

"Exploring the Unique Cultural Traits: The Kattunayakkan Tribe of Madurai District"

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Introduction

India is a huge, stunning country with a rich, ancient past. This subcontinent has been home to numerous groups of men and women for thousands of years, each with their own cultural practices that include land cultivation, industry development, artistic and craft production, and the development of indigenous culture. Because of the flourishing of multiple civilizations, India is now home to a wide diversity of races that speak a wide variety of tongues and adhere to a wide range of customs and practices. In addition to this cultural splendor, there are still a lot of backward communities with distinct cultures.

These marginalized groups only make up a small portion of each state or region's cultural history in India. Tribes are the name given to these ape-like groups. Writing social history has been coerced scientifically by the dominant schools of thought, namely the Marxian and the Annals. As a result, historical literature has undergone a noticeable change in both substance and perspective. Nearly everywhere, the idea of history from the bottom up is becoming more and more popular. Thus, one of the main areas of interest for Indian anthropologists has been the study of tribal society and culture.

In Tamil and Malayalam, the word Kattunayakkan denotes the king of the jungle. Among the first people recorded to have lived in the Western Ghats are the Kattunayakkan, who gather and collect forest products, primarily wild honey and wax. The guys dress in half-sleeved shirts and short dhotis. The ladies cover their arms and shoulders with a long, single piece of cloth that is fastened around their bodies just below the neck. Before the 1990s, child marriages were frequent; today, girls marry after reaching puberty. Generally speaking, the Kattunayakkan community adheres to monogamy.

One of the backward tribal groups in the southern Indian state is the Kattunayakkan. Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, and Andhra Pradesh are where they primarily reside. It is thought that this tribe was subservient to the Pallava

emperors. They are one of the 36 scheduled tribes who call Tamil Nadu home. The 1950 Indian republican constitution used the term "scheduled tribes" for the first time. They were referred to as primitive tribes and aboriginals of the forest hills prior to that.

They go by titles like Kudukudupaitottiyar and Kudukudupunayakan, but in Tamil they were known as Kudukudupai Kambalattar and Tottiyar. These are the indigenous people that live in the Western Ghats; they are primarily located in the Nilgiris of Tamil Nadu and the Waynad and Nilambar hills that border Kerala. Their primary habitats are the plains, hills, and plateaus of the districts of Madurai, Coimbatore, and the Nilgiris (Singh KS).

Thoda, Kattunayakan, and Kadar But tribal societies. Because tribal women are allowed to choose their husbands and file for divorce, their status is somewhat better than that of scheduled castes. Women of the Thoda tribe are allowed to wed multiple husbands. In matriarchal civilizations, women hold property, and widow remarriage is feasible among the Kattunayakan tribe's women. Women belonging to the lower caste, who are not regarded highly in society, have traditionally worked in agriculture, non-agricultural labor, or any other type of employment. However, if we compare tribal and caste societies, we can conclude that tribal women have a higher standing than caste women. Certain indicators, such as freedom of choice and mobility in social concerns, are present in tribal society. It is believed that tribal women have greater freedom than non-tribal women. The basis for this idea is the ease with which tribal women can remarry after dissolving their first marriage. But in both tribal and non-tribal communities, man is the master.

Hypothesis

1. The goal of the current study is to provide a comprehensive explanation of the research topic, which was selected by the Kattunayakkans of Southern Tamil Nadu's Madurai District.
2. For the sake of this study, the social-cultural, economic, and religious characteristics of Kattunayakkans have been broadly acknowledged.
3. Investigating the ethnic makeup of Tamil Nadu's Kattunayakkan community is morally right.
4. Made an effort to look at these tribes' distinct and autonomous activities in light of their customs and traditional culture.

Study area

The current study was conducted in the Madurai district's tribal hamlets of Sathiyamoorthinagar village. The study area is situated in Madurai's North Taluk. the examination of the Kattunayakan in the Madurai district in order to investigate the characteristics of their social environment and place of origin, as well as their customs, religious beliefs, and cultural qualities. Although the Kattunayakkan tribes' geographical home is primarily in south Tamil Nadu, the current study only looks at Madurai District. In the Madurai District of Southern Tamil Nadu's Samayanallur Post and Sathyamorrthy Nagar, there is a dense population of Kattunayakkan. The primary focus of the study is on different Kattunakkans residents in order to gather the data required for this investigation.

