

**KINSHIP, MARRIAGE AND FAMILY SYSTEM FROM FOLKLORIC
PERSPECTIVE: A STUDY ON NADARS OF TAMILNADU**

A Thesis Submitted During 2019
To the University of Hyderabad in partial fulfillment of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

Centre for Folk Culture Studies

Submitted by

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November 2019



DECLARATION

I C. Justin Selvaraj hereby declare that this thesis entitled “**Kinship, Marriage and Family System from Folkloric Perspective: A Study on Nadars of Tamilnadu**” submitted by me under the guidance and supervision of **Prof. Dr. Y.A Sudhakar Reddy** is a bonafide research work. I also declare that it has not been submitted previously in part or in full to this University or any other University or Institution for the award of any degree or diploma.

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the thesis entitled **“Kinship, Marriage and Family System From Folkloric Perspective: A Study on Nadars of Tamilnadu”** submitted by C. Justin Selvaraj, bearing Reg.No: 09SFPH02 in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Doctor of Philosophy in the Centre for Folk Culture Studies is a bonafide work carried out by him under my supervision and guidance.

The thesis has not been submitted previously in part or full to this or any other University or Institution for the award of any degree or diploma.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to express my deep gratitude to **Prof. Dr. Y A. Sudhakar Reddy** my supervisor, for his highly illuminating guidance which more than anything else, made me feel confident to carry on this work smoothly. His help and creative insights made this research possible and complete. I also owe a great deal to **Prof. Dr. P.S Kanaka Durga** for her valuable suggestions, motherly encouragement and hospitality. She raised insightful queries and valuable comments during the development of this thesis and they were eye openers which ensured that I was kept committed to my research.

I would also like to extend my sincere thanks to **Dr. Joly Puthussery** and **Dr. N. Naveen Kumar** for the lively and relevant discussions on this topic. They were a source of much benefit for the research.

I would also like to thank all the staff members of the CFCS especially Dhanalakshmi and Laxman for their tremendous help.

I also acknowledge my thanks to **Dr. George Tharakan** who was a member of my Doctoral Committee, for guiding and helping me in this work. With his sagacious observations and ideas, he brought in perspectives that were very important and relevant for a topic of this potential.

I am also grateful to University Grant Commission for providing the JRF/SRF Fellowship to complete this work, without which none of this would have been materialistically possible.

I would like to acknowledge the assistance I have received from the librarians of several institutions and the informants for their valuable time in providing me the data needed for this work.

I am very thankful to my friends Dr. R. Rajesh, Dr. Hashik N.K, Dr. Resenmenla Longchar, Hindola, Benny, Dr. Ch. Malliarjuna, Kancharla Somayya, Karuna, Koushik, Sapha, Hemanta, Aditi, Prakash, Jeeva, Antony, Prem, Vellai, Muruganatham, Nelson, Deepanjan, Arun. Their presence and participation in my life has been a source of constant boost for me.

Last but not least, I would like to thank my wife Vini and my son Michel, my parents cyril-rose, family members and well wishers who always wished me success and supported me in all my endeavours.

C. JUSTIN SELVARAJ

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List of Abbreviations

A.D. – Anno Domini
A.G. – Assembly of God
B.C. – Before Christ
C.M.S - Church Missionary Society
CSI – Church of South India
L.M.S – London Mission Society
S.D.A. - Seventh Day Adventists
S.P.G. - Society for the Propagation of Gospel
SPCK - Society for the Promotion for Christian Knowledge

D	Daughter
DH/ZS	Daughter's Husband/Sister's Son
eB	elder Brother
eZ	elder Sister
eZH/ yZH,	elder Sister's Husband/younger Sister's Husband, Wife's elder
WeB/ WyB,	Brother/Wife's younger Brother
F	Father
FeB	Father's elder Brother
FF	Father's Father
FFF	Father's Father's Father
FFFF	Father's Father's Father's Father
FM	Father's Mother
FyB	Father's younger Brother
FZ	Father's Sister
HeZ, HyZ,	Husband's elder Sister, Husband's younger Sister, Husband elder
HeBW/HyBW	Brother Wife/Husband younger Brother's Wife
HM/WM	Husband's Mother/Wife's Mother
M	Mother
MB	Mother's Brother
MBeD	Mother's Brother's elder Daughter
MBeS	Mother's Brother's elder Son

MByD	Mother's Brother's younger Daughter
MByS	Mother's Brother's younger Son
MeZ	Mother's elder Sister
ms	male speaking
MyZ	Mother's younger Sister
S	Son
SD, DD	Son's Daughter, Daughters' Daughter
SS, DS	Son's Son, Daughter's Son
SSD	Son's Son's Daughter
SSS	Son's Son's Son
SSSD	Son's Son's Son's Daughter
SSSS	Son's Son's Son's Son
SW/ZD, BD,	Son's Wife/Sister's Daughter, Brother's Daughter, Brother's
BSW, ZSW	Son's Wife, Sister's Son's Wife
SWF/SWM,	Son's Wife's Father/Son's Wife's Mother, Daughter's Husband's
DHF/DHM	Father/ Daughter's Husband's Mother
WeZ/WyZ,	Wife's elder Sister/Wife's younger Sister, elder Brother's
eBW/yBW	Wife/younger Brother's Wife
ws	woman speaking
yB	younger Brother
yZ	younger Sister
yZH, HyB,	younger Sister's Husband, Husband's younger Brother, Mother's
MByS, FZyS	Brother's younger Sister, Father's Sister's younger Sister

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Glossary

- Adiyantharam/kizhamai* – day of commemoration
Adukkalai – kitchen
Akka – elder Sister
Alathi – ritual waving
Amma – Mother
amma vazhi - goddess worship
Anantharam – agnate's ritual
Annan – elder brother
Appamma – father's mother
Asanam – Feast
assans - masters
Atthai – Father's Sister or Maternal Uncle's Wife
Ayya – grandfather
Ayyamma – grandmother
Baaram – burden
Bhadra/panai - Palmyra
Chetti Tholerum Perumal – who climbed on the shoulder of the Chettiyar
cholan – maize
guru - teacher to bard
indi – house
irattai sangon – who had dual conch
jalra - cymbals
Jati - caste
Kadaathu – a ritual is done in funeral
Kadukkan – ear stud
Kallarai – tomb
kambu - rye
Kanchipurai – a place of offering food
Kannadiyan Por - War of Kannadiga
Kanni - virgin

Karukku - the sharp edge of the Palmyra bat
Karuvatti – Blacky
Kathai – Story
Kathaippadal – Ballad
kattai - wood
Keerthi Petron – who got reputation
Kozhunthan – younger brother-in-law
Kozhunthiya – younger sister-in-law
Kulasekara Raja Kathai - the story of Kulasekara Raja
kulatheivam - family deity
Kurunkatty – platform of wooden made
Machan – brother-in-law
Machinan – brother-in-law
Mahamai – share of each family
Makal – Daughter
Makan – Son
Makka – beloved
Maman – Mother’s Brother
Manavarai – marriage hall
Marumakal – daughter-in-law
Marumakan – Son-in-law
Mathini – sister-in-law
Moi – gift
munivar varampetron – who blessed by sage
Munthaanai – Sari’s end
Naadikkattu – tying the pulse
Nalanku – Marriage song/ritual
Nallappan – Fatherly figure
nar - fibre or string
Nazhiveedu – Bride wealth
Neermmaalai – holy water
nizhal thankal - Ayya Vazhi temples
Nool – Book
Ottan – great great-grandfather

Ottan – great-great grandfather
p/mattai - the leaf stalk of the Palmyra tree
Pakka surul – nearest circle of groom
Pallanguzhi - a tablet with fourteen holes for playing
Panambalam – Palmyra fruit
Pancha Pandiyar Kathai - the story of five Pandiyas
Pangali – agnates
Panku – Sharing
Patti – grandmother
Pen Panam – Bride wealth
Peran – grandson
Periyamma – Mother’s elder Sister or Father’s elder brother’s wife
Periyappa – Father’s elder brother
perumal - the great one
Pethi – granddaughter
pettais - primary centres/ warehouse
Petti – box
Pettichoru – rice in the box
Ponpootti – Golden ties
Poottan – great-grandfather
pulavar - the term for scholar of learned
Sambanthi – Husband’s Father/Mother and Wife’s Father/Mother
san - a span
Satti – small pot
Senai – first food given to baby
Sinnamma – Mother’s younger Sister or Father’s younger Brother’s Wife
Sithappa – father’s younger brother
Sithi – Mother’s younger Sister or Father’s younger Brother’s Wife
Talaimakan/ Kudimahan - Barber
Thaimaman – Maternal Uncle
Thalai vari - Poll tax
thalaipagai - head wear
thalaipagai - head wear
Thambi – younger brother

Thamboolam – plate for exchanging vow during the time of betrothal
Thankachi – younger sister
Thatha – great-grandfather
Their - sandy land
udukkai - drummer
Uravathan – the fellow who cuts off the relation
uravinmurai – local association
Vaaiikkarici – rice for mouth
Vahaiyara, Koottam and Indi - Family
Vaidhyars - traditional medicinal practitioners
Valangaiyars - right hands
Varalaaru – History
Varmakkalai - method of curing nerves disorders by massaging certain nerve centres
Vazhaikkiru kulaikandon – who had seen two bananas in a plantain
vazhipaattu - final
Veedu - house
Veppilai – neem leaf
Vilaku Vaithal – lighting the lamp
Villuppattu - Bow song tradition
viyabari – merchant

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Appendix I: Palm Leaf Manuscript

Appendix II: Ethnic Terminology of Kinship of Nadars

CHAPTER - I
INTRODUCTION

Nadar is one of the Tamil communities in Tamilnadu. The Nadars community was not a single *Jati* (caste i.e., occupation group), but developed from the affiliation of related castes which came to exist under single stream Nadar. The Nadar community constitute six percentage of the State's population.¹ They are predominant in Chennai, Madurai, Theni, Virudhunagar, Tirunelveli, Thoothukudi and Kanniyakumari districts. Notably their strength concentrated about sixty percentages of the Kanniyakumari, Tirunelveli, Thoothukudi districts. These districts seemed to be the native land of Nadars. Moreover Nadars live in the northern districts of Tamilnadu namely Virudhunagar, Madurai and Ramanathapuram. According to Templeman "those traditionally resident in Madurai, Virudhunagar, Ramanathapuram districts refer to themselves as Northern Nadars, while those who live in Tirunelveli, Thoothukudi and Kanniyakumari districts are the Southern Nadars".²

This research on *Kinship, Marriage and Family System from Folkloric Perspective: A Study on Nadars of Tamilnadu* deals the southern Nadars of Tamilnadu. Kinship, Family and Marriage systems are known to be the basic elements of social fabric. They are the indicators and the instruments of the social changes. On looking at history, it has been found that Nadars were treated as low caste people by upper caste Hindus in 17th and 18th centuries in their home land.³ The intervention of Christian missionaries in India especially, in the Southern part of Tamilnadu brought social reforms among the marginalized communities. Thereafter, Nadars started changing their occupation as they got emerged by their conversion of religion. After getting the social status especially, in nineteenth century, they emerged as one of the notable merchant communities in Tamil Nadu. Simultaneously they emerged as politicians, professionals and engaged themselves in education fields as well. Thereby Nadars had improved themselves in their social status. Those developments and their new religious policies and ritual practices also brought many changes among the Nadars. Although foreign scholars and Indian scholars had done the research on Nadars, limited researches have brought out research on social organizations of Nadars. This research aimed to bring out the

Nadars' kinship systems, marriage practices and family systems from the Folkloristic perspectives with the help of fieldwork.

Significance of the study

Nadars come under the patriarchy system among the Dravidian kinship systems. The community of Nadars is an important section of the Tamilnadu. They are having distinctions and disparities among their traditional customary practices mainly due to the regional variants, social and political developments and new changes and influences. Also they are gradually adapting all kinds of geographical, economic and social conditions. This dynamics found within the community makes this research more significant to study their shift and change from tradition to modern (status consciousness). Moreover Nadars strived for their own upliftment; this community was regarded as a significant community to be studied in all the aspects by the missionaries and twentieth century scholars particularly. It is also to be noted that they have gone to successful position and got empowered as a significant group of people in the nation particularly in Tamilnadu. As they occupied prominent places in social, economical and political fields, they could contribute their share to their own community, region, and nation as well. Thus it is relevant to study Nadars from a folkloric perspective.

Nature and Scope of the study

The Nature of this research is based on folkloric approach which focuses on the construction of various notions about kinship and how they are expressed in the folklore of different life cycle ceremonies in everyday life of Nadars of Tamilnadu. The elements such as kinship, family and marriage system are basic to the social organization and they are the indicators for social status and change. During seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Nadars embraced new religious path of Christianity that indicated in their occupation⁴ when Christian missionaries came to India and served among the Nadars of Southern Tamil Nadu. After they acquired the higher social status during nineteenth century, they emerged as one of the notable merchant communities in Tamilnadu.

Although scholars from abroad and India had done research on Nadars in general, limited works are found in the area of social organizations on Nadars.

Moreover, no one has done a study on folkloric perspective on Nadars in particular. The prominent aim of the study is to explore the social organization in particular kinship, marriage systems of Nadars and its impact on their social mobility and cultural advancement.

Area of the research

The area of the study is confined to Nadars of Tamilnadu who are residing at Kanniyakumari, Tirunelveli and Thoothukudi districts. These districts have much density of Nadar population and are vital for political parties and politics. Nadars are diversified into several occupational groups ranging from landed gentry, mercantile group to toddy tapping community. Despite the variation in their occupation, they follow rigid rules in the areas of kinship, family and marriage and therefore it appears as Nadar community is highly traditional. It is to be interesting to study how the community negotiates between tradition and modernity to uphold their identity as a distinct group within the social groups of Tamilnadu.

Review of Literature

This research follows the following four types of literatures.

- I. Literature pertaining to theoretical and conceptual framework on social organisation related to family, kinship, marriage, and caste:
- II. Literature pertaining to theoretical and conceptual framework on folklore Studies:
- III. Literature pertaining to Caste, Nadars and social organisations:
- IV. Vernacular studies on Nadars:

I. Literature pertaining to theoretical and conceptual frame on Kinship Studies

The basic social unit usually consists of two or three generation of family or the nuclear families of two brothers augmented occasionally by other individuals with ties to the core group. Each person belongs to the family of orientation (e.g. mother, father brothers and sisters). Family bonds of descent and marriage may be

traced through a genealogy, a written or oral statement of the names of individuals and their community.

Lewis Henry Morgan⁵, his work basically interested in history and society of the Iroquois League. He had also registered extensive data through field among the Native American groups from **evolutionary** theoretic model.

David Parkin describes⁶ the basic works on kinship, family and marriage. One can utilize the basic knowledge and terms in kinship, family and its functions in the society, how the process of marriage works in social structure. In the first part basic information about kinship terminology, types of kinship, kinship signs explanations, various kinds of marriages and family practices are explained. The second part of the book describes about conceptualized information on kinship and marriage with the various kinship studies from scholar L.H. Morgan to till the date research scholars. It is to be noted from the work of David Parkin is that collecting the data related to kinship author suggest to follow a folk perceptions. He further says that data which have been collected from the folk's views concentrated ethnographic works would give valuable notes for kinship studies.

Radcliffe Brown's work was the first study⁷ from the **functional** aspect to assert the kinship studies pertaining to the relationship among individuals. Thus his works seem to be an important reference to kinship networks and social process in kinship studies.

Malinowski had focused his skill in doing ethnography especially theoretical approach to the study of social systems. His work⁸ deals about procreation aspect and marriage, mode of living, analysis and the concept of consanguinity in everyday life in as society.

Herman Max Gulukman, a South African and British Social Anthropologist, latterly known as the founder of the Manchester School of Anthropology did a vast study social setups. His study⁹ stresses the stability of institutions against the process of change and conflict deduced through comprehensive analysis of instances of social interaction to infer the rules and assumptions.

John Arundel Barnes was an Australian and British Social Anthropologist. His contribution¹⁰ examines the work of three distinguished anthropologists namely Claude Levi-Strauss, Mayer Fortes, G.P. Murdock on kinship and determines the theoretical model.

George P. Murdock work¹¹ deals with an interdisciplinary analysis of family and kinship structure and their relations to marriage and sexual regulation in human societies around the world is based on the findings of the cross cultural society.

Another work¹² of Claude Levi-Strauss was much appreciated by all the social science fellowship which has dealt with a detailed study on kinship terminologies, exchange among the societies and the rules of family. From his work (a) caste creates the endogamy practices (b) the clans and *gotras* create the exogamy practices (c) those two practices are controlled by the law of two exchange practices are understood. One is 'law of restricted exchange' which is directly expressed in preferential marriage between bilateral cross-cousins. Another one is 'law of generalised exchange' which is directly articulated in preferential marriage between sister's son and brother's daughter (marriage with the mother's brother's daughter).¹³ These two exchange practices create two kinds of societies. One is harmonic and another one disharmonic. A society is defined as ordered as harmonic regime if its "rule of descent", which means transmission of "the family name" and its "rule of residence" are corresponding that is patrilineal and patrilocal or matrilineal or matrilocal. That would be the result of a system of unilineal local groups. A disharmonic regime is defined as one in which the rule of descent and the rule of residence are complementary rather than corresponding that is patrilineal and matrilocal or matrilineal and patrilocal. The functions of disharmonic relation are the simplest and most effective process for ensuring the integration of the group. Rules of exchange are based on the two things. One is identified as method of classes which is exemplified by rules of marriage to women of particular categories. That may be kin categories of unilineality defined groups or major social categories. Another one is method of relations, which means consisted rules of marriage to woman of particular kin types such a MBD, FZD. Author further gives an explanation for the reason having cross-cousin marriage

practices rather than parallel cousins that societies have created incest/taboo. For that he takes an example from the primitive groups. In hunting society, if one who marries his sister or one who marries her brother never gets any partner to hunt. So the society creates some incest /taboo on marriage and kinship rules for the society needs. In lieu of that cross-cousins are prescribed or preferred spouses for the same reason that parallel cousins are prohibited as spouses. Thus the cross-cousin marriage only can carry the system of exchange between groups.

