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RESEARCH ARTICLE

THE FLOURISHING FOLK CULTURE OF THE KURUMBA ETHNIC TRIBES IN TAMIL NADU
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Abstract

The rich tapestry of Tamil Nadu's cultural diversity is adorned by the vibrant and enduring folk culture of the Kurumba ethnic tribes. This ancient community, deeply rooted in the heartland of Tamil Nadu, has nurtured a unique and captivating heritage that continues to thrive amidst modernity. The Kurumbas, with a history dating back centuries, have demonstrated remarkable resilience in preserving their folk culture. This indigenous group has weathered numerous societal changes and external influences, yet their cultural identity remains steadfast.

Keywords: Kurumpas, Kounder, Heckate, Naikkar

Introduction

The Kurumbas, also known as Kurumbar, constitute a tribal community residing across the Indian states of Karunadaka, Kerala, and Tamil Nadu. This resilient ethnic group primarily inhabits the picturesque hilly terrain of the Nilgiris district in Tamil Nadu, sharing their homeland with other tribes like Kothar, Thodar, Ilurar, Baniyar, and Kattu Nayak. Their lives are intricately entwined with the bounties of the forest, as they adeptly gather resources to sustain their existence. Their language is Kurumba, spoken rather than written. Therefore, the school teachers of Coonoor have created and published an Agaramudi for them. The Todars and

Badukars together often give trouble to the krumbars. They would invade villages inhabited by miscreants and kill them in droves. Such massacres have taken place in the years 1824, 1835, 1875, 1882, 1900. Kurumbars are excellent archers. When there was a war between the King of Kotdayam and the British, the Kumbars fought bravely on behalf of the King of Kotdayam. At present, they are living in the villages of Kulathuppalayam, Kurumbapalayam near Madhukarai, Kurumbapalayam near Vedapatti, Poochyur near Periyanyakanpalayam, Thavayampalayam and Kasthuripalayam in Coimbatore district.

Physical appearance and religious life

Kurumbars are black in colour, dwarf in shape, and have a single veined body and appear dark in appearance. The hair on their heads is thick and curly; It sprouts like a bush around the head. Kurumbas worship three deities namely Gallatta (goddess), and Gadupillala. Irupilli and Gadupillala are considered deities who migrated to Wayanad from Malayalam.

Divisions

These people live in three groups namely Kurumbar, Urkurumbar and Jane Krumber. Kurumbars live in the Nilgiri Plateau and Urkurumbars live around Nellialam. Jain krumpams are also known as 'shola nayaks'. They live in Wayanad, especially in the Madhumalai region. Jain krumpams are experts in destroying the nests of mountain bees in the mountain ridges and extracting honey, which they also have as a profession. Jaenu means honey in Kannada. Hence these Kurumbars call themselves "honey-gathering forest chiefs" (jenu koyo shola nayaka) Jain Kurumbars are considered experts in magic tricks. They are said to have the power to summon wild animals when they wish, and to pulverize even rocks by throwing some mysterious herbs. Every town has a panchayat and the head of the panchayat is called 'Esaman'.

Mullukumbar

The Mullukumbar tribes belong to the Krumber caste. They live in Kudalur area of Nilgiri district. Their dynasty is also said to be that of Sivaveda who gave boon to Arjuna. Their way of life is different from the Kurumbas. They speak a mixed language of Kannada or Malayalam. Their profession is hunting in the forest.

Petta Kurmbar

Tribal people living in Tamil Nadu and Karnataka. These people live in Kudalur area of Nilgiris district in Tamil Nadu. Petta means mountain in Indian language. They are called by many names like Kuruman, Kurumban, Kuruban etc. These people call their habitat Badi. Their huts are made of bamboo. There is a large hut in the middle of the hut. There is

always a fire burning outside. The Peta Kurumbas who live in Mudumalai and Theppakadu areas are experts in taming elephants. Their occupation is collecting honey and fishing. They light a fire and worship it as a deity. The language spoken by Petta Krumber is called Petta Krumber. It is a distinct Dravidian language belonging to the South Dravidian language family. Professor Emano and Kamil Suvalapil have also mentioned this idea in their respective books. There is a total of 16 names among the Pettak Krumber people. They are eight male names such as Manban, Maran, Bomman and eight female names such as Manbi, Mari and Bommi. These people bury their dead. Both men and women carry the dead to Idukat. The family of the deceased will later settle elsewhere.

Worship and ritual of life of the Krumber people

Palangudi Makkal Kurumbas are also a section of Neelamalavi people. They are Tamil speakers. But other Tamils cannot understand the Tamil they speak. Most of them live in Arakadu in Neelamalai and Kadanjala below Neerkandi. And Palangudi Makkal Kurumbas live in Mysore Malayalam, Attabadi, Annumale etc. Also, they are called Kurumbas (Palangudi Makkal Kurumbas). There is also a type called Palangudi Makkal Kurumbas. But the customs and habits of the two types of dwarfs are the same. Those who are in Malayalam among these Kurumbars speak Malayalam this is not understood by the Malayalees. The Kannada spoken by the Kurumbans of Mysore is unintelligible to Kannada. Similarly, the Kurumbas in Annumalai speak Tamil. It is not understood by the Tamil people. This is because the language they speak has a lot of trisyllabic words. Kurumbars, Madi Veedo, Machu Veedo did not build huts and lived. Their habitats are huts and rock caves and slopes, with banana seedlings growing in front of and behind the huts.