Methodology

In this study, a descriptive and analytical methodology has been chosen. This study would use a survey approach to gather unidentified data related to Kattunayakkan. using a random sample technique. Household surveys and primary data from Kattunayakans—such as interviews and group interviews—collected via the triangulation approach would be used in the study. Aside from the rites and ceremonies associated with birth, adolescence, marriage, dance, and occupation, census data was gathered using this method. Following the living with them was the only way to gather knowledge of this kind. Through an unstructured interview, this was accomplished. The primary informants and the elderly members both played a significant role in providing information about the ethnographic specifics of the Kattunayakns. A timetable and a discussion were used to collect primary data. Their habits, religion, rituals, social life, education, etc. are all relevant to that conversation. involving subjects of both genders and varying age groups, such as teens, children, and elderly. The schedule contained details about the several kinds of families, their literacy levels, their occupations, their incomes, their marital status, their state of health, etc. Continue conducting formal interviews for this project, including both organized and unstructured interviewing methods. Science and technological advancements have made it possible to record material such as women's rites, funeral rituals, and folk songs from the Kattunayakn people. This method proved to be very helpful for the research. Methods like censuses and surveys are highly helpful in gathering data about the Kattunayakan tribe's population, housing count, and demographics. Census data for our study includes name, age, marital status, income, and economic status. The internet, academic records, government documents, and pertinent publications in various libraries are the secondary sources of information gathered. Tent N.G.O. provided a wealth of

knowledge about the Kattunayakans tribe and their way of life. The secondary material was gathered from a variety of sources, including published and unpublished theses and official records from different government officials.

Worship and Language

The Kattunayakkan were not formed, and as they settled among the villages on the plains and plateaus, they progressively turned into semi-nomade people. Within the household and among relatives, they converse in colloquial Telugu. They converse in Tamil with Tamil-speaking groups. Many of them are conversant in Malayalam and Kannada.

The Kattunayakar are Hindus who speak a language composed of many Dravidian languages. The tribe worships Lord Shiva, also known as Bhairava, as their primary god. Along with the other Hindu deities, they also worship animals, birds, trees, rock hills, and snakes. Kattunayakar enjoys dancing, singing, and music. They go by the names Pathinaickars and Cholanaickars as well.

Religion: "Poommakatu" is the traditional god. This indicates that they began by worshipping the stone and then turned to idolatry. The goddesses Vanakaliyamman, Kattuyamman, Konndayammal, and Jakkamal were revered by them. They were forced to adopt the Hindu god system by the Sanskritization.

The Kattunayakkan people held a belief in natural worship, whereby they held the sun, moon, trees, forests, and stones in high regard. On days of full moon, they congregate in greater numbers to worship natural forces. The community's elders removed water, fire, bones, and ass from the burial site. The practice of gazing up at the eagle in the sky is called "ancestor worship." They also see rain as a deity. They see the neem tree as a divinity. In addition, they worship the crescent moon, and their fathers and predecessors also engage in ancestral worship. Spec stories, receptacles, betel Ural, and hand sticks are the materials.

Social Organization and Matrimony:

Tribal communities' social structures were well-organized. 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.

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. Widow remarriage is acceptable, and marriage rituals are performed by the village elders while they are dressed in block head tali. The ladies were allowed to get an

abortion, but gingili and karuputti were used by traditional midwives to carry out the procedure. I. 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. They don't follow a dowry system and have straightforward marital rites.

customary employment

The society of Kattunayaka is based on hunting and gathering. Their economy used to cause them to move around a lot. They now pursue a variety of careers to advance their financial situation. These indigenous peoples' primary profession is fortunate telling. Children, as well as men and adults, work in the same field. They lose their personal identity and their customary occupation as a result of globalization and moderation.

Farming

The main industry in the tribal economy is agriculture. Due to the uneven topography and slope of the land, however, systematic and settled farming is no longer very common. The tribes farm plantation crops such as pepper, garlic, ginger, nutmeg, cloves, and cardamom in addition to paddy, coffee, tea, and cinchona. They grow a variety of crops, including turnips, potatoes, cabbage, carrots, beetroot, and radishes. According to the 2001 Census, 29.84 percent of Kattunayakan families own land, and both men and women work in agriculture within each family.