A volume¹⁴ given by Patricia Uberoi on kinship studies seem to be the crucial work for those who wants to know about Indian kinship and also do research on Indian kinship studies. First part of this book deals with regional data taken from south India, north India and central India. Iravathy Karve in her article she puts some information on taboo and incest that is “A man can marry his elder sister’s daughter but not allowed to marry younger sister’s daughter; Widow Remarriage practice not allowed in the southern region of India; whoever touches with northern population the taboo is not observed. Rest of the southern areas namely, Tamilnadu, Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Karnataka this taboo is general. Some interesting data can be utilized about the taboos and marriage practices from the folk tales and folk songs”.¹⁵ Then, Trautmann’s article explains that how does Dravidian kinship structure differs from the Indo-Aryan kinship. This discussion was taken from the classical literatures and historical documents about royal kingdoms. Thus author concludes that the Indian kinship systems are seen as “regionally diverse (north/south/east/west), communally differentiated (Hindu/Muslim/Sikh/Christian/Buddhist etc.), socially stratified (in terms of caste or class), and culturally detached by ethno linguistic criteria”.¹⁶

Nur Yalman’s book¹⁷ is based on intensive field work conducted at various places of Ceylon (Modern Sri Lanka) during the period of 1954-1956. Author has divided this book into three major parts. First part of the book describes the Ceylon village along with the historical and ecological background of Ceylon. Second section part examines the data of kinship and marriage which was recorded from various villages. Finally author compares the conclusions drawn from the analysis of kinship structure in Ceylon with anthropological material of South India.

Meyer Fortes' work¹⁸ basically deals with clanship and economic and ritual institutions of Tallensi. It is an outcome of three years of fieldwork amongst the Tallensi. The whole book emphasises Tallensi region still preserved the culture taught them by their fore fathers and the social structure of their own, homogeneous society. Author examines the influence of literary and Christianity among the Tallensi. He concludes with people of the Tallensi achieved at the rate of literacy when they accepted the Christian faith, then only they were able to get degree and government employment. Thus the work of Fortes Meyer is observed as an outcome of colonial perspective towards the tribal settlement during the globalisation implementation.

A milestone work among the multidisciplinary approach on kinship studies was published¹⁹ by Thomas Trautmann. As it deals about the region as research category, it is found among the regional aspects of kinship study in India. It consists full of ethnological data and commentary of Dravidian communities and Indian literature texts data on kinship. Trautmann classifies the kinship as follows: Concepts which indicates kinship terms of reference, kinship terminology; Rules which create kinship and kinship related behaviour, the semantics of the kinship system as a whole, thus norms are considered as a social system; Behaviour which makes an individual as egocentric or individualizing thus behaviour enacts. The strategies appropriate to individuals or small groups interior to society which means individuals as defined by the social structure rather than biological individuals. Author tries to prove how kinship terminologies work among the societies with the linguistics approach; within the societies and how it is used for uniform usage among the Dravidian. The term which is used in the work 'Dravidian' is not confined to south India by him, but he has extended to the northern part of Sri Lanka, as well. Then, he compares the kinship terms with marriage alliances and other social organisations between Dravidian literatures and Indo-Aryan literatures. The sister exchange is primary issues in Dravidian kinship, whereas in Indo-Aryan kinship is not found.²⁰ His work was specifically through the comparative study of kinship and marriage patterns in Dravidian communities and certain relevant Indo-Aryan linguistic communities. From his historical approach, he reconstructs the ancestral form of Dravidian kinship which was found

among the Dravidian communities. The view of Trautmann was to find out the relationship between Dravidian kinship and Dharmashastra but latterly, he could prove that both are extremely different by using Indo-Aryan classical literature works like Pali literature, Sanskrit literatures, Vedas. For that he has taken several Dravidian terminologies, including castes and tribes communities' kinship terminologies.

Another work²¹ by T.N. Madan describes the patrilineal and patrilocal household of Kashmir pundits, who follows patrilineal and joint family system. Among the Pandits of Kashmir rules of adoptions is allowed. If a couple does not have child, they will be able to get sons from the relation of husband lineage side but from the lineage side of wife.²² Marrying their own sub caste is preferable according to their customary practice. Among the pandits three types of marriage are followed. First one is on the basis of dowry (ornaments and clothes for the bride, domestic utensils and other gifts in cash and kind for her relatives-in-law). Second one is give-and-take (reciprocal) marriage practice, which means exchange of women and gifts, gives them considerable importance for they are the commonest type of marriage. Third one is marriages involving payment of consideration to the girl-giving household.²³ It is noted that among the Pandits who does not have child cannot get any property from the father (which means patrilineal property). It is given to next immediate male siblings. As like that, married woman who has lost her husband will not be considered as a one of the family members. After husband's death and the woman who does not have child may be abandoned by the society. The reason is that she will not have any jural right to ask for division as per the community rules.²⁴

The study of kinship terms emphasises the cultural meaning of folk terminology which are being used among the community. This work²⁵ deals with kinship term with special reference to north India focused on how human society getting varied in the respective of addressing their kinship. In introduction author proposes and tells about need of the research on cultural meanings of kinship for cultural studies. Author says further that kinship studies aim is not only collecting the terminology, it has also to speak about the cultural meaning of the kinship.²⁶ There are two kinds of contexts in using the kinship terms. One is referential

context, which refers/speaks about oneself or another person to a third party. Second one is vocative context, which tells/speaks directly to another.²⁷ These base characteristics make us to call/address our kinship terms.

A work²⁸ on kinship emphasises the contemporary issues on abortion, conception, adoption, artificial life styles and technology with the help of empirical studies. It also documents the notion of nation, health, gender, nature and kinship as a primary for the society. Anthony Good deals²⁹ with the ceremonies on life cycle ceremonies which done for women. By describing those ceremonies he could explore the female sexuality's representations in ritual as well as myth in the cultural context. This work³⁰ gives an outlook of kinship and marriage in African social life. It is a work³¹ which speaks about the individual privileges and social conditions in the context of present United Nations of America, from anthropological perspective. It is one of the crucial works to understand the kinship and marriage of Nuer.³² This is the work³³ on West Indies emphasises the family and kinship bonds of people of Jamaica and Guyana. By doing that author explores the myths which is practiced and existed in the West Indian family. Author explores³⁴ in her work that the social and religious life of the Samaritans. Samaritans are a minority community in the modern Israel and Palestinian. As the author portrays the empirical and epistemic dimensions of Samaritan, it discusses the external influence which given to this community by the majority society in the Israel and Palestinian. It also documents the role of ancient history of Samaritan community. It is a notable work³⁵ from social-anthropological perspective gives everyday life of the places nearby Delhi in India through the case studies. In which this work describes the shifts within their marriage and remarriages by examining with married women.

II. Literature pertaining to theoretical and conceptual framework on folklore Studies:

This editorial book³⁶ has five important articles. It is a pioneer work for one to look into analysing the folk narratives. It is an account for analysing the women folk and their lore as cultural objects of every tradition. From this editorial work³⁷ it can be understood that house as a physical as well as symbolic form and also a social organisation. With the help of fieldwork, material culture is being used

for explaining the kinship at house. This book is an account³⁸ of wedding rites and songs taken from the fieldwork from the region of rural India. Also presents the social and ritual context of the songs and rituals. Based on collected women folk narratives, this work³⁹ reveals the power (spoken words) and way of women folk in day today life. As it concentrates more on women's expressive tradition, one need to have understood the symbolic and telling of alternative moral perspectives shaped by women folk, in particular context of north Indian ideology of kinship and family. Another milestone work⁴⁰ on expressive tradition which has covered folklore, anthropology and historical views of folk songs, epics and stories from the south Asian folk tradition with contributions of renowned scholars from all over the world.

III. Literature pertaining to Caste, Nadars and social organisation:

As the caste in one of the dominant aspects in Indian social system, studies done in social sciences need to have much more clarity on the system of caste and its functioning in the society. This is the primary work⁴¹ in which social science researchers to initiate the works in community studies. This work⁴² on of pioneer works among the studies on caste in Indian sub-continent. Dumont emphasises the ideology of hierarchy how it is existed in society and literature by analysing various empirical studies and various religious texts. Andre Beteille⁴³ deals with social stratification in India. It focuses on disparities between the societies in terms of race, caste, tribe, ethnicity and gender. This is another notable work given by M.N. Srinivas⁴⁴ on caste. This work on caste deals the issues faced by the whole nation during twentieth century, namely other backward community movements, caste issues among Muslim and Christianity, caste and its hierarchy in Hinduism are dealt. Apart from that the work of the relationship between caste and economy is also commendable. It is also a basic material for the scholars who do research on caste. It is a shift in caste studies⁴⁵ in India. Caste is today doing the cultural separation rather than once if followed hierarchical rank. All the articles in this edited volume have written based ethnographic research which conducted from various part of India. It is the work⁴⁶ based on medieval periods to the later twentieth century. Author uses archival materials, ethnographic notes of colonial administrators. By analysing all those materials author has dealt the caste and its

politics in India. Another important work⁴⁷ given by colonial historian for those who are interested in studying region and society it will be guide for that. He has covered various groups of the country with the help of natives, he documented the past of various dynasties and its regions. E. Thurston has compiled⁴⁸ this work with the help of native researchers. It speaks about various castes, tribes and their origin, culture, customs etc. this manual has the value of culturally for those who are interested in folklore and anthropological study.

Robert Caldwell, a Christian missionary was staying in South India for more than fifty years got appointed as bishop of Tirunelveli Diocese in 1877. He was the first to get international recognition as an orientalist. Then, he was working with people of southern districts of Tamilnadu namely Thoothukudi, Tirunelveli and Kanniyakumari. The Nadars spread over these regions. He has written two volumes on Nadars. One is “A Political and General history of the District of Tirunelveli, in the presidency of Madras: from the earliest period to its cession to the English government in A.D. 1801”. In this book, he explains and shows of socio-political historical views of the Tinnevely district (presently it known as Tirunelveli and Thoothukudi districts.) Up to 1801 A.D. Another work of Caldwell was exclusively on Nadars the book is called as “Tinnevely Shanars (1850)”. The “Shanars” is a word which was used to refer the community of Nadar. This book explains Nadars religion, their moral conditions and characteristics during the time of progress of Christianity amongst them.

Samuel Mateer was another missionary who worked among the people of Kanniyakumari district. In his book⁴⁹ he has mentioned south Travancore’s administration, people and their manners, customs, agriculture, industry and commerce, worship, education and contribution of London Mission during his tenure with Travancore people. In his work he emphasises on Nadars (they were known as Shanar) of Tamilnadu and Elavars of Kerala. The Elavars and Shanars (Nadars) differ from one another in employments character and there are no doubts identical in origin. Shanars are found only in the southern districts of Travancore between Kanniyakumari and Thiruvananthapuram.⁵⁰

Robert L. Hardgrave's book⁵¹ was about Nadars political movement for their community upliftment during the later nineteenth century till half of the twentieth century. Author also states about the Nadars' Sanskritization and their consolidation, which helped for the upliftment of the community. Nadars (formerly they were known as Shanars) widely known community in Tamilnadu. Nadars were identified into two groups within the community as in the follows: one is palm tree climber (labour); another one is *Nadan* (land lord). Hardgrave gives the same classifications of which Thurston emphasised about Nadars' sub divisions in his *Castes and Tribes of South India*. They are known as Karukkupattai, Melnattar, Nattathi, Kodikkal and Kalla Shanars (pulukka). Until the missionaries come to enter the southern districts of Tamilnadu Nadars were being suppressed by caste Hindus. After entry of missionaries in Tamilnadu especially among the people of southern Tamilnadu, people started embracing Christianity. By the end of nineteenth century the Tinnevely (presently it known as Tirunelveli and Thoothukudi districts) had huge number of Christians in Madras presidency. People equally followed the Roman Catholic and Protestant denominations.⁵² After the conversion, Nadars could achieve politically clothing the upper part of the body which was known as 'breast cloth controversy',⁵³ by the government of Travancore.⁵⁴ Hardgrave has pointed out that the conversion in Tamilnadu especially among the higher castes known Vellalas; the conversion into Christianity forbid their entrance into the home of their Hindu relatives. Vellalas lost their status by conversion, but the Nadar gained status, rising above their former position".⁵⁵ The same manner of conversion Hindu Nadars started adapting higher caste practices. Their community literature of the new mythology claimed traditional Kshatriya status and took the title *Nadan*. Meanwhile Nadars' political leaders aimed to get some political space for community. As a result of entering into political, Nadars started founding own association namely *Nadar Mahajana Sangam* and *Dakshnamara Nadar Sangam*. Simultaneously they developed as merchants through trade as well as.

Another work⁵⁶ on Nadars was written by Templeman. Templeman classifies Nadars into two major groups one is southern Nadars⁵⁷ another one is Northern Nadars^{58, 59}. Templeman emphasised two types of changes which occurred among

the northern Nadars they are: caste mobility and social evolution. Moreover Templeman classifies Nadars as clans and occupational divisions as merchants and business people, professional and semi-professional⁶⁰, agriculturalists, agricultural labourers, non-agricultural labourers etc. it is also to be noted that from Templeman's contribution that as a member of Nadars' local association Hindu Nadars are taken part of the association whereas Christian Nadars are never members of Nadars' local associations; their churches serve as associations of sorts for them.⁶¹ Moreover he has pointed out that women take greater interest in family and clan matters, it shows, women are more caste conscious factor among the Northern Nadars.⁶²

A. Thasarathan wrote⁶³ a work, which analyses the socio-history of a section of people hailing from a place in the Thoothukudi district and part of Tirunelveli district. This place is called *Manavira Valanadu* or *Manadu*. It has produced many historical, mythological and social narrative poems which are designed to be sung in the form of bow song i.e. *Villuppattu*; many inscriptions and copper plates revealing the history of this region, are also preserved in this place.

A book⁶⁴ was written by M. Immauel. Author has developed for socio-historical study on Nadars by using records taken from literature, archival materials. Author deals with records of Nadars to discuss their cultural heritage and customs, martial arts⁶⁵. While author explains about Nadars' cultural heritage and customs he gives so many ethnic names of the marriage systems.

Ivy Peter⁶⁶ emphasises the social background of Travancore as they had been divided into two divisions such as groups based on religion and caste. Author has discussed about Nadars in separate chapter much detailed. Nadars and other non-caste Hindus were not allowed to wear ornaments as like caste Hindus women, umbrella holding was also prohibited, should not wear foot ware in front of upper caste Hindus, should not use vehicles, should not have cow for milking.⁶⁷ In southern Travancore Nadars were forced to pay taxes to the government. Though Nadars were toddy tappers or farmers or land lords they were advised to pay the taxes. *Purushandram*, a tax was collected from whoever had traditional properties they have given as tax 40% of their land value.⁶⁸ *Thalai vari* (Poll tax)⁶⁹, this is

another tax which was levied from all Nadar males, those who are attained age 16 he has to pay poll tax and till sixty ages everyone has to pay the tax.⁷⁰ As they were not able to pay those taxes, many numbers of Nadars migrated to north part of Tamilnadu.⁷¹ Those who were toddy tappers paid *yenikkanam*⁷², *thalaikkanam*⁷³, *naali kal*⁷⁴ these three taxes were collected from the toddy tappers.⁷⁵ *Kuppa katcha*, who had house he/she has to pay one *panam* as tax. *Mania meippan kollumirai*, which was given to when one attempted to do alteration of house, he/she has to pay this tax. *Taaliyirai*, who got married they have to give this tax especially it was collected from the Nadar women.⁷⁶ Moreover there were two practices predominantly followed in southern Travancore. One is known as *Oozhiyam*, whoever was considered as lower status they should work to government and upper class people without expect any remuneration thus it was called *Oozhiyam*. Another one is *virutthi*, government or upper class people gave their land to lease to working class people. The people who had taken the land for lease have to work in the particular land. These taxes and social issues forced Nadars to migrate to northern wards of Tamilnadu.⁷⁷

U. Subramaniam in his book⁷⁸ emphasises on Vellalas who are also living in Kanniyakumari district of Tamilnadu. Nevertheless, he has collected various other community details namely Brahmins, Asari, Nadar, Chettiyar, Saliyar, Muthaliyar, Senai Muthaliyar, Panar, Ythavar, Sambavar, Maruthuvar, Kulalar etc. This research has been conducted by purposive sample method. Author says that as Tamils intermingled with Malayalees, we cannot divide Tamils from the Malayalees whoever lives in Kerala.⁷⁹ Although they had mingled with Malayalees, there little differences are found to vary in life cycle ceremonies and religious ceremonies. Author's research concern was to indentify the Tamils' engage with Kerala and Tamilnadu in order to do cult, marriage practices (brides giving, brides taking), and getting education. Kerala Nadars consider bride from Tamilnadu only especially from Kanniyakumari and Tirunelveli districts. In Family god/goddess worship most of the Nadars go to their family temple festival to Tamilnadu rather than having from Thiruvananthapuram and Kollam districts of Kerala.⁸⁰

This unpublished dissertation⁸¹ on Nadars concentrates social mobility and agrarian change among the Nadars of south Tamilnadu. This research emphasises

identity formation within the community by using various case studies conducted from the selected regions in Tamilnadu. It focuses⁸² on Virudhunagar district Nadars' customs and practices. There is a chapter on religious traditions which deals the present ritual among the Virudhunagar Nadars. This thesis deals⁸³ about the organisation of Nadar Mahajana Sangam. It records the things from its conception till 2010 on the contribution taken places at community and societal level. Moreover, gives an outline to history of Nadars. It⁸⁴ deals with local associations of Nadars in Madurai district, Nadars' contribution to education, the economic and political participation and progression. As it deals with historical documents, it has been dealt with sources taken from secondary sources. As it concentrates⁸⁵ the palmyra climbing occupation at present conditions, it deals about more policy level of economic and government response towards the occupation of palmyra climbing.

