playing the unique instrument called Kodangi. On that night, seven devotees will be possessed by the clan deity, and they would act as soothsayers to the devotees.During the month of Panguni, during the Pongal of Mariamman Temple, and in the month of Vaikasi, during the Pongal of Veil Uganda Amman Temple, all the devotees also worship Sangili Karuppasamy.

The clan that belongs to SangiliKaruppasamy also worships other deities using agginichatti, but they finally submit the agini chatty (the pot of fire) to the SangiliKaruppasamy deity temple.Once in twelve years, the Kumbabishegam ritual is observed. The face of the clan deity idol is always covered with a cloth because the deity is considered powerful.The clan deity's temple remains open from 6:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon and from 4:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

Conclusion

From the above discussion, the worship of the clan deity helps us understand the people of Virudhunagar Nadars. This worship is a unique feature of the Virudhunagar Sangili Karuppasamy Temple, distinct from other Karuppasamy temples across Tamil Nadu.

There is a strong affinity between the people of Virudhunagar and their clan deity, Sangili Karuppasamy. Among clan deity worship practices, unique rituals are observed in celebrating the Sangili Karuppasamy festival. Through this worship, one can understand the customs, trade, commerce, self-discipline, courage, and social development of the people of Virudhunagar. The uniqueness of rituals at Sangili Karuppasamy Temple is that they are conducted regularly by Brahmin priests. The Moolavar is an idol stone without any human form.

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