

## **"Unveiling the Socio-Cultural Fabric: Investigating the Kattunayakan Tribe in the Context of Madurai District"**

**N. Vanavarayan<sup>1</sup> Dr. B. Chitra<sup>2\*</sup>**

1. Research Scholar, PG. Dept. of History, Govt. Arts College, Melur-625 106  
Tamilnadu, affiliated to Madurai Kamaraj University, Madurai.625021

2. Assistant Professor, Department of History, Government Arts College, Melur--  
625 106, Tamilnadu, affiliated to Madurai Kamaraj University, Madurai.625021

### **Introduction**

one of the Southern State of India's primitive tribal communities is the Kattunayakkan. Their primary places of residence are Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Tamilnadu, and Karnataka. The Pallava monarchs are thought to have dispatched delegates from this tribe. Among the thirty-six scheduled tribes that call Tamilnadu home, they are one. The meaning of the phrase Kattanayakkan is "The king of the jungle." Kadu, which translates to "forest, wild, or jungle," is the source of the Kattunayakkan people's name. Nayakkan is Chief's leader. The other names given by the inhabitants were Kudukudupunayakkan and Kudukudupuattion. the residents of Tamilnadu's significant hills, including Varshandu Hill in the Theni district, Palanimalai and Sirumalai Hills in Dindigul, and Jawadhu Hills of Dhamapuri? The small Kattunayakkan population migrates to the north and to the Madurai district.

### **Problem Statement**

Twenty families, who have been in the village for 50–60 years, moved from Munar Malai to make their living. Initially, these families were employed as wage workers in the Madurai District's powerhouse construction project. Residents of the Madurai District are members of the Kattunayakkan Community. The Kattunayakkan scheduled tribes of Tamilnadu are identified by the village names of Sathyamoorthy Nagar, Sakkimangalam, Kadachanenthal, and S. Alangulam. 400 households were living in the village on Madurai's northern side at that point as the population grew.

## **Study Area**

In several districts of Madurai, there is a high population density of Kattunayakkan. of the Madurai North Tamilnadu research region, Sakkimangalam, Kadachanenthal, S. Alangulam, and Sathyamoorthy Nagar. As a result, the study's focus on community identification is the Madurai district. It is analyzed and explained how their entire social-economic and cultural lives

## **Evaluations of the literature**

To reach results for this study, "A study on Kattunayakkan tribe concerning Madurai District," both primary and secondary sources were used. The primary sources of information are government orders and personal interviews, most of which are archival in nature. The paper highlights the significant relevance of contemporary published works as secondary sources. One such work is *The Socio-Economic Condition of the Aboriginal Tribes of the Province of Madras*, written by A. Aiyappan (1948:100). According to A. A. D. Luiz (1962: 86–90), who wrote a book on Keralan tribes, Kattunayakkan is as follows. In his report on the Kattunayakkan, M. Sasikumar (1999:4) reached the ethnographic conclusion. The book *The Scheduled Tribes concerning Kattunayakan of Tamilnadu* was edited by K. S. Singh (1994:483), as stated below. Varma, R. C. *Indian Tribes: Sheela aseervatham and A Sivakozhunthu's over the ages. Next is Nattupazhankudigal in Tamil. Nilgiri District, Tamilnadu; Bhatavathsalabharathi, Tamilgathil Nadotikal Sangalamuthal; Samakalamvarai; and Tam i Lagapazhankudigal; Jakka Parthasarathi S. Kattunayakkan. N. Murrugeshpandian Kudukudupaikaran Vaazhviyal* has been consulted in order to ensure the dissertation's effective completion.

## **Social Group**

Tribal groups have a well-structured social framework. People still adhere to their social control system and conventions, which helps them maintain this structure. This covers the establishments of kinship, marriage, and family. The Pilli vodu and Tara vodu are the two main endogamous groups that make up the community. Endogamous refers to the fact that members of each group will marry members of their own group. Risely correctly noted that the tribe's ancestry will ultimately come from familial ties and animals. In Telugu, the word 'Pilli' signifies cat. 'Tara' is the name of a bird. Such kinship system is referred to as moiety organization in

anthropology, and it is thought to constitute the fundamental kinship structure of the tribe. There are far too many clans and lineages that have been created from these two endogamous groupings, including podilvodu, pasamiadu, kovitodu, korivodu, galivodu, kavativodu, seerolodu, payatapaliodu, and so forth. Each of these groups is exogamous, and these are the names of the lineages. They see them as brothers and sisters and do not marry into the same clan.