IV. Literature pertaining to vernacular studies on Nadars and kinship:

*Valamkaimaalai*⁸⁶ was written by a sage Eanathi Nayanar. This volume is considered as sacred book of Nadars who do worship of goddess Bhadrakali. Folk ballad form of *Valamkaimaalai* is available in all grand old families of Nadars who were *assans* or masters of *kalari*. This folk ballad tells about Nadars' origin, how could learn Palmyra toddy taping and also to climb the Palmyra tree. As per *Valamkaimaalai*, there are seven occupation groups were among the Nadars. These are: Drawing the nectar (toddy tappers), Trade, Navigation, Cultivation, Fine arts, Medicine, Philosophy. It is to be noted that all of them mastered the martial arts.

Another work⁸⁷ on Virudhunagar is about the history of Virudhunagar in which it is dealt the involvement and marketing, distribution of commodities of Nadars since British reign in Tamilnadu. The whole book can be divided into two major divisions. One is their trade and commerce activities and another one is about the social organisation especially clan among the Nadars of Virudhunagar districts. Author also states that they could develop networking with local and their native region for the purpose of goods and commodities. There is a popular saying about Virudhunagar is that "Virudhunagar produces nothing but controls

everything”. So Virudhunagar has grown up considerable level in the marketing fields.

The book written⁸⁸ by D. Velappan discloses the account of Kanniyakumari District. Author emphasises the socio-economic condition of Kanniyakumari district before the period of 1960 A.D. People of working class such as agricultural labour, Palmyra workers, pot makers and weavers in southern Travancore had to pay more number of taxes to the government author has explained its various names. Moreover, author furnishes about the data on tax collected as palm taxes was rupees eighteen thousand five hundred and twenty three in 1807 A.D from the Palmyra workers of southern Travancore.

A work on folk deity written⁸⁹ by S. Ganapathiraman who has mentioned various names of the deities, with their associates, the different kinds of worship offered them in different localities by different communities. Among them folk goddesses of Bhadrakaali, *Kannimaar*⁹⁰, *Muthumalaiamman*, *Isakkiamman* and folk gods who are *Ayyanar*⁹¹, *Sudalaimadan*, *Narayanasamy*⁹², Chairman Eral *Arunachaleshwarar Swamy*, *Anchuveetusamy* are worshipped by Nadars of the southern Tamilnadu especially Tirunelveli, Thoothukudi and Kanniyakumari districts.⁹³ Bhadrakaali is a common folk goddess in most of Nadars’ villages of Tirunelveli and other southern districts. Nadars believed that they were brought up Bhadrakaali they claim themselves as sons of Bhadrakaali.⁹⁴ Nagam Aiya⁹⁵ says that in India, Kaali and Bhadrakaali are worshipped by all but Nadars having Bhadrakaali worship and they believed that they were sons of Bhadrakaali.⁹⁶ *Kannimar*⁹⁷ is another goddess worshipped by Nadars is known as *Brammani*, *Vaishnavi*, *Maheshvari*, *Gaumari*, *Varaki*, *Inthirai* and *Samundi*.⁹⁸ It is also to be noted that among the six sisters of seven sisters are classified as incarnation (Sakthi) of Shiva, Thirumal, Bramman, Indira, Kumaran, Varakan, Kaali respectively. *Muthumalaiamman* worship widely found among the Nadars in Tirunelveli, Thoothukudi and Kanniyakumari districts. Especially Mukkodai and Tharuvai Nadars in Tirunelveli they follow *Muthumalaiamman* worship. It is a custom before getting married a vow should be taken and the same has to be convinced by boy or girl who is going to get married. The vow is known as “*kayiru*

kuthi”⁹⁹. If girl is going to get married she has to take “*mavilakku*”¹⁰⁰. Even today these practices are alive and done by Nadars of particular region.¹⁰¹

Joy Gnanadasan book¹⁰² deals with CSI protestant Christian missionaries who were working among the downtrodden people of Kanniyakumari district (erstwhile Southern Travancore). Institutions were made for helping the people who were socially and economically backward. Conversion into Christianity¹⁰³ made resolved in Upper cloth rights protests; got Neyoor Medical Mission, CSI Christian education institutions namely Scott Christian College, Women Christians College, and Theological institute. Nadars, Elavars, Sambavar were considered as untouchable communities in southern Travancore. They have not got any rights to enter into high caste Hindu educational institutions, temples as well as in front of the higher caste Hindus of Nayar, Namboothiri. That scenario had completely changed when conversion occurred among the communities of southern Travancore. After that, Christian missionaries approached and did reform programme for the suppressed community in order to uplift them socially, politically and economically. As they were converted into Christian, they had a chance to enter into missionaries’ educational institutions. Author gives a note on migration among the Nadar community whom migrated to Tirunelveli and its surrounding places in the years of 1822-23, 1828-30 when many schools, colleges, medical mission and hospitals were opened. Thus the aim of author can be summarised in two ways one is the work of CSI Christian missionaries have been emphasised as author’s subjective, as another within the Christianity they did not want others to come under one banner.

The work of G. Stephen¹⁰⁴ basically deals with dynamics of folk tales in a society. The speaking society is Nadars of Kanniyakumari districts. Author gives a demographic account of Kanniyakumari districts and cultural interpretation of folk tales of the selected community. According to Census Report of India, Kanniyakumari 1961 *marumakkal vazhi thayam* (matrilineal succession) came from Malabar region of Kerala to the Kanniyakumari district. In particular region then it spread through Nayar, Pillai and Krishnan Vaghai communities/castes.¹⁰⁵ Author says further that if male migrated from one place to another place they cannot carry their culture to where they want to go, but when total families got

migrated from one place to another place then only the culture is spread over to wherever they go. Aryans came to India but they could not develop their language and their culture. They were not able to carry their language as it was predominantly with them. The same paradigm may be put to the case of whoever migrated along with their families from Tamilakam to Srilanka, Burma, Mauritius and Malaysia; they could keep their culture and language.¹⁰⁶ One particular group thinks about another group as very lower than them. That image depends on another group's occupations, properties and developments. Some time growth can be indicator for others to tell about the some groups here author emphasises through folk tales' interpretations that how other groups make fun of the newly developed society. He named it as ethnic slur. Many numbers of ethnic slurs found in the form of folk tales, proverbs, anecdotes and jokes. It can be explored and identified in marriage alliances. It would be divided into two types they are: esoteric lore¹⁰⁷, exoteric lore¹⁰⁸.

A.K. Perumal's book¹⁰⁹ records the following themes, they are: socio-political history of Kanniyakumari district from the early years to present day, from the reign of Aai Andiran king to 1956 A.D, national and social revolutionary movements in Kanniyakumari district, religions and its contributions in Kanniyakumari with special references from Vaishnavism to Islam, education and arts. Author has pointed out in his book that Nadars migrations occurred during the time of King Dharma Raja in eighteenth century. Nattathi Nadars, who are one of among the Nadars, say that our ancestor came to this region very long back. The same is found in author' quote from the book that during reign of King Dharma raja (1758-1798) of Travancore king many of Nattathi Nadars were brought to Kanniyakumari from Nattathi of Thoothukudi and settled in Aralvoimozhi an eastern jurisdiction of Travancore government as soldiers of the Aralvoimozhi fort.¹¹⁰ There was a practice among the Land Lords of Kanniyakumari to sell/buy the slave. Land lords used to give a slave along with dowry of their daughters after the marriage. This slavery practice had been as a part of Sridhan (dowry).¹¹¹

P. Rasadurai wrote a book which deals¹¹² with local associations of Nadars especially Kalloorani¹¹³ Nadars Local Association. Prior to discuss about the contribution of this local association, author furnishes details on the etymology of Nadars, Nadars' migration towards northern ward of Tamilnadu especially during

the Nayaka kingdom many of Nadars migrated to Coimbatore, Salem etc. Author has quoted that “migrated Nadars changed their caste title as Chetti, Muthali also converted into Muslims.”¹¹⁴ It is interesting to know about a practice of *mahamai*¹¹⁵ and *uravinmurai*¹¹⁶ of Nadars that wherever they go Nadars form an association in order to help themselves and others. Author mentions from a document on “*Uravinmurai*” and “*Mahamai*” called *Cholan Purvapattaiyam*¹¹⁷ which says about the social history of the Chola. However author says that this *Uravinmurai* and *Mahamai* concept had been emerged before 230 years.¹¹⁸ In addition to author believes that “*Uravinmurai*” concept was formed with rules and regulations, traditional practices by Nadars in those days no one has done this kind of association ever before.¹¹⁹ Sathangudi, Tirumangalam, Sivakasi, Viruthupatti (present Viruthunagar), Aruppukkottai and Palayampatti were most important *uravinmurai/pettai*. Robert L. Hardgrave has also mentioned *pettais* and its works in Nadar society.

T. V. Jagatheesan provides the data¹²⁰ of “right hand” as it is known in one of the divisions in early Tamil Nadu history. It still occupies as in the name to identify a community’s origin myth of Nadars called “*Valangai Malai*”. They are very much proud about them as they to be identified as “*Valangaiyars* (right hands)”. As early it was mentioned, the origin myth of Nadars *Valangai Malai* is known as in various names such as *Valangai Nool*, *Valangai Malai*, *Valangai Charithram* and *Bhadrakaliamman Kathai*. It is to be believed as sacred object on keeping the palm leaf-manuscript at house and temples. The story of *Valangaiyars*/Bhadrakali is being narrated in the form of *Villuppattu* (Bow song tradition) in all *Bhadrakaliamman* temples. Not only that, it is also in all Ayya Vazhi temples (it is known as *nizhal thankal* in the local term) the myth is narrated. Every year especially in the month of Tamil *Masi* (February to March) it is narrated in the temples (*nizhal thankal*). Ayya Vazhi temples (Narayana Sect) in all over Tamil Nadu and Kerala the story is being performed in form of storytelling in the temples by village people. On the occasion of birth anniversary of “Ayya Vaikundar” this myth narration is being made important roles in all Ayya Vazhi temples.¹²¹ Easanthanku is a village in Kanniyakumari district. In this village a famous *Bhadrakaliamman* temple is there. During the festival, *Valangai Malai* is performed in the form of Bow song. The story of *Valangaiyar* must be read from

the beginning to the end. It is expected from the bard to sing or narrate the whole lines from palm leaf-manuscripts.¹²²

K. Sukumaran's¹²³ work discusses about Nadar achievers in southern Kerala (erstwhile Travancore) with thirty one articles speak about the following fields of folk religion, folk medicine and martial arts as well family history. People of the residence of Easanthanku in Kanniyakumari district still they follow the practice of offering toddy sap to Lord Shiva.¹²⁴ The practice of *Urumal kattu*¹²⁵, it reveals identity of Ayya Vazhi.¹²⁶ As a result of conversion, some Nadars from Mettukkadai got converted into Muslims.¹²⁷ Some people were migrated to Kanniyakumari during Rev. Charles Meet, who was a priest for protestant Christians in Nagercoil of Kanniyakumari district. In 1818 around fifty families migrated from Thisaiyanvilai of south eastern part of Tirunelveli district to Nagercoil.¹²⁸ Nadars had different occupations. Among them physician was one of the occupations of Nadars. As physician known to technique of removing the poison from human biting by snakes or any other insects, they were also experts in Siddha, *Varmakkalai*, which is method of curing nerves disorders by massaging certain nerve centres.¹²⁹

Sarada Devi has written a book¹³⁰ about Nadars of Tamilnadu which is basically done for her Ph.D thesis submitted to Madurai Kamaraj University on 1985. It was published with some modifications in 2010, with the title "The History of the Nadars". This is the first work which is done on Nadars by the Nadars. It approaches data on Nadars through historical perspectives. This book gives a basic platform to understand about Nadars through historical evidences. Author has depicted by providing information from various sources on Nadars.

Lacunae in existing Literature

Although scholars from abroad and scholars from India had done the research on Nadars, their works are limited to the social organizations on Nadars. This research's main intention is to bring out the Nadars' kinship, marriage practices and family systems from the Folkloristics perspectives. As far as anthropology and other social science disciplines are concerned, kinship is one of the bases of social institution and the same has been studied from a point of universalisation. In addition to that, most of the kinship studies done in national

and international level are anthropological perspectives. It is indeed to have perspective and discipline to understand the community in their shift and change through social organisations is one folkloric perspective. It is the discipline which helps the fellowship to understand the culture and change in a community through the lore. Thus, folklore is concerned with version and variations of the culture; multiplication of cultural values of the community. As folklore methodology strongly believes on multiple existences and variants of any genre, this study on kinship, marriage and family systems of Nadars will also employ this methodology to collect the data on the topic and represent genre through application of theories of folk culture.

Folkloric Perspective

Folklore Study is a multidisciplinary field of study concerned with the documentation and analysis of oral narratives, customs, material, and performance traditions. It is concerned with all bodies of belief, ceremonies, rites, customs, dramatic or mimetic action, procedures, techniques, and arts in any form that may legitimately be looked upon as the outgrowths, manifestations, or representations of the ideas in the classes above.¹³¹ G.L. Gomme's states that folklore must be studied item by item from its own home.¹³² Folklore is an integral and vital part of our daily lives. Members of the society interact with others on a daily basis, express what they know, think, believe and feel. Also they do in a variety of readily distinguishable, often symbolic ways: by singing and making music, uttering proverbial expressions, dancing, and creating objects.¹³³ As Bess Lomax emphasises about folklore studies as an individual is required-by virtue of his membership within the profession-to balance out the conflicting essentials of his work, it is to be noted that as a sound suggestion as far as the new perspectives in folklore are concerned.¹³⁴ The ideology and politics of folkloristic approach may vary from one nation to other. Studies in folkloristic approach are bound to follow the socio-political position of a country. To say an example, folklore was applied for the creation of Finland national epic known Kalevala. The same method was applied in Russia's communists' campaigning. As it is the product of working class, it should be used for their liberation. In order to discuss the various relationships of folklore with gender and kinship roles, marriage practices between

individuals, groups, and society; it is very much needed of having folkloric perspective in cultural studies.¹³⁵ Bringing folkloric perspective for studying kinship and marriage systems for that using folklore data could be a new model to the folklore methodology. As it gives proper understanding to a culture, it is better to hold this methodology for studying a culture rather from peripheral level of approaching. A folklorist studies and the related disciplines, at least for marking the boundaries of the discipline, it remains that folklore still concerns many disciplines and will certainly be studied across disciplines and sometimes with entirely different perspectives. If any researcher studies a given phenomenon of a culture for instance, kinship system, without folklore data as supportive evidence, one cannot sustain his conclusions about kinship system. Thus using folklore data folkloric perspective is very much needed in studies.¹³⁶ Alan Dundes identifies¹³⁷ the characteristics of folkloristics as in the follows: i) multiple existences across space ii) persistence through time iii) poetics and projections iv) rationale of fantasy. Dundes moves further that variation of a particular genre is inevitable as a result of multiple existences. As the technological growth fosters folklore to allow by the folks, it accommodates the traditional forms for the creation. Most of the folk groups have its own style and content to represent the groups who have created. It is to be noted that esoteric and exoteric nature of folklore also an amusement in terms of content. As Dundes emphasises the characters of folklore, it is also a significant one to study the kinship by keeping those characterisation in the thesis.

Hypothesis

Nadars especially southern Nadars of Tamilnadu are distinctively differed from each other in terms of marriage practices, group representations within the caste and religious practices. Having converted into Christianity and accepted the traditional practices, it is observed that there are lots of changes might have occurred among the Nadars. Although the family of Nadars is seen as a system of exogamous practices, religion is observed as an endogamous to reinforce the religious group within the community. The proof of this transition may be identified through religious and other cultural practices. Among the Nadars, crucial factors which influence family as well as society are the dynamics of the

community. The dynamics of Nadars is found in religion and other rituals. Since they all play crucial role in family as well as in the society, the tradition and the subsequent changes should be studied at its socio-cultural context by using folkloric perspective. This community of Nadars faced mass conversion during the colonial period. The conversion into Christianity followed the socio-cultural changes in their social system also to be studied. Ayya Vazhi is another denomination founded by Ayya Vaikundar a Nadar during later nineteenth century. It is observed as a reformative movement within the Hinduism in order to appeal the people not to embrace other religion. Thus it is also an interesting phenomenon to study to understand the shift and change in the community when new denomination is accepted by the people and its subsequent changes in social organisation.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The study aims;

- ❖ To document the life and lore of Nadars
- ❖ To interpret the kin roles in marriage and family of the Nadar community
- ❖ To discuss the structural aspects of marriage of Nadars
- ❖ To unearth the conversion dynamics of Nadars with special reference to religion

Research Methodology:

Research methods are the methods, techniques and strategies which are applied in conducting the research. Methodology is a scientific study or the systematic or logical process adopted to follow. The objective of the research was to explore the solution for a given problem, the available data and the unknown aspects of the problem have been related to each other to make a solution possible. The methodology which was followed to execute this research is as follows:

Methods employed in the field:

Fieldwork in folklore and folklife studies cannot be replaced by any other genres. In fact each item of folklore might require a special kind of fieldwork for its

data collection. Thus having understood in the same manner, the following methods have been applied in the field while doing fieldwork.