The huts are made of bamboo. It is covered with paddy and wild sugarcane. The huts are individually spaced. Amidst all the huts, they have built a hut like a big pavilion. It has open space on all four sides. It can sleep between thirty and forty people. A fire burns around its day and night. Only two of them are night guards. One can hear the cries of various animals. Some Kurumbas have thatched roofs of their

houses. Household items Pots, bamboo baskets, spades, cutlass, scythes, torn clothes, canoes, mats made of bamboo are the items used by them. In the beginning, bamboo bowls were used for milking, honey pouring, water pouring, and gourds for pouring. But today the Kurumbar use a variety of weapons including iron and stone tools. After a woman poops, she has to live in a separate hut for eight days. On the eighth day she takes a bath and puts flowers on her head.

The flower watering ritual is very similar to the ritual we perform. The flowered female first rests on a mane, or square. A small boy is dressed up as a groom in her womb. Then pour good oil in a bowl or a pan and wipe it in front of him. Both the old man and the near-relatives greet each other by touching their heads. A party will be held. After such a ritual, the girl is taken home. After menstruation, the woman should stay in a separate house for three days.

A Folk of Veerabhadrasamy

A variety of folk dances are performed to aid in worship. They often take place during festivals for the village deities. They are classified as performing arts specific to specific deities. Mostly all religious performances are performed for the worship of God. Veerabhadraswamy is one of the children of Lord Shiva. He has many names in many places. He is interpreted as a family deity for many ethnic groups and a guardian deity for some.

The Thiruvilayadal Purana says that he sprang from the forehead of Lord Shiva. It is said that he appeared as a hero to destroy Dakhan in Dagnakayagappharani. In 'Kanda Purana' it is mentioned as 'Veerabhadra Patalam'. Agora Patira is the family deity of the 'Kurumbar' people. They are among the people of India who stand on the path of dharma. They are residents of North Arcot, Tiruvannamalai, Dharmapuri district and now Ooty. They are known as "Kurumbar" who can speak Tamil language without 'libby' mixed with Kannada. There is an oral history that these people are the descendants of the Pallavas who ruled with Kanji as their capital. Although they try to live in the mountains, their occupation is goat and cow grazing and wool weaving.

Pudukottai, Trichy, Salem and Coimbatore districts will hold Veerabhatra festival in the months of Chitrai, Aadi, Masi and Puratasi. Then the game played is called a board game. But according to the information found while analysing about this game, it has been given that day that it is a game of kumbar. Then the games are named after the movement of the instruments played in the game. "It got its name because it is danced with Veerabhadrasamy on its head. Ichilai is a Sami made of Aimbom. The idol is made to look like a horse or a horse and is like a board. It is called 'Veerabhadraswamy board game' and because it is played by kumbar it is called 'Kurumbalakai game'. Therefore, playing with sammy on the kurumbar board, it got the name as kurumbar board game.

Godly deeds of folks for Kurumbar

In this folk It seems that the game that was played for the worship of God is now scientifically useful. However, during the game, the arms and legs of the players are fully active, which gives good health to the body. Nowadays we spend a lot on exercise. On that day they got the training for free through the game. It also refreshes the nerves. It is also evident that these are Tamil speaking people who are not 'Liby' who are hill people. These people seem to live in many places. It is evident that they lived in the Western Ghats during that period and their food was nuts, fruits and tubers. This food can be used to determine the fastness of the players. It is also known that what was called 'Kurumbatam' back then has changed to 'Kurumbar's board game' today. The board game is now considered to be a game related to games such as Samavatram, Sevayatram, Devrattam etc.

Conclusion

In Kurumbar towns, the adjudicator of cases is known as 'mudi'. A priest is there to help him in solving cases etc. This 'muddhi' is not chosen by inheritance. Initially, the perpetrators were arrested four days later. They gave in instalments; In this case, the penalty is one quarter rupees, and this penalty money can be used by everyone to drink tea. If a wild boar wants to marry

another wild boar, the two wild boars must first meet and talk. Loss Male and female are equal in loss: there is no difference. The padi will be made of wood and bamboo found in the forest. After the death of her husband, the wife should take her earring and her right hair and place it on her husband's chest. If the wife dies, the husband takes his earring and puts it on his wife's chest and shaves his head. They have two customs of cremation and burial. But they do not bury the corpse immediately; No shooting: the dead moon will pick up the corpse on the same day. They bury the dead body. Neelamalai Irulan If a person dies, the krumpan should be shaved. When good people die, the world will be relinquished through the netherworld sinners will become ghosts of death. Kurumbas also have thatched roofs of their houses. Household items Pots, bamboo baskets, spades, cutlass, scythes, torn clothes, canoes, mats made of bamboo are the items used by them. In the beginning, bamboo bowls were used for milking, honey pouring, water pouring, and gourds for pouring. Previously, the Kurubas celebrated parashe where the group of Kurubas throughout a region celebrated the festival of their gods. During this time Goravas, an order of saints dedicated to Mailari Devaru, are initiated. During the parashe, the idol of the temple where the parashe takes place is washed in a river, and decorated with hoovu-vibhuti. The worship is conducted by a Kuruba pujari and the Goravas sing songs dedicated to the deity. However, these celebrations were largely gone by the 1920s. The Kurubas also worship Iragaru, men who die unmarried, by building temples and setting up stones for them. They bury their dead.

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