### **Union**

Every tribe practices endogamy. There is a clan system in the group, and it is rigorously adhered to. They eloped to become married. After the young couple leaves the town, they return and are formally married by the locals. We refer to this kind of tribal marriage arrangement as "marriage by elopement." The ceremonies are performed by the village elders; no Brahmin initiates them. Their headgear is black. widow Remarrying is acceptable. The traditional midwife in the village used gingili and karuputt to perform local abortions. These elements were used to make the ball, which was handed to the expectant girl. In general, it is extremely forbidden to be married in another community. However, there is a custom known as Pelli theritham made of Tulsi for a guy from Kattunaiyakan to reenter the community if he marries a community girl after falling in love with her. They welcome the bride into their community and bless the couple with holy water. Women who leave the group and marry outsiders, however, will not be welcomed back. They don't follow a dowry system and have straightforward marital rites. Even in modern times, the prospective husband pays the bride price and marries the woman of his dreams. Among them, child marriage is extremely prevalent. Patrilocal is adhered to. Although polygyny is common, it is now prohibited. The system of the nuclear family is observed and is patrilocal. During Vaigasi month, people commemorate Vanakaliamma Puja as a community and offer animal sacrifices to the goddess.

### **Belief System**

The goddess of the village, Vanakaliamman, is revered in the tribe's unique belief system. Every clan possesses a kula daivam.

### **Language**

The dialect spoken by the community is Telugu-based. They converse in Tamil with foreigners. They solely write in Tamil and have no script for their dialect.

### **Traditional occupation**

The people in the community are nomadic, moving around and settling usually along to streams and forests. Traditionally, they have engaged in both fishing and hunting. Seldom are the animals that are hunted and fished used for commercial purposes; instead, they are consumed by themselves. The people in the village share food and are self-sufficient. They still capture small birds and hunt creatures like mongooses, jungle cats, squirrels, and turtles. They are semi-nomads now. They hunt animals and birds and consume them all because they are not vegetarians. The people revere cows as gods and view eating beef as forbidden. Pigs are eaten during communal feasts and have long been regarded as delicacies. 'Pigee' is made from the fat and is used as standard cooking oil. They occasionally go fishing with conventional nets as well. When they go hunting, they use well-trained hounds. These canines are regarded as community members since they have been domesticated.

### **Political framework**

Even now, the town maintains its customary political structure. group leaders were always the ones to resolve disputes inside the group. Seldom do they call the police to handle neighborhood issues. Respected as a community leader, his version has been accepted as the ultimate one. They carry out their customs as a community and gather vehicles.

### **Material Culture**

The people in the community own and use a variety of traditional hunting tools. Every piece of hunting gear was basic and archaic. Depending on the size of the animal, several kinds of nets were employed to trap it; also, the community manufactured different kinds of nets. The differences across the nets make it evident what conventional skills and attitudes the community has for their line of work. The ability has been passed down orally from generation to generation.

The younger generation has less interest in hunting and is more interested in other vocations, particularly those with the government.

### **Ceremonies honoring the life cycle**

The folk songs of the village are performed during various life cycle rites. Another name for it is nalathangal pattu. On the eleventh day after the baby is born, they celebrate Purattu and bless the mother and kid with a song. The reptile's (Thonda) blood was frothy on the "Long-Lie of the chilled" as soon as the child was born, together with milk and honey. Throughout the event, they also wear red-iron rods on their foreheads. Every community member has a mark on their forehead. Women also have basic hand tattoos (Pacai Kuthuthal). They perform certain rites and bury their deceased.

### **Tribal characteristics of the Kattunayakkan People**

The Kattunayakkan people are known for their tribal characteristics, which include their relative isolation, semi-nomadic lifestyle, close relationship with the forest, kinship-clan organization, indigenous dialect, simple belief system, indigenous knowledge system in hunting, traditional political system, resistance to change, folk songs, lifecycle ceremonies, and community endogamous and clan exogamy.

### **References:**

1. Vibrant Tribal Expressions, The Hindu Newspaper, March 21, 1999.
2. "List of notified Scheduled Tribes" (PDF). Census India. Archived from the original (PDF) on 7 November 2013. Retrieved 15 December 2013.
3. K.S.Singh People of India Tamilnadu, Vol.XL, New Delhi, 1997, p.181.
4. R.C. Varma, Indian Through the Age. Govt. of India, New Delhi, 1990, p.227.

5. Edgar Thursun caste and Tribes of Southern India, New Delhi, Vol. I, 2001, p.20.
6. H.S.Singh People of India Vol.V., Indian Communities, Delhi, 1998, p.1616.
7. Discussion with Director of Tribal Welfare, Chennai on 06.04.2006.
8. TRC Lr.No.R.C.no.746/A2/2006 dt.12.05.2006 to Director of Tribal welfare, Chennai.