Interviewing method is the most common field method which has been employed by folklore researchers. It supplies the researcher with an insider's view to the individual, his culture and his folklore on the social customs of the Nadars. And it is also the chief means of supplying the researcher with the folklore materials. Directive and non-directive interviews were done.

Documentation method is an analysis and interpretation of the field work based on the data collected. The whole kinship terminologies, marriage practices, family functions of the Nadars were documented by the audio and visual records.

Sample collection method: This method is one of the quantitative research methods that deal with numbers and data which are measurable in a systematic way of investigation of phenomena and their relationships. It is used to answer the questions on relationships within the measurable variables with an intention to explain, predict and control a phenomenon. Marriage data related to alliance from the print media sources have also been collected for the study to discuss the influence of the religion and region endogamous from the three districts of Kanniyakumari, Tirunelveli and Thoothukudi in Tamilnadu. Kinship terminology has also been collected which are used among the community.

Dialogical method brings out the discourse through a discussion between the informant and the researcher which helps to produce a thick data where data is self-reflective, self-reflective knowledge comes from the discussion of both sides. The modernist ethnographical method of research employed by social sciences, humanities, folklore and other cultural studies is processed through these ideologies and new ethnography or post-modern ethnography or interview method is evolved. Combination of all the above mentioned methods supplies good volume of data for analysis.

Sources of the Study

The sources of the study were divided into two categories namely primary and secondary sources. The primary data comes basically from the fieldwork through

documentation of life styles and personal narratives. The secondary data is from the written sources. Some of the sources for the study are listed below.

1. Life cycle ceremonies, and religious rituals of Nadars which found in birth ceremony to death ceremonies and temples, church festivals (*pongal/kodai*)
2. Ethnic Genres like Myths, proverbs, folk songs, sayings which are related to kinship and caste
3. Kinship terminologies and its usages in the society

Primary Sources

This research entitled “Kinship, Marriage, and Family systems from Folkloric Perspective: A study on Nadars of Tamilnadu” was conducted in Southern districts of Tamilnadu such as Kanniyakumari, Tirunelveli and Thoothukudi of Tamilnadu. Most of the Nadars settlements spread out these areas. Data have been collected on Kinship and marriage of the community in the present social conditions. It has also been documented the marriage practices and rituals to interpret irrespective of Christian and Hindu Nadars.

Secondary Sources

The secondary sources were used including books and works on the Nadars in particular which both published and unpublished. Government gazetteers, manuals, survey reports, archival sources like letters, pamphlets; records which have been reserved for future study and references and also newspapers, articles, form the secondary sources.

Brief Chapterization

The Chapterization of this thesis is divided as in the following

Chapter I: Introduction

Chapter II: Life and Lore of Nadars

Chapter III: Kinship and Marriage: Reflection in Ethnic Genres

Chapter IV: Marriage Practices of Nadars: Structural Perspective

Chapter V: Religion and Ritual Dynamics

Chapter VI: Conclusion

Chapter 1 - Introduction: This chapter introduces the community of Nadars through various records and pioneer works done on kinship and the community. And also explores the nature of study done during the period. Apart from the basic concept, significance of the study, literature survey, objectives of the study, research problem, scope of the study, methodology are also enumerated in this Chapter.

Chapter 2 - Life and Lore of Nadars: This chapter studies the life and lore of Nadars of everyday life with special reference to folk culture. In this chapter, the southern Nadars are discussed; it is also found that social divisions, economic organisations as their arrangements are laid based on regions and regions. As the community of Nadar has been exercising different socio-cultural practices, it is needed a study for documenting the life. As Nadars are distributed among Hinduism and Christianity, they follow the respective religious practices and concern rituals of marriage ceremonies. This community is broadly divided into two major groups: Nadan and Nattathi Nadar. Nadan comprises two sub groups: land lords (*Nilamaikkaran*) and Karukkupattai. The people of Karukkupattai a sub group are usually toddy tappers and are engaged in coconut cultivation. Also they are the labourers to the land lords (Nadan in Kanniyakumari region and Nilamaikkaran in Tirunelveli, Thoothukudi regions). Nattathi Nadar division comprises Kodikkal and Melnattan. It is to be noted that Nattathi Nadars are also called Kodikkal Nadars and their presence is found in western part of Tirunelveli district such as Ambasamudhram and Tenkasi; in certain areas of Thoothukudi district such as Atthoor, Mukkani and Eral; and in some of the places in western part of Kanniyakumari district and taluk of Neyyatrinkarai.¹³⁸ The division of Kodikkal Nadars were believed to be migrated to the Pandiyan country from the banks of the Cauvery River in Thanjavur, coming under the patronage of the Pandiyan kings as flag bearers'.¹³⁹ In this chapter, the southern Nadars' (the region based) marriage alliance is discussed. The third factor of arranging marriage alliance is family as an exogamous group. Though it is observed majorly among the Nattathi Nadars, other sects of Nadar such as Nadan and *Karukkupattai* are divided into regions and also deity.

Nadars, due to migration from their hometown to urban areas, the cultural practice is also tend to have modified by having new social interaction with people of other communities which obviously affects their socialisation. Now they stopped coming to their native villages. Instead of going to native places, they build temples at their new towns. It is the major change which was seen among the Nadars. At the same time within the southern Nadars, Christian community made major influences in their rituals especially in their life cycle ceremonies. Although they were known as different sub-groups within the Nadars, Christianity made them as one sect after some decades of the conversion¹⁴⁰. The sub-groups' kinship pattern slowly emerged out of new religious groups and social mobility of the community. As Christian Nadars embraced the Christianity for their emancipation from caste Hindus, Hindu Nadars started embracing Sanskritisation practices at their temples and family shrines, which they built in their new towns. Thus religion is seen as one of the major factors which influenced in the political and social mobility of the community. It had also made major changes in their day to day life.

Chapter 3 - Kinship and Marriage: Reflections in Ethnic Genres deals with folklore genres of Nadars. There are many collections of folklore such as folk songs (children songs, folk games, and marriage songs), folk tales, myths, proverbs, ballad and customary practices, but less of works has been dealt on kinship and marriage. Moreover, no one has dealt on kinship and marriage on Nadars from folkloric perspective. Thus it is indeed to study on Nadars which remains unexplored in terms of folklore perspective.

The lifestyles of a community is interpreted through the resources of oral traditions, which constitutes the whole knowledge system of a community, further it reveals all its lifestyles of the community through its ethnic genres. As kinship is a complex, dynamic and likely to change in practice, it is indeed to study the particular element of unit of a community which makes larger changes at societal level. The result of migration and new alliance made families to be found more closure. Thus Nadars (sub-caste, family as exogamous, religion, and economic status) are divided into many groups their kin bond is getting connected with each and every sects of division. The reason for division is also observed as the vindicating point of getting closure according to the sects of various divisions.

Thus the existence of the divisions is the reason for getting united each sectarian wise.

Chapter 4 - Marriage practices of Nadars: Structural Perspective discusses the marriage practices of the Nadars from stages to structure. Nadars follow patriarchal kinship pattern. In terms of marriage alliance endogamous practice as well as exogamous practice is observed on the ground of customs. As kinship systems are built up on the complementary relationship of the two sexes in marriage and parenthood¹⁴¹, it is more relevant to discuss the marriage practices of the Nadars. They follow cross cousin marriage practices as it is one of the basic elements, which is also observed as Dravidian kinship in pan south Indian level. It is also observed from the field that marriage alliances with cross-cousin such as FZS/D, MBS/D and eZD marriage. Families are identified with different clan names among the Nattathi Nadars. But other divisions of Nadars such as Karukkupattai and other than Nattathi Nadars are identified through family deity, villages, district etc. Among the Karukkupattai Nadars, alliances are made within their sub-sect namely villages, district as their outside family. So, clan/family is decided for the marriage alliance in Nattathi Nadars. The new arrival and strong bond of religion is also very important for Nadars. Although they are as a community, when a marriage alliance is made, religion also plays a key role.

Apart from these, the following things have been found as recently emerging issues within the community. They are some new issues such as women's aged marriages; inter-caste marriage; less usages of material culture (materials which were used in most of the marriages). It is also a good outcome from this to discuss by taking these phenomena as present crisis at society and culture. Thus, among the Nadars religion has a crucial role when the marriage alliance is being made.

Chapter 5 - Religion and Ritual Dynamics explores the ground by using quantitative data as well as qualitative data through description and interpretations. Nadars are divided into two major groups' basis of kinship and marriage. As they are the followers of village/family deity worship (especially among the Nattathi Nadars), they all become the part and parcel of *koottam*, which means family. As they are converted into Christianity and other sects such as Amma Vazhi, Ayya

Vazhi are tend to follow the sacraments prescribed by the Christianity and Hindu. Thus they are the followers of sacraments guidelines of the Christianity each denomination of Christianity has separate social practice. So, practice that had with them is gradually getting away from its members. They all tend to be within the lineage, which considers as a lowest exogamous unit within their social structure. So, there is a possibility to have more conscious on lineage one another a *pangali*, which means 'sharer'.

Prior to the conversion, Nadars worshiped folk goddess (*Amma Vazhi*), Vaikunda Samy (*Ayya Vazhi*), ancestor worship (family elders as god and goddess), *Kanni*¹⁴², person from other community¹⁴³ also worshiped by the Nadars. Aforementioned deity was clubbed together as Hindu by the people as well as in every region. The word 'ayya' in Ayya Vazhi might have taken from the deity of *Ayyanar* which is predominant in the origin home land of Nadars, the affection as well as worship pattern of the tradition of Nadars made a group of Nadars call Muthukutti or Vaikunda Samy principles as Ayya Vazhi. Thus Ayya Vazhi has become as one of the new denominations among the Nadars.

It is also observed in the thesis that Nadars are a very small extent of Hindus. After analysing kinship and marriage, it is found that religion seems to be influential phenomenon among the Nadars (Hindu Nadars, Catholic, CSI and Ayya Vazhi). The notion about the region is also getting increased in the modern day (Thoothukudi, Tirunelveli and Kanniyakumari). The next influential phenomenon is profession strongly based on economic status. Profession decides the dowry and other gifts which groom would be given by bride family. It is to be noted that the major sub-group within the Nadars is known as Nattathi Nadars. They are controlled by the system of family. There 64 families are found among the Nattathi Nadars. They have an exogamous practice, so, marrying within the group is prohibited. Despite it is prohibited/not entertained by the clans, there are several examples could find from the field who have married from the same clan. For Christians (Catholic and CSI) their associations take responsible in marriages. So, there will be no clan division rather religion. Among the Christians (though it is Catholic or Protestants) marriage is not controlled by clan. But among the Nattathi Nadars though they are Christians they still want to continue the clan practice with

them. Even today many marriages are arranged based on their clans with some exceptions as mentioned earlier about them.

Practices are important in a life cycle ritual but after the conversion due to the religious code, some practices are not allowed or some practices are not visible among the converted, migrated Nadars. They are identified namely maternal uncle ritual, agnates blessing. In another hand as like religion takes a role in controlling the life cycle rituals, regionalism also makes some differentiation with its specific identity. Among the Nadars the following practice is found as a unique in Kanniyakumari district is that giving palm jaggery to bride's family. As a practice, it is known as one among the regular activities. But the socio-cultural meaning to behind the practice should be concentrated.

Though they are same religious group concerned, region is preferred to be the selection criteria of bride or groom. It is to be noted that most of the Nadars who are economically sound give their bride within their region or to the known circle. That known circle is identified mostly through the region. It is very rare to see to go marriage alliance with groom who is the resident of far from the bride. Although they are from the same religious group, but less in economy status then obviously the family seeks a groom or giving bride to the groom who is seeking the bride when region is not considered as criteria. Unless there is a political connection between bride and groom families, within the region marriage alliance is sought by most of the Nadars who go with religion. Thus religion also plays in assuring and following endogamous practices among the Nadars.

Thoothukudi and Tirunelveli district Nadars do similar businesses in terms of occupation. Whereas the Kanniyakumari Nadars consider, education as an important benchmark for all kind of life matters. Moreover in Kanniyakumari district, Christians and Hindus follow different religious practices in marriage. They have unique feature in hospitality, kinship, gift giving practices, many of life cycle ceremonies and dowry systems. If alliance is made on the basis of religion, there are two types of alliances found. One is as religious division another one is region. If a Hindu goes with religion, then it is obviously religious alliance for him. If Christian goes for an alliance it is also a religious alliance for him. But, there will be less number of chances in getting bride/groom for a religious based Nadars then

it is to be noted that it might be the religion which makes Nadars to go as region specific by selecting their bride/groom selection as an endogamy.

Chapter 6 – Conclusion provides suggestion, findings and scope for future study which taken from the core chapters.

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- ⁴⁷ Mark Wilks. (1810 & 1817). *Historical Sketches of the South of India*. Vol. I, Vol. II & Vol. III. London: Printed for Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown.
- ⁴⁸ Edgar Thurston. (1909 & 2009 (reprint)). *Caste and Tribes of South India*. Vol. VI. Madras.
- ⁴⁹ Samuel Mateer. (1870). *The land of Charity: A descriptive account of Travancore and its People with special reference to mission life*
- ⁵⁰ Samuel Mateer. (1870). Pp.38-42.
- ⁵¹ Robert L. Hardgrave. (1969). *The Nadars of Tamilnadu*
- ⁵² Robert L. Hardgrave. (1969). P.47.
- ⁵³ By tradition in Travancore the breast was bared as a symbolic of respect of those of higher status
- ⁵⁴ Because as Nadans, had the right to wear the breast cloth. The lower classes, being only Shanars, had no such right. Then Nadars started to create community consciousness among the Nadars in the movement for the adoption of the breast cloth, the Christians of Tinnevely began to work for the uplift of the Nadars in that district to a position of higher status.
- ⁵⁵ Robert L. Hardgrave. (1969). P.60.
- ⁵⁶ Dennis Templeman. (1996). *Northern Nadars of Tamilnadu*
- ⁵⁷ Whoever the resident of Tirunelveli, Thoothukudi and Kanniyakumari districts
- ⁵⁸ The resident of Virudhunagar, Madurai, Ramanathapuram and rest of districts in Tamilnadu

- ⁵⁹ During the later nineteenth century and early twentieth century Nadars started migrating to northwards in order to develop their business of cotton, Palmyra products, and textiles. Afterwards Nadars founded new settlements in Virudhunagar, Madurai regions.
- ⁶⁰ i.e. occupation requiring high or relatively high educational levels and professional training
- ⁶¹ Dennis Templeman. (1996). *Op.cit.*, P.30.
- ⁶² Dennis Templeman. (1996). *Op.cit.*, P.38.
- ⁶³ A. Thasarathan. (2001). *Manadu: A Socio-History of Manavira Valanadu*
- ⁶⁴ M. Immauel. (2002). *The Dravidian Lineages a Socio-Historical Study: The Nadar through the ages*
- ⁶⁵ *Kalaripayattu*, southern style also *varma sastra*.
- ⁶⁶ Ivy Peter. (2002). *History of the Struggle for Socio-Economic and Political Liberation of an oppressed community in the extreme south: A Case study*.
- ⁶⁷ Cover file No. 1231. Report of V. Rama Rao, Dewan Peishkar of Quilon to T. Madhava Rao, The Dewan of Travancore, 30 September 1869. English records. Kerala Archives. Trivandrum
- ⁶⁸ Political Consultations. vol. 124, p. 875, Colonel Munro to Chief Secretary to Government, Fort St. George, 7 March 1818, Tamilnadu Archives, Madras
- ⁶⁹ John A .Jacob. (1990). *A History of the London Missionary Society in South Travancore 1806-1959*. Nagercoil. P.41.
- ⁷⁰ Neetu. Vol. 13, P.64. Kerala State Archives. Trivandrum.
- ⁷¹ C.M. Agur. (1990). *Church History of Travancore*. New Delhi. P.573.
- ⁷² *yeni* means ladder. Toddy tappers use this ladder for climbing the Palmyra tree till the height of the ladder it will help to climb two more palm tree without tired
- ⁷³ Here *thalai* means a ring kind of thing which is made of palm fibre. It was very crucial for toddy tappers to climb the tree.
- ⁷⁴ If one toddy tapper gets one pot toddy (*kal*) he has to give one *naali kal* (this is the measurement). The capacity of *naali* is 1.25lt. to the government
- ⁷⁵ Ivy Peter & Peter. (2002). *History of the Struggle for Socio-Economic and Political Liberation of an oppressed community in the extreme south: A Case study*. Nagercoil: Kanyakumari Institute of Development Studies. P.21.
- ⁷⁶ Samuel Mateer. (1991). *Native Life in Travancore*. New Delhi. P.377.
- ⁷⁷ Ivy Peter and Peter, 2002. *Op.cit.*, Pp.21-23.
- ⁷⁸ U. Subramaniyam. (1988). *Kerala Tamilians and their complexity*
- ⁷⁹ U. Subramaniyam. (1988). *Kerala Tamilians and their complexity*. Tanjore: Tamil University Press. P.6.
- ⁸⁰ U. Subramaniyam. (1988). *Op.cit.*, Pp.105-120
- ⁸¹ P. Muthuraman. (2004). *Agrarian Change and Identity formation: Caste mobilization among the Nadars of Tamilnadu*. PhD dissertation (unpublished)
- ⁸² P. Malarvizhi. (2009). *Customs and Practice of Hindu Nadars in Virudhunagar: A Study*. PhD dissertation (unpublished)
- ⁸³ V. Indira Devi. (2010). *Nadar Mahajana Sangam in Tamilnadu: A Study*. PhD dissertation (unpublished)
- ⁸⁴ M. Vijaya Shanthi. (2015). *Social Status of Nadars of Madurai District*. PhD dissertation (unpublished)
- ⁸⁵ B. Vijay Amirtharaj. (2017). *The Nadars of Palmyra Climbing: A Study*. PhD dissertation (unpublished)
- ⁸⁶ It is a palm leaf manuscript document which tells the origin story of Nadars
- ⁸⁷ N. Jagannathan. (2007). *History of Virudhunagar District*
- ⁸⁸ D. Velappan. (). *Nanchil Naadu*
- ⁸⁹ S. Ganapathiraman. (1986). *Folk Deities of Tinnevely*
- ⁹⁰ *Ezhu kannikal/Sapta Kannikal*
- ⁹¹ Ayyanar is worshipped by people in various names