Harvesting Honey

The Kattunayakans continue to harvest honey using the traditional method. There's a belief that this line of work serves as a defense mechanism for each tiny branch on a tree, keeping the tree large and robust and allowing bees to thrive. Even though they think it is unfair to the insects, they see it as a way to preserve the forest. Along with elders, they pray to the gods to attract more bees to the trees. As fate would have it, their prayers help to bring their goals to pass. A typical tree has five hives in its first year, fifteen or more in its second year, and thirty or more in its third year. The figures continued to rise year. These days, a typical tree contains almost 40 hives. When collecting honey, there are a few guidelines that must be observed. Every village has a man who is highly respected. He stays unmarried and spends most of his time in the wilderness. He raises pigs and wild dogs together. He was buried next to a mango tree when he passed away. At the tomb, honey gatherers pray and ask the deceased for permission to gather honey. If he has not been worshipped, it is thought that creatures such as tigers, bears, deer, etc., will

follow them to their houses and honey harvesting will be reduced. This illustrates the tribes' economic ties to the forest.

In addition, Kattunayakans collected small-scale forest items such deer horns, fruits, leaves, roots, and tubers. They gather hill brooms and various tubers such as hekke, bennia, korani, narane, and nuraga in the forest. Along with the hen's eggs, they also gather the fertilized peacock eggs from the forest and hatch them.

The people in the community are nomads; they move around a lot and tend to dwell close to streams and forests. They have historically engaged in 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 consume the animals and birds they hunted because they are semi-nomads and are not vegetarians.

Pursing

The Kattunayakans are expert hunters. In order to maintain ecological and environmental security, hunting of wild animals and birds is forbidden by the Wildlife Protection Act of 1972. As a result, Kattunayakans have given up hunting, though occasionally they still go hunting in groups with dogs that have been trained to use snares and traps to catch small game for their own use. They like porcupines very much. They use an ilikudi (net) to collect rats from agricultural fields. They are capturing jungle reptiles that are housed in tree holes. For this, they employ digging sticks and sharpened sticks. They use colored bamboo sticks and stone pellets to catch birds as well as birdlime. Experts of taming wild elephants, a small group of Betakurumbas serve as elephant cheddar operators.

Crab-catching and fishing

Women and children from Kattunayakan traditionally go fishing and crab harvesting. To catch fish in lakes and ponds, some women use conical baskets. Additionally, the fish were caught by utilizing a large cloth that was placed against the downstream water flow. They harvest the crabs by hand from the openings on the paddy fields' sides. They are aware of their presence in the hole because of the crabs' motions on the ground in front of it. By attaching an insect tie to the stick on the front side of the hole, they employ a different technique to capture crabs. They use cloth to trap the crabs when they emerge to bite the insect.

Life cycle ceremonies:

The folk songs in the community are dedicated to several life cycle rites. Another name for it is nalathangalpattu. On the eleventh day following childbirth, people celebrate puruttu and sing songs to bless the mother and child. The kid was given milk, honey, and the reptile's (Thoda) blood at birth to use during their "long life." Throughout the event, they also wear a red-iron rod on their foreheads. Every individual in the community possesses a mark on their forehead. Simple tattoos on women's hands are also common (PacaiKuthuthal). They perform certain ceremonies and bury their dead.

Animal sacrifices are made during the festival season: Elderly community members visit the villages to make purchases on the final day of the celebrations. Important pigs are sacrificed in the neighboring forest rather than being scarified at the temple. All of the community's male residents went to the forest at night with those bigs. Subsequently, the pig is cleaned, and the individual known as "Kolapetha" cuts the pig's head, worships the ancestral figure, and drinks alcohol. The Korivolu clan should be represented by the headman. Everyone then shares a portion of the pig. Subsequently, the large blood and tail are buried beneath the dirt, in accordance with the portion of the god's earth that the cock sacrificed at the Kondiyamman Temple represents. following the offering of cock, cock blood, and cock feathers, and then housed. Conclusion: The goat would be offered as a sacrifice to their detail before it was kumkum and spunkled turmeric water. No other clan members would be permitted to perform this ceremony.

The tribal population of Kattunayakkan is nomad, much like our Indian land. The ethnography of the community under study is described in full above. The fact that this community is revealed in the cultural historical framework The study comes to the conclusion that the Madurai district's Tamilnadu residents

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