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RESEARCH ARTICLE

CUSTOMS, ETIQUETEE AND MANNERS OF IRULA TRIBES IN VILLUPURAM DISTRICT

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Abstract

This article mainly focused on the customs and manners of Irula Tribals in Villupuram District. India has consisted second largest tribal population next to Africa. Moreover, the fifty percent of the tribal population lived in India. The Census of 2011 has authenticated the above statement that around 8.6 percent of total population is tribals. There are 537 ethnic groups were lived in India, and 75 are declared as primitive tribals. Among them 449 tribals were lived in the forests and forest fringes and linked with the forest economy. The Irulas are spread over entire Tamil Nadu, and their profession belongs to the region where they lived. Tribals were lived both plains areas and Hilly regions in Tamil Nadu. On the path, the Irula tribals were lived both forms. The villupuram district has consisted Irulas in plain areas. Being a minor tribals groups were faced some constrains through education, job, and settlement. They are aboriginal's faced lot of difficulties from the other communities. They are neglected and had lack of awareness, illiteracy lead their life style into hell. The tribals are the aboriginals who lived in the separate settlements in Villupruam District. They are migrated from the hills for the life and livelihood. Irulas worked the traditional ways, however, they lifestyle and their job has been changed by the modernization.

Keywords: Aborigines, Irulas, Customs and manners, lifestyle, Primitive tribals, Villupruam District

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Introduction

India has consisted second largest tribal population next to Africa. Moreover, the fifty percent of the tribal population lived in India. The Census of 2011 has authenticated the above statement that

125

around 8.6 percent of total population is tribals. (Gopalakrishnan, 2011) There are 537 ethnic groups were lived in India, and 75 are declared as primitive tribals. Among them 449 tribals were lived in the forests and forest fringes and linked with the forest economy. The Tribals have been names as Adivashi, Mudukudi, and Vanavasi. The Tamil Literary sources Tholkappiyam and Thirukkural has mentioned about the tribals. The Tholkappiyam referred the tribals as "Ayar" and Thirukkural mentioned as "Vetturavar, Kurinjilakizhavan, Mullai Nilkkovalar, Kanakkuravar, Eyinar, Ebini, Ayar, Aviyar, Aymagan, Aymagal, Pulaiyar, Idaiyar, Idaimagan, Idaimagal, Sirukkudia, Kuravar, Kovalar, Kosar, Koyan, Koyaman, vettuvar, Vedar, kanikkarar, and Mazhavar. The Irulas are spread over entire Tamil Nadu, and their profession belong to the region where they lived. Tribals were lived both plains areas and Hilly regions in Tamil Nadu. On the path, the Irula tribals were lived both forms. The villupuram district has consisted the irulas inhabitants in plain areas. Being an minor tribals groups were faced some constrains through education, job, and settlement. They are aboriginal's faced lot of difficulties from the other communities. They are neglected and had lack of awareness, illiteracy lead their life style into hell. This article mainly focused on the customs and manners of Irula Tribals in Villupuram District.

Tribals in Tamil Nadu

Tamil Nadu has the natural assestes consisted the largest tribal groups. There are two forms of hills, namely western Ghats and Eastern Ghats. In Tamil Nadu there are 36 scheduled tribes such as Arandan, Adiyar, Eravanan, Kadar, kanikaran, Kommaa Kaniyan,, kannikar, Kanyan, Kochu Irular,, Kattunayakan Konda,, Velan, Kapns, Konda reddy, malai Arajan, Koraga, Kota Kudiva, Melakudi, Kurichchan, Kurimbas, Kurumbas, Maha Malassar, Malaivedan, Muthuvan, malakkuravan Palliyar,, Malayali, Malssar, malaye kandi, Manna, Mudugar, Mauduvan, Palleyan, Palliyar, Paniyan and Sholga, (Shashi 1994) Out of the 36 Tribal communities in the state 6 Tribal communities (i.e) Kota, Toda, Kurumbas, Irular, Paniyan and Kattunayakan have been identified as particularly vulnerable Tribal

groups(PTGs) (Report of the commissioner for scheduled castes and scheduled tribes Twenty-sixth Report 1978-1979).

Villupuram District

Villupuram district has been segregated from the erstwhile South Arcot District. It is bordered with Chinglept on the North Arcot in Northern side, Salem district and sea by the eastern side. (Garistin, 1978) It has been segregated from Cuddalore and become 32nd district from Tamil Nadu on 30th September 1993. Villupuram district, being a big district to bifurcated for the administrative convenience and new district has formed and named Kallakurichi, acted as headquarter too. Villupuram district situated between 11° 38' 25" North and 12° 20' 44" South 78° 15' 00" West and 79° 42' 55" East with covered area 3725 sq.kms. (G.O.(Ms) No.424, 2019) it has surrounded the on the west by Kallakurichi district(bifurcated from Villupuram), on the north by Kanchipuram and Thiruvannamalai, then south and east as Cuddalore District. (Usha, 1985) This district consisted 2 major revenue divisions, 9 administrative taluks, have 932 revenue villages, 2 municipalities, 8 town panchayats with 13 blocks and around 693 village panchayats.