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- ⁹² Also known as Periyasamy
- ⁹³ S. Ganapathiraman. (1986). *Folk Deities of Tinnevely*. Thoothukudi: Thirumahal Noolakam.
- ⁹⁴ S. Ganapathiraman. (1986). *Op.Cit.*, Pp.24-25.
- ⁹⁵ *Travancore State Manual* was written by V. Nagam Aiya, who was then working as the Dewan Peishcar in Travancore government service.
- ⁹⁶ Nagamaya. (1906). *Travancore State Manual*. P.112.
- ⁹⁷ Once upon a time northern side of Cauvery river bank one family was living. The father name is Nagarajan. He had seven daughters. They went to one mountain spring for bathing. It calls as *Yelaachunai*. The seven virgins usually they come and take bathe in the *Yelaachunai* mountain spring. One day Rajarishi Vidhyadharan saw them while seven sisters were taking bathe. He wanted to have sex with them. It happened. He impregnated the seven virgins. One day seven virgins delivered seven sons and they left the children at Mother Kaali temple. Then Mother *Kaali* brought up those children. The she had given one fort to them to rule. Nadars claim that we are all the descends of that seven brothers
- ⁹⁸ P.R. Srinivasan. *Our Deities* (in Tamil). P.76.
- ⁹⁹ For this ritual boy will hook a rope on the back side of his body by rope, then people will hang him up for some time from the particular height
- ¹⁰⁰ A kind of lamp shallow bowl-shaped oil lamp made of rice flour
- ¹⁰¹ S. Ganapathiraman. (1986). *Op.cit.*, P.37.
- ¹⁰² Joy Gnanadasan. (1998). *Marakkapatta Varalaru* (A Forgotten History: The Story of the Missionary Movement and the Liberation of People in South Travancore).
- ¹⁰³ Mayiladi is situated in Kanniyakumari district this was elevated as one of the CSI Christian conversion. Rev. Vedhanayaham who was the founder of this CSI Christian community and also brought some Danish missionaries from Tanjore to Kanniyakumari. Among them Ringal Taube, Charles Meet, Samuel Mateer were well known missionaries as well as reformists. They had helped the communities for their survival in Kanniyakumari district for getting rights to wear upper cloth, exception from the Sunday *ooliyam* (work). *Ooliyam* is known as a practice for Nadars, Sambavars, Ezhavas do free work to higher caste Hindus in south Travancore without any wages. After the intervention of missionaries into this matter they got the permission to leave away from the work burden one day in a week. During these periods numbers of protests were made by the natives and many of people had migrated to Tirunelveli and Thoothukudi districts.
- ¹⁰⁴ G. Stephen. (2009). *Tamil Samookathil Voimozhi Kathaikal* (Oral Narratives in Tamil Society).
- ¹⁰⁵ G. Stephen. (2009). *Tamil Samookathil Voimozhi Kathaikal* (Oral Narratives in Tamil society). Chennai: Paavai Publications. P.75.
- ¹⁰⁶ G. Stephen. (2009). *Op.Cit.*, P.95.
- ¹⁰⁷ Intended for or understood by only a particular community of group.
- ¹⁰⁸ Of or relating to the outside; external
- ¹⁰⁹ A.K. Perumal. (2003). *Thenkumariy Kathai* (History of Kanniyakumari district).
- ¹¹⁰ A.K. Perumal. (2003). *Op.cit.*, P.97.
- ¹¹¹ 1458, 1470 A.D. records say about this slavery system was in Kanniyakumari District
- ¹¹² P. Rasadurai. (1983). *Uravinmurai* (Local Association).
- ¹¹³ Village situated in Virudhunagar district of Tamilnadu
- ¹¹⁴ P. Rasadurai. (1983). *Uravinmurai*. Virudhunagar: Ilamaram Pathippakam. P.63.
- ¹¹⁵ The revenue of a temple, the donation of merchants or cultivators to a temple.
- ¹¹⁶ *Uravinmurai* this system can be found in all over Tamilnadu districts among the Nadars. This *uravinmurai* helps them to gather under particular association as well as to solve their community problems, to decide further development activities for the community and the society.
- ¹¹⁷ P. Rasadurai. (1983). *Op.cit.*, Pg. 83.
- ¹¹⁸ P. Rasadurai. (1983). *Op.cit.*, Pg. 94-95.
- ¹¹⁹ P. Rasadurai. (1983). *Op.cit.*, Pg. 97.
- ¹²⁰ T. V. Jagatheesan. (). *Sons of Bhadrakali (Bhadrakaliyin Puthirarkal)*

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- ¹²¹ Ponneelan. (2004). "Introduction." in T.V. Jegatheesan. *Sons of Bhadrakali (Bhadrakaliyin Puthirarkal)*. Chennai: United Writers. P.6.
- ¹²² T.V. Jegatheesan. (2004). *Sons of Bhadrakali (Bhadrakaliyin Puthirarkal)*. Chennai: United Writers. P.22
- ¹²³ K. Sukumaran. (2007). *Thiruvithancooril Sathanai padaittha Santrorkal* (Nadar Achievers in Travancore).
- ¹²⁴ K. Sukumaran. (2007). *Op.cit.* P.28.
- ¹²⁵ Every aged boy should tie the turban on his age of maturity that practice which is known as *Urumul kattu*.
- ¹²⁶ K. Sukumaran. (2007). *Op.cit.*, P.49.
- ¹²⁷ K. Sukumaran. (2007). *Op.cit.*, Pp.61-62.
- ¹²⁸ K. Sukumaran. (2007). *Op.cit.*, P.66.
- ¹²⁹ K. Sukumaran. (2007). *Op.cit.*, P.148-153.
- ¹³⁰ Sarada Devi. (2010). *The History of the Nadars*
- ¹³¹ Samuel P. Bayard. (January-March, 1953). "The Materials of Folklore." in *The Journal of American Folklore*. Vol. 66. No. 259. P.9.
- ¹³² Sona Rosa Burstein. (1957). "George Lawrence Gomme and the Science of Folklore." *Folklore*. Vol. 68. P.323.
- ¹³³ Robert A. Georges and Michael Owen Jones. (Eds.). (1995). "Introduction: Folklore and Its Study." in *Folkloristics: An Introduction*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press. Pp.1-2.
- ¹³⁴ Robert Baron and Nicholas Spitzer. (1992). "Introduction." in Robert Baron and Nicholas Spitzer. (Eds.). *Public Folklore*. Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press. Pp.1-16
- ¹³⁵ Sue V. Rosser. (1992). "Are There Feminist Methodologies Appropriate for the Natural Sciences and Do They Make a Difference?" *Women's Studies International Forum* Vol. 15. No. 5/6. Pp.535-50.
- ¹³⁶ Richard M. Dorson. (1972). *Folklore and Folklife: An Introduction*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press. P.40.
- ¹³⁷ Alan Dundes, S.J. Bronner (Eds). (2007). *The Meaning of Folklore: The analytical essays of Alan Dundes*. Logan: Uta Press. P.41
- ¹³⁸ Sukumaran, K. 2005. *Chera Mannarkalum, MakkalVaazhviyalum* (Political and Social History of Cheranadu). Nagercoil: Santhini Publishing. Pg. 202.
- ¹³⁹ Pate, H.R. 1917. *Madras District Gazetteers Tinnevely*. Vol. I. Pg.129-130.
- ¹⁴⁰ Post 19th century
- ¹⁴¹ Durkheim E. 1984 (New York: The Free Press), 1997; *The Division of Labor in Society*, Macmillan Education Ltd. in Great Britain.
- ¹⁴² When a virgin dies in a family, then she is worshiped by the family as a respectful one in the family.
- ¹⁴³ Person from Nadar community, other than Nadar community and the man of non-native of the region.

CHAPTER – II
LIFE AND LORE OF NADARS

Nadars are living in the Tamilnadu districts of Kanniyakumari, Thoothukudi, Tirunelveli, Virudhunagar, Ramanathapuram, Madurai, Theni, Dindigul, Coimbatore, Tiruppur, Erode, Salem, Sivagangai, Chennai, Thanjavur and Cuddalore. They are called as 'Nadar' in the Southern districts of Tamil Nadu; 'Gramini' in Cuddalore, Chennai and other northern parts of Tamil Nadu. In the western regions of Coimbatore, Tiruppur, Erode and Namakkal districts they are called as *Kongu* Nadars.

Nadars: Geographical Distribution

Most of the Nadar (the Shanar as they were then known) population is concentrated in the arid land called *theri* of Tiruchendur of Thoothukudi (erstwhile eastern part of Tinnevely).¹ Hardgrave has described that the Nadars located outside the mainstream of the Hindu society in their region, in villages consisted of several Nadar sub-groups; here, internal divisions provided the principal framework within their functioned.² Except the few rich Nadans, all of them were poor. They had a very low social status and their ritual position in the caste hierarchy was just above the bottom.³ Nadar comprises about twelve percentage of the total Tamil Nadu population.⁴ It can be considered as 86, 57,644 as per the census report of India 2011. They are big chunk of people in the southern districts such as Kanniyakumari, Thoothukudi and Tirunelveli respectively.

This study has been conducted in three districts namely Kanniyakumari, Tirunelveli and Thoothukudi. Hardgrave's reconstructed history of the Nadars reveals that Nadars' original home land was Tiruchendur taluk of the present Thoothukudi district of Tamil Nadu. Their traditional occupation was toddy tapping. Most of the Nadars (the Shanars as they were then known) were engaging themselves in cultivating and climbing of the palmyra. An endogamous sub-group called Nadan, 'land of the soil' owned the lands and trees and each Nadan had a group of dependent climbers to work for them.⁵

Kanniyakumari district is situated between 77.0 - 05` and 77.0 - 36` of eastern longitude and 8.03 and 8.36 of the northern latitude occupying a total area of 1672

sq. km. It is bordered with Tirunelveli district in the north and north east, Kerala in the northwest and by the Indian Ocean and the Bay of Bengal in the south and western sides respectively⁶. Kanniyakumari district accommodates people belonging to Hinduism, Islam and Christianity with a sprinkling of saints. However, Christian population is the largest in number in the district. Among Hindus, there is a separate religious sect known as “Ayya vazhi” based on the precepts propounded by Ayya Vaikundar.

Tirunelveli district occupies a total area of 6823 sq.km. It is bordered with Kanniyakumari district in the south-west by the bay of Bengal in the south. Tirunelveli consists of Hindus, Muslims, Christians and others. However, Christian population especially CSI Christian is the largest in number in the district. On the 20th, October 1986 a new district called Thoothukudi, carved out of the erstwhile Tirunelveli district was born in Tamil Nadu.⁷ Thoothukudi (Tuticorin) district occupies a total area of 4621 sq.km, which is bordered with Tirunelveli district in the south and west, by the Bay of Bengal in the east. It accommodates Hindus, Muslims, Christians and others.

In this chapter, the Southern Nadars’ (the region based) life and lore are discussed. As seeking marriage alliance is done through the families among the Nattathi Nadars, other sects of Nadar such as Nadan and Karukkupattai are also followed to have been divided into regions. Thus this chapter discusses about the life and lore of Nadars based on their social organisation, migration, economic organisation and religious practices.

Etymology of Nadar

The title ‘Santror’ is known as ‘eminent’ or the ‘superior’.⁸ *Santrar* is the actual name of Nadar (Nadar, which is being called now). *Santrar* word shrank into *Shanar*.⁹ *Shanarkaasuit* was used as currency. Once it was very much popularly known and circulated in Ancient Kerala. It was used to have been currency between South India and Italy. It was a coin in which effigy of coconut tree marked in it.¹⁰

Shanan/r is etymologically derived from *Shandran*, which is a grammatical and intelligent form of the name.¹¹ “*Chananis* a borrowed word from the Tamil word *chandr* which denotes chief man”.¹² Thurston states that “in Tamilnadu there are two

words to call Nadars one is Nadars, who were in south Tamilnadu; and another one is *Gramini*, who were in North Arcot (present day Tiruvannamalai and Vellore districts) and South Arcot (present day Cuddalore and Villupuram districts) districts of Tamilnadu. The two words *Nadan* and *Gramini* were also used to call the same community namely the ruler of a country or village; the former being a Tamil word and the latter a Sanskrit word”.¹³ The Nadars, a name signifying lord of the soil, are *Sandaravar* land owners who claim rights of seigniorage over most of the village in the south.¹⁴ “Nadan is a common use amongst the Christians. It means that an owner of lands or a land lord, in these days a Nadan may be a farmer or trader”.¹⁵ Kshatriyas, this name also is in practice, to address Nadars. In northern village of Thoothukudi and Virudhunagar, Theni, some of Madurai villages, Nadars claim that they are Kshatriyas. SundaramPillai he mentions in his work of *Tamilian Antiquary* that “Nadar may have occupied positions of as much respectability as they now claim among the original Tamil people”.¹⁶

The word “Shanan is originally derived from the Tamil word *saru*, meaning juice. Here it is taken as toddy; but a learned missionary Robert Caldwell opines that it was derived it from *san* (a span) and *nar* (fibre or string), that is the noose, one span in length, used by the Shanans while climbing palm tree”.¹⁷

Though the word ‘Nadar’ considered as a caste name by the community, it is observed that it is not a caste name, The name ‘Nadar’ was given to whoever owned lands and assets among the community, to address the wealthy Nadan or Nadar was used by the people

Nada (n) r =Nadu (land) + aan (grammatically it stands in the third person of masculine gender). In those days ‘Nadar’ this word was also used to be a sign of calling chieftains.¹⁸

Nadars were referred as *Shanar* too. But the correct form is said to be *Shandrar* derived from Tamil word *Sal*. The expression *Shandror* or *Shandravar* was derived from the same root.¹⁹ Nadar community is not a singular class or a monolith, but an assortment of sub-divisions and classes of different origins, which in course of time,

came under the single banner Nadar. According to them, the original name of the community was *Chandror* or *Chandrar* which in course of time contracted to be to Shanar.²⁰

Social Divisions among the Nadars

The community of Nadar has been exercising different sociocultural practices. This chapter on life and lore of Nadars deals with the Nadars' practices of everyday life with special reference to folklore and culture. Further it studies the sociocultural practices of the community for which it applies the historical and ethnographic methods to collect the data on Nadars. Looking at religious perspective, Nadars are distributed among Hinduism and Christianity. Apparently they follow the respective religious practices concerning the rituals and of marriage ceremonies. This community is broadly divided into two major groups: Nadan and Nattathi Nadar. Nadan comprises two sub groups: land lords (*Nilamaikkaran*) and Karukkupattai. The people of Karukkupattai, a sub group are usually toddy tappers and are engaged in coconut cultivation. Also they are the labourers to the land lords (Nadan in Kanniyakumari region; *Nilamaikkaran* in Tirunelveli, Thoothukudi regions). Nattathi Nadar division comprises *Kodikkal* and *Melnattan*. It is to be noted that Nattathi Nadars are also called *Kodikkal* Nadars and their presence is found in western part of Tirunelveli district such as Ambasamudhram and Tenkasi; in certain areas of Thoothukudi district such as Atthoor, Mukkani and Eral; and in some of the places in western part of Kanniyakumari district and taluk of Neyyatrinkarai.²¹ The division of *Kodikkal* Nadars were supposed to have migrated to the Pandiyan country from the banks of the Cauvery River in Thanjavur, coming under the patronage of the Pandiyan kings as flag bearers.²² Thus region also plays a deciding role in the marriage alliance of Nadars (northern and southern Nadars).

Thus, it can be divided into two major segments in Nadar community, based on their social organisation. One is Nadan and another one is Nattathi Nadar. In the segment of Nadan it comprises *Nilamaikkaran* and *Karukkupattai* in the community. *Nilamaikaran* is a land lord group in the Teri land and *Karukkupattai* is the labour group to the land lord *Nilamaikaran*. *Karukkupattai* have Palmyra climbing or toddy tapping as their occupation. These sub sects of *Karukkupattai* are largely found in Teri land and

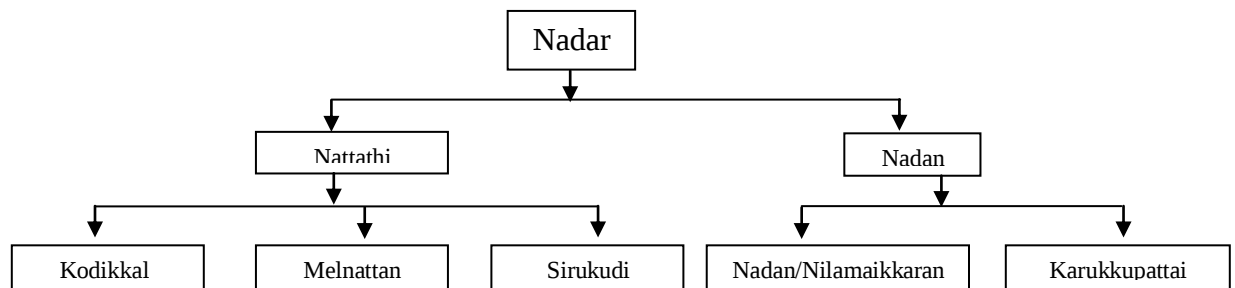
in Kanniyakumari district. The second segment of Nattathi Nadar is largely found in Thoothukudi district and some of villages in southern Tirunelveli and Kanniyakumari districts. It comprises *Nattathi* Nadar and *Sirukudi* Nadar (*Pulukkai* Shanar) sub groups of the Nadars. Nattathi Nadars' occupation is agriculture. They are the land lords of agriculture fields as well as they labour in the agriculture field. H.R. Pate says *Kodikkal* Nadars are found in Ambasamuthram and other places of western part of Tirunelveli region. They are one of the clans in Nattathi Nadars. They were supposed to have migrated from the Cauvery river belt.²³

Nadan (comprised of *Nilamaikaran* and *Karukkupattai*) segment of the Nadars is connected with the ownership of Palmyra groves and Palmyra climbing and its related palm cultivation. The second one, Nattathi Nadar, is connected with the general agriculture. According to David Ludden, the first mentioned Nadar segment is related to the dry region, the second one is connected with wet region.²⁴ The identification of the dry region and wet region is relatively easy. The Teri land (red sandy land) is full of dry region where Palmyra cultivation is only predominant occupation. But in the case of Kanniyakumari district except the taluk of Agastheeswaram (partially it is a dry region) rest of the Thoivalai, Kalkulam and Vilavankodu taluks are wet regions. Occupation among the Nadars of Kanniyakumari district is identified as cultivation of paddy, other money crops, coconut and Palmyra. These are the major cultivations of wet region. But the Nadars more especially Karukkupattai groups in Kanniyakumari district engage in all the above said occupations. They are the owners of lands as well as they go to work as labourers to others too.

Among the Nadars the sub group known as Karukkupattai (they are also identified as *manattanin* territorial division) is the majority in the community. Approximately the eighty percent people are the Karukkupattai.²⁵ Their occupation was toddy tapping later they adopted different occupations such as agriculture and other professions. Toddy tapping was the chief occupation which was considered as a degrading occupation in Hindu hierarchy.²⁶ They are predominately spread over in the three districts of Tirunelveli, Thoothukudi and Kanniyakumari. Nilamaikkarans are majorly found in the Teri region of Thoothukudi and Tirunelveli regions. Pulukka

Shanar/Sirukudi Shanar is found mixed in the three districts especially in few villages of Kanniyakumari and in few villages of western part of Tirunelveli districts. But their population is less. Although many studies have been conducted on Nadars, no one has mentioned about the population distribution of *Plukka* Shanar/Sirukudi Nadars. This *Plukka* Shanars are stated in some other names such as *Marumakka Vazhi* (avuncular marriage practices) Nadars and *Aruthukkatti* (widow remarriage) in Kanniyakumari and Tirunelveli districts.

Diagram 2.1: Social Divisions of Nadars



Origin myths of Nadars

The source of this origin myths are found in palm leaf manuscripts form of Bhadrakaliamman/Venkalarajan Kathai or Valangai Malai/Valangai Nool. Among the Nadars, there are two major divisions are seen; one is Christian Nadars and another one is Hindu Nadars. The special care for keeping the origin myths/community history in the myth form is found among the Hindu Nadars especially Bhadrakaliamman worship villages of Nadar settlements. One can notice from the Hindu Nadars that at their home they keep many god and goddess histories in the form of palm leaf manuscripts. Among them *Bhadrakaliamman* or *ValangaiMalai* is one of the major records. Kanniyakumari districts taluk such as Agastheeswaram, Kalkulam and some of the places of Thovalai and Vilavancode are specially known for *Villupaattu* (ritual song) performance. Whereas Tirunelveli and southern part of Thoothukudi districts also widely known for this performance. Moreover the story on this performance is believed to be spread over through the northern regions from the southern regions of Kanniyakumari.²⁷ In addition to that, most of the singers in Kanniyakumari and Tirunelveli regions are Nadars and

most of the temples where they sing are managed by Nadars. Nowadays it is being narrated by other community people such as Sambavar, Pillai and Chunnapraiya. But in the Bhadrakaliamman temple, Nadar bards are allowed to sing thing is strictly followed even today.²⁸

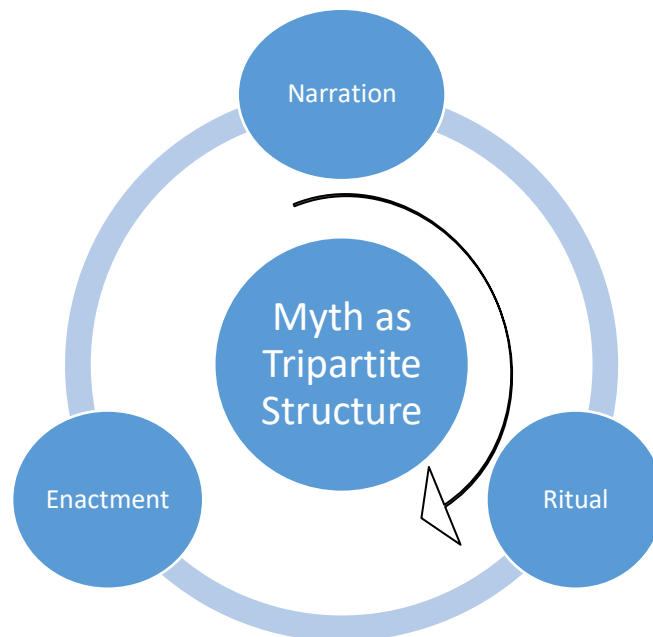
Form of Transmission of myth

The research views that the tradition has really lost in recent years at the temples that used to sponsor bow song festivals (it was called as *Kodai*) and now support festivals of another kind (known as *Vizha* and *Utsavam*). The study found that the text of Bhadrakaliamman or *ValangaiNool* has been transmitted from the original source of palm-leaf to present day digital style.

The transmission of the story is found in the following three cycles.

1. Narrating the story (narration)
2. Practicing the ritual (ritual)
3. Enacting the practice (enactment)

Diagram 2.2: Transmission of Origin Myth of Nadars



According to the practitioners of myth-ritual, this theory is characterised as in the follows, i) myth as primacy, ii) rite as primacy, iii) myth and rituals as coexistence. As a culture gets developed, its ritual practice and narration part of the myth is also getting developed equally. The important thing of this myth and ritual is to become another genre for the existence. If sacred character of myth and ritual is lost or forgotten, then it will become another genre folk tales, songs and sometime in dance, music for the existence.²⁹ Myth is to provide an explanation³⁰; myth and ritual are not coextensive³¹. As like that, enactment of myth is also observed among the Nadars in the form of folk ballad, in which a story is sung. It is to be noted that this theory of myth-ritual used for identifying the folklore genres.

Narration

The narration of an origin myth of Nadars is found in the form of Bhadrakaliamman story or *Valangai Malai/Valangai Nool*. The story is performed in bow song form at Bhadrakaliamman temple. Story is narrated in a traditional performance form called *Villupaattu*. *Villupaattu* is an ancient form of musical storytelling where narration is mixed together with music. A traditional art form of *Villupaattu* is performed in the Kanniyakumari, Tirunelveli, and in some parts of Thoothukudi districts of Tamilnadu and South Kerala districts such as Thiruvananthapuram and Kollam. The performers are narrating the stories ranging from mythological to social events. *Villupaattu*, it is a performance tradition in which form birth stories and death stories of gods/goddesses are narrated. Here the important thing is that a bow song carries the meaning as it moves into performances. In Kanniyakumari district taluk called Agastheeswaram, bow song is stronger, more traditional and more ritualistic than other places.

Bow is made out of a long bamboo or palmyra beam around eight feet and centrally mounted on pot. The musical instruments, which are essential for *Villupaattu* such as *udukkai* (drummer), *jalra* (cymbals), *kattai* (wood), tabla, harmonium and morsing etc. Artists in *Villupaattu* are categorized as lead singer, pot player, drummer,

wooden blocks player, cymbals player, harmonium or keyboard, Tabla, assistant to lead singer. Generally bow song performance is ritual and non ritual it depends upon the relevant context. As a ritual art, it is conducted usually during *Kodai* (festivals) of Bhadrakaliamman. Ballads represent the stories of *Bhadrakaliamman* or *Valangai Malai* (history of *Valangai* warriors). Stories are sung during night and it is continued to the next day morning too. As a two days event, it is performed in front of the Bhadrakaliamman temple.

Seven virgins³² used to collect water and offer to Lord Shiva from the balneary (a spring or fountain on a mountain) known as Yelaseeni. It had been going for long time till Lord Vishnu saw them. One day Lord Vishnu was sitting beside the pond and started to watch seven maids bathing. Seven maids they removed their dress and bathed as barred in the water. Lord Vishnu used this opportunity as his advantages. He asked them to offer him as they offering to Lord Shiva. But they refused it. And they said that “one can count the quantity of sand in river, but cannot count Hariraman’s incarnations; one can count the quantity of sand in Theri, but cannot count the Sri Raman incarnations” finally they said so we cannot offer for you.

One day he was waiting for seven maids. As they came and left to take bath, he took their ornaments, other belongings and put it in one bush. Maids came out of the water and saw their ornaments it was not there. Meanwhile they heard one sound it was like someone laughing at them. Lord Vishnu slowly comes out from the bush where he was hiding. Maids asked their dresses, but he denied giving. When they asked in the second time he said that come and collect your dresses. They did not go near to Vishnu. Vishnu made rain and followed storm. They were not able to endure the rain and storm at a time. Meanwhile Vishnu changed himself as fire now seven maids came near to Vishnu without knowing that they went near to fire. Lord Vishnu impregnated all maids. Everyone gave birth to child. They told Lord Vishnu that we were celestial virgins; we cannot stay back in the earth. Then lord Vishnu cured their organs so that no one can identify that they gave birth to child. Lord Vishnu brought them up.

Devendran³³ had many number of cows. He found that milk quantity was gradually decreasing. He asked his servants what could be the reason. He said that one old man

was drawing milk from some of our cows. Resented Devendran planned to kill that old man. One of the servants of Bhadrakali (she was ruling Puttapuram) told about Devendran entry of killing the old man for which he drew milk from cows. Bhadrakali stopped Devendran, and she said that the old man no one else who was Lord Vishnu; he was drawing milk for his children. Then Devendran returned back. Bhadrakali asked to Vishnu give me those children I will bring them up as my children. Then he blessed as “you, sevens will become seventy; that seventy will become seven hundred; sage sons you will get angry very easily; you will be born as Nadar and you will rule the country”. Bhadrakali took them to her place Puttapuram. One day, she told her sons to bring water from one spring for quenching her thirsty. They went there but there was no water. As one couple had water from the spring, it got stirred up. Sons complained to Bhadrakali. She upturned the couple in the earth and cursed them to become palm tree. Male became alavupanai³⁴ (male palm tree) and female became paruvapanai³⁵ (female palm tree).

Bhadrakali said her children to get milk from the palmyrah palm. But they did not know how to get it. Then she gave some arms to climb the palm tree and taught how to get the milk from the palm tree. Instruments which she gave are given below:

1. For leg Salankai (small bells worn on the ankles) as thalainar (band of rope used by climbers to climb palm trees)
2. Trident as murukkuthadi (stick is used for climbing)
3. Rattan as Kadippi/idukki³⁶
4. Sacred ash as lime
5. Kapparai³⁷ as kalasam³⁸

With the help of these arms Bhadrakali sons yielded milk from the palm tree. First milk, they wanted to give to their mother Bhadrakali. As they planned, they gave it to their mother. Amman (Bhadrakali) has to drink, then only her sons have to eat it. This was practice and it had also been following by the sons for long period.

Later, her sons joined in the army of Chola king Karikalan as warriors. Day by day their praise got up by their honest works. But one of the ministers of Karikalan got angry over them. He was waiting for a chance to put them into the trouble. River of Vaigai had breached into the villages. Chola king asked his minister Izhava (who waits for the turn against seven sons of Bhadrakali) to give solution for stopping overflow. Izhava (in this myth minister is known as Izhava) said that these seven commanders (Bhadrakali sons) could do this work. If they carry basket of mud in their head, we would entrap the overflowing. So, we would give this work to them. King ordered for that, but they refused to do it. They said that “our heads were meant to carry crowns upon our heads, not baskets”. And they continued “though you gave any kind of crisis we would not touch the basket”. King ordered their heads to be trodden by elephant. When the first one trampled he cried and said “I would not touch the basket”. When second one was trampled it said that “shall this head prove to that head? I will not touch the basket”.

Bhadrakali as she came to know these issues, she cursed Chola king. Since that time onwards there was no raining in his region for twelve years. Then Chola king asked Bhadrakali to forgive him for his mistakes. She forgave him and gave rain to his region. She gave five regions³⁹ to her sons to rule. As her sons asked, Bhadrakali had gone to bring medicine for her sons. That medicine used to have long life for oneself. Lord Vishnu came to know about this and he thought that if the son had this medicine they would not die and this world would not bear them. So he decided that to stop this medicine which Bhadrakali would give to them. He made a plan and went to Bhadrakali. Vishnu said to her sister that, go and see your sons they were having palm milk from the tree itself. Resented Bhadrakali went and saw them. It seemed like as they were having milk from the tree. But, actually they were cutting the spathe of the palm tree to get the toddy sap. So it was seemed like as they were having milk from the tree. So, she threw away the medicine on the ground without telling to them. Squirrels, lizards and garden lizards ate that medicine. That is what, whenever these reptiles fall down from such a huge height, nothing will happen to them⁴⁰. Once they got down from the tree they could find the medicine (which Bhadrakali threw the medicine away, it had spread over the land) and they applied it in their body. For that reason when climber

fell down most of the persons would not die rather get some wounds in their body. It is believed as it was given by mother Bhadrakali.

The text consists of the aspects namely invocation, respect for the teacher, introduction of the story to the audience, pardon for any lapses, and narration of the story and finally it ends up with *vazhipaattu*⁴¹. In another words the narration has a structure, invocations starts with praise song to Ganesa⁴², then about the *Sathan* story⁴³, then praise song to *guru* (teacher to bard), then the story starts, followed dialogue and ends with *vazhipaattu*(final). Jokes, riddles and ethical instructions find prominent place in the performance. Social, political and cinematic references are effectively used to influence by bards. The performance is held largely during the time of January to June.⁴⁴

Ritual

Ritual is basically defined as a series of actions performed according to a prescribed order. It may be religious ritual or life cycle rituals. Both have distinctive/unique features as they hold respective and significant role in every unit of society and culture. Most of the ritual is based on certain actions performed in an accepted situation in a group. The group can be defined as society or culture. The origin myth of Nadars is told in very *Bhadrakaliamman* temple. The story of origin of Nadars is said in the ballad of *Bhadrakaliamman*. Ritual is conducted in the premises of *Bhadrakaliamman* temple where the whole village has gathered. Most of the *Bhadrakaliamman* gets offered with toddy sap. But nowadays, fruits offering is also seen in the ritual. Sometimes it is also observed fruits offering as the replacement of toddy sap. Meanwhile multi episode of the story of *Bhadrakaliamman* is sung by the bard. It is to be noted that the audience of the performance is village people. Since the story begins (during the night of Monday) to end of the event and the story (noon of Wednesday). The participation in the ritual and *Villupattu* is considered as sacred one.

Enactment

The story of Bhadrakali is sung in the ritual as in the following manner. They are: story of Sathan (Ayyanar⁴⁵), the story of ayyanar/sathan is common to be visible in all the folk ballad while the ballad is scribed by a bard;⁴⁶ body of the story, in which war

between Bhadrakali and Tharakan is said, victory of Bhadrakali, creation of Nadars, occupation of Nadars, Migration of Nadars, Bhadrakali as mother of Nadars; then it ends with naming the Nadars. It is also to be noted that myth in practice is seen among the Nadars during the ritual of Bhadrakali. An event known making gruel is traced in the origin myth of Nadars. That event is represented by practicing in the present day. It is an important event for making gruel and the same is shared with all the participation whoever gathered in the ritual. It is reflected the myth where Bhadrakali offered gruel to her warriors during that war over the Tharakan. The same event is strictly followed in the ritual. Thus the ritual is interpreted in following manners, first Nadars offered the today sap/fruits to Bhadrakali as they were told to offer to their mother; second one is by enacting the gruel making at largest level in the village it recalls the grant event happened in the past and the same is fostered the validation of the origin myth of Nadars.

Generic form of myth

Though the print media got widely developed, in temples of Bhadrakaliamman, keeping the palm leaf manuscripts is believed to be sacred. So, people give more importance to palm leaf manuscript. If the script is in the palm leaf form it may fade away, for the need of giving more importance of this text they arrange one bard to write down the stories in new palm leaves as well as in printed version. In Kanniyakumari district, a village called Asarivilai where they have inscribed the story of Bhadrakaliamman from palm leaf manuscript. The intention was that our people wanted to keep the “*amma*” story in the temple. It is also now considered as sacred object.⁴⁷

To indicate bards there are three names. Most of the bards were called *pulavar*, the term for scholar of learned man since the earliest Tamil literature; others used the title *perumal* (the great one), an epithet of Vishnu and a name normally forbidden to Nadars. A third name was *Pandaram*, priest among the Nadar, some of who actually were poets also.