Irulas

Irulas are the primitive tribes become the forest-tribe on this district in Tamil Nadu Perhaps, Villupuram district consisted kalrayan has given the possibilities to the Tribals who settled in the region. (Sanmuga Sundaranar, 1985) Irulas are otherwise known as Villiyans or bowmen. They are chiefly found in the hills of Gingee hills. They are appeared with dark skinned, curly hair and never shave their heads also never wear any turbans or sandals. (Francis, 1906) However, some of them leaved the hills and settled in the plains areas and lost their tradition and customs. In Villupruam district the Irula tribals majorly lived in Chinna thachur and Pudupalayam. (The author has been visited and collected the records to interact them; Interview with Pachaiyappan, Irula at Pudupalayam, Doss, VAO, Pagandai, T.R.Arumugam, Irula, Chinna thachur, Vijayalakshmi, Chinna thachur).

Religion

The Irulas have devoted the minor deity named Kanni. The kanni goddesses otherwise known as Ayamma. Kanniyamma believed that she is the sister of Goddesses Mari, Neeli. Both goddesses were devoted by the mose backward classes believed that the realtiship of the Irulas and the above communities. They worshipped the goddesses for getting prosperity and wealth. However, they prayed for getting protection from the wild animals and other natural calamities. Also worishiped at the time of the plough and cultivation. While drought happended in this region, they worishipped the goddess for the rain (Francis,1906a). During the tamil month of Masi, they irulas conjoined in the Mamallapuram coast and worshipped the Goddess of Kannimma ever year. There are around 50 irula tribals were married in this occasion on February 20, 2019 (Dinathandi , 2019).

Customs and Manners

The tribas have the unique pattern of life and customs which differ from the other people lived in this district. However, the impact of modernization and migration their settlement may and the lifestyle changed over the years.

Birth Cermony

From birth to death, the rites were conducted by the irulas. After the birth of the child, the irulas construct the hut and both child and mother were lived some days inside the hut. After the seventh day, the aunt of child come to the hut and sprinkles the holy water and brough the mother and child inside the home. The sister of the bride might name the child. (Interview with T.R.Arumugam, Irula, Chinna thachur, Villupruam).

Puberty

After the girls attain puberty, the rites were conducted by the brother of the mother known as Maman(uncle). He construted the hut for habitat for the girl and plugin the neem leaves on the hut. After the seven days, the girl go to bath in the river and wear the new cloths.

Marriage

The family of bride who visited the bridegrooms home on Monday or Sunday for asking the bridegroom for the marriage. They bride has to bring the stick both made by the iron or wood on matrimonial allaiance. Before the puberty girls are married in this community. (Francis, 1906b) The Marriage ceremony become very simple. The meat of sheep are served while marriage feast. The realtives and friends has given the gifts to the couples on that day. The sacred thread (Thali) tied on the womens neck during this occasion. However, these ceremonies impacted only afted the modernization. The Muppan has to give the sacred threat to the bride and conducted the above ceremony. After the engagement the bridegroom lived with the bride up to one year. The widow may marry the other men. so there is no widows in these community. (Interview with Vijayaalaskhmi, Irula women , Chinna thachur, Villupruam).

Death Ceremony

The rites of birth and death are very simple in the Irulas community. The sub-division of the Irula tribe has followed the unique type of the death rites. The dead are usually buried with lying face upwards, and stoned were placed on the burial. Their burial was known as Kompey. While attending the last rites, the people must bring the sere stick if the dead person was old. If the dead person was young the people may bring the green sticks. After the body was buried the son of the dead was shave his head and bring home to cover his head by cloth. On the eleventh day the death of eldest son ties a cloth round his head.

Conclusion

The tribals are the aboriginals who lived in the separate settlements in Villupruam District. They are migrated from the hills for the life and livelihood. Irulas worked the traditional ways, however, they lifestyle and their job has been changed by the modernization. The people from abroad has visited India for desired to seen the customs and manners of the people. on the path, the Irulas have the unique lifestyle which admired the other communities.

However, they are economically poor and socially marginalized. Also they had lack of education, illiteracy, awareness lead the life lead the life into hell. Still they never get the community certificate would be biggest problem in the Irulas who lived in Villupuram district.

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