“The earliest dated manuscript is from the late seventeenth century; the most recent are those inscribed by the last bard, Arumuka Perumal Nadar of

Agastheeswaram”.⁴⁸ Inscribing on palm-leaf was the most common writing method in Kanniyakumari and Tirunelveli districts until the early decades of the twentieth century.⁴⁹

A performance gets successfully summoned deities when their stories are accurately presented and palm-leaf manuscripts are considered the most authentic form of a story. The demand for authenticity is that in some temples, the manuscript becomes a “script” from performance; it is read line by line to the lead singer who then sings.

A palm leaf manuscript is given to be copied under condition of the new copy and original must be presented to the owners then only it is allowed to be taken away. If it is a temple copy, no one will be allowed to take that script except the person who got the order to sing the story in that temple. If he is not familiar with that temple’s text, he is allowed to see the text with some assistants from the village with the formal permission of temple officials.

Today this palm-leaf manuscript replaced by two new forms one is hand written form and another one is printed pamphlets. But keeping the original script in temple is believed to be sacred object.⁵⁰

Narrators

Most of the singers in Kanniyakumari and Tirunelveli region are Nadars and most of the temples where they sing are controlled by Nadars. The only relatively high caste to support the bow song tradition is Pillai community from the Kanniyakumari district. But nowadays due to the lack of bards from its own community, the other communities such as Chunnappariyar, Sambavar also allowed to perform Villupaattu. For narrating Bhadrakali story, Nadar bard is allowed to sing the story of origin of Nadars. In Bhadrashwari temples the places such as western parts of Kanniyakumari and in southern parts of Kerala state others are also allowed to sing the story of Bhadrakaliamman⁵¹. In Bhadrashwari temples narration origin of Nadars is not found. It has been observed that they sing and end up with a war Bhadrakali with Tharudhan. Narrating the birth of Bhadrakali and her war with Tharudhan is known as Bhadrashwari story in the southern Kerala districts. When Bhadrakali killed Tharudhan, that time story

also gets finished by the bards where as in Kanniyakumari and some western part of Tirunelveli regions Bhadrakali temples of Nadar settlements this origin myth of Nadars is also sung. The village called Aralvoimozhi (eastern jurisdiction of Kanniyakumari district) of Kanniyakumari district after this region to afterwards Bhadrakaliamman temples are very rare to be seen. It has been identified that most of the eastern part of Tirunelveli and southern part of Thoothukudi districts dominated Christian populations.⁵²

Form and Narration

Narrating the Bhadrakaliamman/Valangai Nool is identified in two ways in bow song. One is singing the story and another one is telling the dialogues. It stands as “verse” and “prose”. Verse and prose are defined by textual features of language, whereas “song” and “speech” in the bow song are distinguished by features of articulation. It ultimately stands on delivery style. The story which was delivered in song form may be repeated in the dialogue form. To give more importance to the character or story, these techniques is followed by the bards.

While narrating the story, prior and simultaneous compositions are used. Prior composition or prior preparation is nothing but the bard recalls what someone else has composed.⁵³ In addition to that there are several styles among the bards which they have been adapted from the modern cinemas. By accepting some techniques from the cinema they deliver it to audience in various styles. But it is not advisable while singing the story.⁵⁴

Nadar and Migration

Migration is a common phenomenon which can be found in all societies. Depending upon the various factors, migration is identified with various names. Nadars of Tamil Nadu are widely known to be a dynamic community through the ages. Migration has played a decisive role in changing the social structure of Nadars. It can be observed by analysing their migration with the historical approach. They were originally inhabitants of Tamil Nadu, who went to Ceylon along with Chola king who invaded the island. After the invasions, many of them stayed on and lived there for a long time and

later returned to their homeland owing to adverse circumstances, such as oppression by Sinhalese kings. When they returned to Tamil Nadu the most fertile lands had already been occupied by the *Vellalas* and therefore they had to go and occupy the arid regions, in Tirunelveli and eke out their livelihood by performing strenuous work such as toddy-tapping which they perhaps learnt from Ceylon and brought to Tamil Nadu.⁵⁵ By analysing their migration one can classify their migration into three stages. First one is 'migration in Oral Narratives' (such as myth, legends (ballads)); second one is 'during missionaries and British rule in India. It can also be noted as 'Christianity and Sanskritisation among the Nadars; third one is the 'impacts of education, trading and migration'. Based on the mentioned three stages of classifications on migration of Nadars, this research tries to construct the migrations of Nadars in the history and in the process also studies the subsequent changes that occurred in the socio-economic and religious practices. Then, it will also elucidate how it brings changes within their social structure and how it is made visible in the marriage alliance between the sub-groups of Nadars. In other words how migration made changes in the social structure of Nadars and how it was/is considered in terms of exogamous and endogamous practices.

Folk Epics and Folk Ballads: Migration

Folk ballad is the form of a narrative folk song, which is known by various names in each language. The standard dictionary of folklore says: "A ballad is story; a ballad is narrative; a ballad is sung; a ballad belongs to the folk in content, style, and designation; a ballad focuses on a single incident; a ballad is impersonal, the action moving of itself by dialogue and incident quickly to the end".⁵⁶ In this section of migration we deal with the migration accounts which are found in folk ballads. The following observation of N. Vanamamalaion Tamil folk ballad is a significant one to be noted here that "the folks are disinterested in historical events, unless they directly affect their fortunes",⁵⁷.

A folk ballad version is known as *Venkalarajan Kathaipadal* (Venkalarajan Ballad), which gives an account of migration among the Nadars. Among the seven, as two of them were beheaded then now they remained only five. As the fifth brother left to Lanka Country, he was blessed by sage *Vidhyadharan*. He became a rich man in

Lanka country. He made a marriage for his daughter in Lanka region. Daughter gave birth to a boy who was known as *Venkalarajan*. A White gave much trouble to the fifth Valangai man and then one day he was killed by him. Then *Venkalarajan* and his family migrated to south along with his servants. He settled down in the south. There also he faced trouble from the local chieftains who sought marriage alliance with his daughters. Since, he denied it; he could not stay in one place. Finally he and his all followers migrated to the place called Kurumpur (a village in the present Thoothukudi district). They ended their life at Kurumpur because yet another trouble came from a local chieftain who sought to marry his daughter.⁵⁸

The folk ballad known as *Ivar Raja Kathai* (story of Ivar Raja) is also known in the following names: *PanchaPandiya Kathai* (the story of five Pandiyas), *Kannadiyan Por* (War of Kannadiga), *Kulasekara Raja Kathai* (the story of Kulasekara Raja) etc. There were five local chieftains in the south region of Tirunelveli (they are identified as Kulasekara Perumal, Muthum Perumal, Mukilam Perumal, Mudisoodum Perumal and Pandiya Perumal). When a Kannadiyan princess fell in love with Kulasekara Perumal, she conveyed this to her father. Father decided to make an arrangement for his daughter's marriage with Kulasekara Perumal. Before that, the king sent this message to Kulasekara Perumal. Kulasekara Perumal refused to marry that Kannadiyan princess. Kannadiyan king was enraged after hearing his refusal of marrying his daughter. He tried many times but he was not successful. Then the king planned to attack Kulasekara Perumal because, the king thought that by attacking Kulasekara Raja, he would surrender to king's wish. But it was not positive to the king. As the result of fighting with Kulasekara Perumal and his four brothers, four of them were killed by Kannadiyan king. Meanwhile Kulasekara Perumal as he had swallowed some amount of diamonds, died soon. Knowing this incident of suicide of Kulasekara Perumal, princess also swallowed diamonds and died. After this incident many of the relatives of the five local chieftains moved towards south (Kanniyakumari) and west (western part of Tirunelveli). It would be more relevant to look at another version of this same story. This version says that Kulasekara Pandiyan, completely ignored the help rendered by his Chola ally, and made marriage ties with the Simhala princess, called *Elaka Valli*. He invited the remaining Shandror warriors, who were stationed in Sri Lanka, to Madurai as his guards

and teachers of martial art. This may be another reason for the immigration of Shandror to the southern region and the western part of Pandiya country.⁵⁹ There are several temples for Ivar raja/ Kulasekara Raja. Among them one of the villages called Avudaiyanur is most famous for this Kulasekara raja festival. Avudaiyanur is located at Tenkasi taluk of Tirunelveli district in Tamilnadu. There are two family lineages in the village. One is Avudaiyan; another one is Manuraiyan. Most of the Avudaiyan's lineage converted to Catholicism and some of them still continue as Hindus. Among the Manuraiyan no one has not converted into any religions. Kulasekara Raja worship is practiced by the Manuraiyan *Koottam* (family).

This is a historical ballad⁶⁰ and it is believed to have happened in the sixteenth century A.D. In this ballad the following are mentioned. Ulakudaiya Perumal and Sariyakula Perumal are the nephews (Sister's sons) of Pandiyan JadavarmanKulasekarapandi (1480 A.D. to 1597 A.D.) who ruled Madurai. The sister had five sons. When he was defeated and killed by his enemies his sister's sons became rulers of Madurai. But again they were defeated by their opponents and three of them were killed. The remaining two sons, Ulakudaiya Perumal and Sariyakula Perumal killed the enemies in the field. There after both of them went to Ariyankavu and they received majestic blessings. Ulagudaiya Perumal stayed at Ariyankavu. Sariyakula Perumal came to Kurumpur region. Later he was known as PathakkaraiSamy by the local people.⁶¹ Another version says that when they were defeated by their opponents they came to south. Ulagudaiya Perumal went to Ariyankavu (the place is known as the modern Ariyankavu of Kerala) and Sariyakula Perumal went to south as a priest. Sariyakula Perumal stayed in the place called Kurumpur. Kurumpur is one of the villages in Manadu region (*theri* region) of Tiruchendur taluk in Thoothukudi district. There he was seen as priest and many families followed his principles. Later he was known as PathakkaraiSamy by the local people. He was worshipped by many toddy tappers in and around the villages of Kurumpur. The temple got popularized by many miracles such as giving suggestion to a land lord, and saving a toddy tapper's life falling from palm tree. PathakkaraiSamy or Sariyakulaperumal is deity of the villages of Naalumavadi, Arumuganeri and Panikka Nadar Kudiyiruppu. Among them

Naalumavadi and Panikka Nadar Kudiyiruppu villages are having marriage alliance with other villages.⁶²

The story of Sivananaincha Perumal (*Sivananaincha Perumal Kathai*) talks about Sivananaincha Perumal and his life. “Thenkasi Pandiyan⁶³ gives his sister to Shenbakaraman (a Chola clan person) in marriage. To Ponnuruvi and Shenbakaraman, Sivanancha Perumal was born. As the Tenkasi Pandiyan did not have child, after him there was no one as his descendant. Hence, Sivananainchan was supposed to take the position after the Tenkasi Pandiyan as his successor. The king was not happy with Sivananaincha Perumal’s bride selection from outside the community.⁶⁴ But he did not listen to his maternal uncle (king) at all. He married the *Vannar* (wahserman) girl and she was known Sivananainchi. As he got married with Sivananainchi, his uncle killed his son-in-law. Upon hearing about the husband’s death Sivananainchi also committed suicide. But now he is worshiped by the some of the family of *Vellaali* of Nattathi Nadars.⁶⁵

Another ballad known *Kumarasamy Nadan Kathai* (Kumarasamy Nadan Ballad) is the story about a tax collector Kumarasamy Nadan of Vadamalaiyappa Pillai who was the representative for Tinnevely region to Thirumalai Nayak king (1623 A.D. to 1659 A.D.). Kumarasamy Nadan was Nattathi Nadar from south Manaveera Valanadu. Nattathi Nadars were employed as soldiers by the Chola king Raja Raj - I and they had occupied regions such as Perunkulam, Manadu, Kottaru, Aralvoimozhi and Kanniyakumari.⁶⁶ Kumarasamy Nadan was tax collector to the Nayak rulers. Although he got married, he fell in love with a barber girl. His uncles (father’s elder and younger brothers) warned him for his disloyalty to his wife. But he did not listen to them. He continued the practice of going to the house of concubine regularly. Then his agnates made a plan to chop off his head. They did so with the help of their servants. Kumarasamy Nadan’s uncles felt guilty for they had killed Kumarasamy Nadan. To rectify their guiltiness they built a temple for Kumarasamy Nadan. Some of agnates migrated to southern part of Tirunelveli district and some of them settled in Aralvoimozhi, Rajakkamankalam and Kalvilai of Kanniyakumari district.⁶⁷ This story of Kumaraswamy Nadan is narrated in bow song in all Kumaraswamy Nadan temples.

Apart from his story, this ballad informs also about the moral life, socio and cultural life of Nattathi Nadars.

From the said descriptions identified, the following findings are found 1). Folk narratives which are found in the *theri* land (*Manaveera Valanadu*) and southern regions of Tirunelveli and Thoothukudi give an account of the history of this region 2). Denial of Marriage alliance with others is found in the ballads such as Kulasekara Raja story and Venkalarajan Story 3). Inter-caste marriage, unfaithfulness to wife is abhorred by the family in the case of Sivananaintha Perumal story and Kumaraswamy Nadan story 4). Marriage alliances are being made among the Ulakudiaya Perumal & Sariyakula Perumal (Pathakara Samy) worshippers though the people worship the same deity. In this case, region (village) controls their exogamous marriage practice.

Migrations between Tirunelveli and Kanniyakumari

The abundance of Palmyra groves made some of the Nadars move to the places of red sandy (*theri* forest) area such as Tiruchendur, Radhapuram, Nanguneri, Srivaikundam taluks, where people of the same social class were making livelihood with Palmyra products. And they were in big numbers. Kanniyakumari Nadars migrated to Tirunelveli and Thoothukudi districts. In Tirunelveli and Thoothukudi districts if the name of any village ended with “*vilai*” those people might have migrated from Kanniyakumari district.⁶⁸ Some examples are: ‘Pothakalan Vilai’, ‘Thisaiyan Vilai’ and ‘Chettiya Vilai’. Atthoor is village in Thoothukudi district, which has good density of Nadars; people believe that Atthoor might have been formed by people who got migrated from the south. After 1700 A.D this village became very popular.⁶⁹ It should also be noted that “ between 1750 and 1850 years Nadars, the majority being called as Tinnevely Shanars originating from theri land (*Therikkaadu*) were considered impure toddy-tappers, migrated to different villages of Nanjil Nadu (Kanniyakumari and Thiruvananthapuram) and *Marava Nadu* (Sivakasi, Ramanathapuram, Madurai, hill ranges of Bodi, Kodaikanal and Palani) ”.

K. Subbaiah who hails from Aralvoimozhi in Kanniyakumari district states that “our ancestors were supposed to have migrated to Rajakkalmangalam⁷⁰ from the region

of Nattathi of Thoothukudi district. Then they started spreading throughout the Kanniyakumari district in villages such as Ethamozhi, Agastheeswaram, Kalvilai, Perumalpuram and Aralvoimozhi. There is a story behind the migration of Nadars to Aralvoimozhi, the eastern part of the modern Kanniyakumari district. When Nattathi Nadars started to migrate from Rajakkalmangalam to Aralvoimozhi they thought that Aralvoimozhi was a hills region, and so the survival would be easy because they could manage as agriculture labours and by selling the fire woods from the forest”. There was one *Kanchipurai*⁷¹ in Thoivalai nearby Aralvoimozhi. During starvation, a committee was appointed by the government of Travancore for providing food to the poor people.⁷² The place Thoivalai was one among them. The facts like starvation might have pushed people to migrate nearby places. Many of Nattathi Nadars migrated to Perumalpuram of Kanniyakumari district. It may be relevant to note here about the statement of K. Subbaiah that “our forefather had lots of properties in Nattathi they sold all their properties and came to Aralvoimozhi (erstwhile eastern part and border of the Southern Travancore). If Mutharammantemple is found in villages of Kanniyakumari district, Nattathi Nadar people will be there”.⁷³ Group of Shandror/Nadar warriors were believed to have lived in *ManaveeraValanadu*, a southern region in the modern Thoothukudi and Tirunelveli districts. The people of *ManaveeraValanadu* scattered in different parts to seek their living. But they frequently visited *ManaveeraValanadu* to worship their tutelary deities who are mostly Ayyanars.⁷⁴

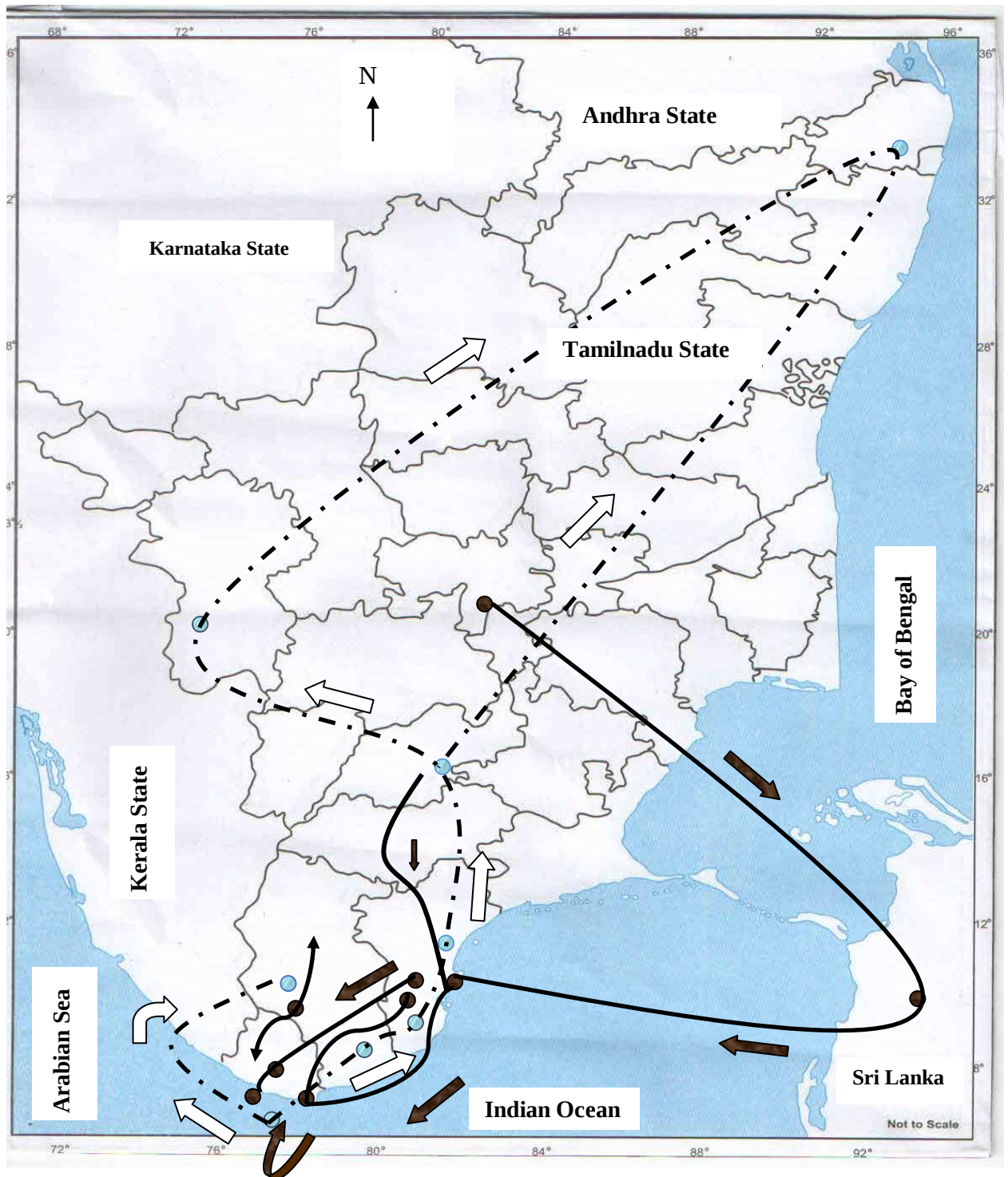
Migration towards Madurai and Chennai

In early nineteenth century 1813 A.D Nadars from Virudhunagar, Aruppukkottai and Palayampatti (in another words ‘Northern Nadars’) purchased lands in Madurai at east Masi Street for the construction of pettai. Nadars, for the safety and protection of goods and also for convenience of their overnight stay, established *pettais*⁷⁵ in several towns in Tamil Nadu.⁷⁶ And also Nadars settled in six primary centres (*pettais*) such as Virudhunagar, Sivakasi, Tirumangalam, Sattankudi, Palayampatti and Aruppukkottai.⁷⁷ From the above said towns and other towns from Ramnad district, Nadar merchants migrated to Madurai, the second major city in Tamil Nadu. It was centred in two localities in Madurai: one is south gate and another one is east Masi Street.⁷⁸ In the early

twentieth century, Nadars from Tinnevely region migrated to Madras. This is the first migration within the Nadars. There after Nadars from Ramnad places such as Virudhunagar, Sivakasi, and Aruppukkottai migrated to Madras. This is the second migration of Nadars from Ramnad after 1914 A.D.⁷⁹

In the early these of migration to Madras, the Nadars' settlement was in the pockets of traditional association. They had not had any marriage alliance with each other as they were in south. Having had systematic organisation such as Uravinmurai and Mahamai, Nadars from Ramnad region (northern Nadars) rapidly emerged a self-conscious community. Hardgrave points out that the Sanskritisation was less relevant to them than having secular goals to seek the upliftment of the community. Out of this consciousness they founded 'Nadar Mahajana Sangam' in 1910. Through the association, aid was provided through a cooperative bank, business and industry, schools and colleges, settling disputes within the community and between the Nadars and other community. Then their next move was changing the name from 'Shanar' (which was associated with pollution and the palmyra) to Nadar (lord of the land).⁸⁰

Map 2.1: Map showing Migration Accounts of Nadars



- Indicates accounts found in Folk Ballads and Myth
- Indicates accounts found during the Colonial Period

It is to be noted from the observation of Sherinian who in her work on *Tamil Folk Music: As Dalit Liberation Theology*, that “by the mid-twentieth century education, migration, endogamy, economic development and unified identification with the British Missions and crown brought great power to the Nadars”.⁸¹ This migration had brought major changes in three stages, especially the processive changes among the Nadars.

Apart from this urbanization among the Nadars, above said migration descriptions are identified as follows. 1). Folk narratives which are found in the *ManaveeraValanadu* (Teri land) and southern regions of Tirunelveli and Thoothukudi give an account of the history of this region 2). Marriage refusals with others are found in the ballads such as Kulasekara Raja story and Venkalarajan Story 3). Inter-caste marriage is warned by the family in the case of Sivananaincha Perumal story and Kumarasamy Nadan story 4). Among the Ulakudaiya Perumal & Sariyakula Perumal (PathakaraiaSamy) worshippers marriage alliances are made though the people even worship the same deity. In this case region (village) controls their exogamous marriage practice.

Economic Organisation

Nadars began their traverse from traditional occupation of toddy tapping. Some of them became land lords of palmyra groves soon. Some of them turned as traders as they were getting surplus produce from their production. Some of them did continue as the labour to the land lords and for the traders. These three kinds of occupation emerged among the Nadars very quickly. This section of economic organisation illustrates the Nadars’ economic growth and development from the traditional occupation to the present day. And how migration made changes from their traditional occupation to the trading. As a result of various migrations through the ages, this community had emerged as merchant community in the northern Tamil Nadu and was known for education in the southern Tamil Nadu. It is relevant to study the economic organisation about a community to understand how processive changes made structural changes in economic organisation of a community. This section emphasises the Nadars’ economic organisation as in the order of traditional occupation of toddy tapping, agriculture,

trading, how Nadar became a merchant, Nadars and land and the present occupation found among the Nadars.

Divisions in the Early Records

Karukkupattai

Melnattar

Kodikkal

Nattathi

Sirukudi Nadar/PulukkaShanar

Traditional Occupation of Toddy Tapping

Once, Nadars' economy was based on palmyra. Cultivation of palm tree was successfully done in Teri land. Palmyra yields toddy sap; from this toddy sap jaggery was made. Also from palmyra mats and baskets are made. These were woven from its fronds; and palmyra trunks were used as poles and roof-beams for houses.⁸² Nadar women supported to develop their business thus advancing economically. For example when jaggery is made from palm juice, it has to be boiled until it gets into the solid state. These works were completely done by Nadar women. Despite this traditional occupation toddy tapping was not very popular in the community; some of villages from Thoothukudi, Tirunelveli and Kanniyakumari were doing this occupation. There women were engaged in jaggery making process. Out of the palmyra products; many business emerged among Nadars. If one manufactures mats or cots from the palmyra fronds, another one will be concentrating on jaggery and candy selling. From this business they collected more revenue. As they emerged as petty business men, isolated settlements had arrived among them. Hence, economically well-developed people called themselves Nadan, a title which is translated as 'lords of the land'.⁸³

Agriculture

In the northern part of Thoothukudi district, especially in places like Koviilpatti, Ettayapuram, Ottapidaram and Vilathikulam taluks, agriculture was the main career

among the Nadars. The black cotton soil of the area was then suitable for cotton, chilli, *kambu* (rye), *cholam* (maize) and vegetable cultivation. Later due to increase in population and drop in the annual rainfall many families had shifted to Madurai, Chennai and other cities and there they engaged in petty business such as sweet, eatery and other shops. There are several match industries run by them in small scale as well.⁸⁴

Trading

British arrived in India and they developed Transport and road facilities in southern region of Tamil Nadu. Nadar traders took this advantage in creative ways. They began to deal in goods other than the products of the palmyra, including dried fish and salt.⁸⁵ As they conducted trade, they migrated from south to north places of Ramnad and Madurai districts. Once they migrated, they established *pettais* (warehouse) to protect goods. Villages were formed near and around the places of *pettais*. Uravinmurai was formed among them which became as governing bodies of the Northern Nadars.⁸⁶ As a result of Sanskritization and trade of Nadar, Muslims and other caste Hindus were enraged against the Nadars. It reflected in many riots which rose against the Nadars.⁸⁷

Among the economic winners of the north and south dry lands, the Shanars (presently known as Nadars) hold special importance, for their success produced dramatic changes in their relative economic standing of a sort that did not occur to any other caste groups. Then they became popular for skill in expanding palmyra tree cultivation, digging wells for garden production, and marketing their products in towns through networks of caste-organised commercial exchange. In the north in black and red soil tract, Shanars excelled in both agriculture and trade. Shanar merchants dominated in cotton marketing in several towns, most importantly Virudhunagar petty Shanar traders apparently forged a link between big town merchants and village produces, so that caste and kin ties among Shanars provided social conduits for the forward contracts that supplied towns with both cotton and domestic commodities.⁸⁸ Historically, majority of Nadars were humble cultivators of Palmyra trees and mostly engaged in the palmyra industry, including the production of toddy. They had the vast knowledge of the medicinal plants surrounding them. They had great faith in the traditional healing

system and they relied on medicinal plants for treatment of various illnesses. The traditional medicinal practitioners are locally known as *Vaidhyars*.⁸⁹

Nadars as traders

The reason for accumulation of capital among Nadars was their two occupations. One is agriculture, another is trade. Apart from the agriculture, trading concept came because of toddy, palm sap, palm jaggery, the products which they extracted from their main agricultural cultivation. These products are consumer objects. If consumption is more, automatically the need will increase. Here is the indication for the next stage of trading. It is not stopped in one place; it spreads to the nearest villages and towns too. When the trade is extended on the basis of consumption profit is also obtained. People started to buy other goods such as salt and dry fish. They extended their trade by selling the goods which they purchased. From Thoothukudi, Nadars brought dry fish, salt to sell it in the market in the northern towns such as Virudhunagar, Sattur, Madurai etc. These kinds of trading boosted the economic growth of Nadars. Added to it, they also had the support of British governments and missionaries. All these made them to claim their political power, by incorporating caste Hindu practice (Sanskritization). They claimed themselves as kshatriyas to get a ritual and social status. Above all these it was their trading that elevated them economically in the northern districts and southern districts of Tamil Nadu.⁹⁰

Theri Land

A.J. Stuart says that “the Shanars may also be looked upon as an agricultural caste. In large portions of the Tinnevely nothing will grow but the palm trees; the cultivation and sale of the products of this tree was the special caste employment of the Shanars.”⁹¹ Their distribution is unequal, the Shanars being most plentiful in the palmyra-growing, districts to the south”.⁹² Among these incomers were large numbers of Shanars, natives of the sandy *theri* tracts of south-eastern Tamil Nadu, who used their experience in digging wells for the theri palmyra trees to begin growing paddy, chillies and other well-dependent 'garden' crops in the Tirunelveli red-soil country.⁹³

The skilled Shanar palmyra cultivators of Tamil Nadu were considered to maximise the use of their own family labour force (both men and women), so as to never leave their lands 'to the mercy of hirelings'.⁹⁴ Majority of the Shanars were owners of the land and they involved in cultivation. Many of them got engaged in trade and some of both these classes were wealthy as wealth was estimated amongst peasantry; whereas one family being Zamindars was entitled to be classed with the gentry of the province. All of them in one or other aspect engaged themselves in the cultivation of the Palmyra, and perhaps the majority of them were employed in climbing Palmyra tree. The Shanars abound in the sandy tracts of the extreme south (*theri* lands), where their chief property consists of the Palmyra palm, of which they extract the juice to manufacture jaggery; they also cultivate, and many of them engage successfully in trade; they are a hardy and industrious class.⁹⁵ There is also a longstanding population of Tamil Shanars (now they are known as Nadar) living in separate hamlets near the coast. Most of these Shanar settlements are located in the bleak and arid sand-dune region known as the *Teri*, which runs close to the more southerly *Parathavar* villages such as Manapadu and Periyatazhai. It will be remembered that these semi-specialised cultivators are well known as experts in the cultivation of palmyra trees and in the manufacture of palmyra products, especially 'toddy' or country liquor; they also became skilled in digging wells for the irrigation of so-called garden crops.⁹⁶ Many Shanars who settled in new frontier border villages such as Vadakkankulam were able to attain a grip in the trans-Ghats trade, first by transporting their own jaggery and toddy to the market towns of the southwest coast, and then by moving into the area's expanding inter-regional trades in tobacco, grains and foodstuffs.⁹⁷

The Shanars' semi-specialised occupational tradition had also given them a comparatively firm sense of shared identity. They were not as highly organised as the *Parathavar*, but the Shanars still had strong networks of leadership and communication than most other south Indian agricultural groups. With their relatively strong caste institutions they possessed natural pathways for the transmission of a new religious affiliation. As it has already been seen, the Jesuits explained, "the Shanars' mass conversions in rather more exalted terms: they thought that the rigours of palmyra cultivation had gifted the group with an innate moral purity and that they therefore had a

natural towards to Christianity”.⁹⁸ The power/force plays an important role in the management of revenue from toddy; under which the right to open shops for retail sale is sold every year to the highest bidder, and a tax is levied on every tree tapped for toddy. The toddy is drawn chiefly from coconut trees. The tappers are generally, though not entirely, of the Shanar caste. A little jaggery is made in the district from the juice of palmyra and of coconut trees (to a smaller extent); but no license is necessary for the tapping of sweet juice.⁹⁹

Present Occupations among the Nadars

It is to be noted that the classification of scholar Templeman on present occupational group among the Nadars is seen very relevant even today. According to Templeman the present day occupations among the Nadars are classified as follows:

1. Merchants and business people
2. Professional and semi-professional (that is, occupation requiring high or relative educational levels and professional training)
3. Agriculturalists
4. Agricultural labourers
5. Toddy Tappers/Palmyra Climbers

Social organization of Nadars

People in a society can be regarded as a system organised by a characteristic pattern of relationships.¹⁰⁰ Characteristics of social organisation may include qualities such as social structure, division of labour and social institutions. “The forms of social organisation indeed, appear to show a striking lack of correlation with levels or types of technology, economy, property rights, class structure or political integration”.¹⁰¹ Here social organisation of this section provides the details on family, clan and sub-groups of the Nadars.

Sub-divisions among the Nadars in the Early Records

The following sub divisions have been mentioned in gazettes, manuals, census reports and several research works. The sub-groups are Karukkupattai, Melnattar,

Kodikkal Nadar, Nattathi Nadars and Sirukudi/Pulukka Nadar. Beyond that some more divisions have been identified by their religious practices such as Christian Nadars (Catholic and Protestants) and Hindu Nadars (Ayya Vazhi and Amma Vazhi); though they were identified as several sub-groups, they preferred to address themselves as 'Nadar'. For example, before the 2011 Indian census, Nadars local associations and major associations spread the information to its people that "do not give any sub-groups name; you shall say only 'Nadar' in the caste column"¹⁰². It is here noted that how the caste associations function decisively in the society by asking people to stick to one identity. Thus, it tries to make unity within the community with a single identity of the caste name.

Nilamaikkara Nadan

The *Nilamaikkara* Nadars consider themselves to be the superior sub-sect among the Nadars. A Tamil inscription at Kulasekarappattinam belonging to 1750 A.D speaks of an order exempting the Nilamaikkarars from paying any tax. The *Madathuachuampadu* inscription of 1645 A.D. (Annual Report of Epigraphy 2002) informs the endowment of Achampadu village to the Kailasanathar temple of Srivaikundam by five chiefs of the Nilamaikkara Nadar Villages. The gazetteer of Thoothukudi district of Tamilnadu speaking about Nilamaikkarars says that 'among them names such as Athithan, Thiruppapu and VeeraMarthandan indicate their relationship with the Chola and Chera dynasties'.¹⁰³

Karukkupattai

People who had the occupation of toddy tapping, they were known as Karukkupattai. *Karukku* means 'the sharp edge of the Palmyra leaf' and *p/mattai* means 'the leaf stalk of the Palmyra tree'. Sometimes, they are also known as Karukkupattaiyan (the word pattaiyan is known as sword). In the Census Report, 1891, the division Karukku-mattai (petiole of the Palmyra leaf with serrated edges) has been mentioned. Some Shanans are said to have assumed the name of *Karukku-mattaiVellalas*¹⁰⁴. *Maanattaanis* also another designation to the *Karukkupattai*. Seventy percentage of Nadars claim to share this identity¹⁰⁵

Melnaattaars

Mel + *Nattaar* = *Melnaattar* which means *Mel*-west, *Nattaar*-people. People who migrated from the Chera region to Manadu (West to east) region were known as *Melnaattaars*.¹⁰⁶ They have also settled down in Kanniyakumari villages namely Ethamvazhithuram, Agastheeswaramthuram, Keezhavalathuram, Killiyoorthuram, Rajakkamangalamthuram, Vilavankottuthuram, Neyyatrinkaraithuram and Manguzhiyamthuram etc.

Mukkandar

Mukkandar is also one of the sub-sects of Nadars. The word *Mukkandar* came from “*Mukadam*” being used in northern states meaning mediators or arbitrators in Sangam literature. For instance, we come across the following phrase in *KurinjiPattuVinaiyidalininraCanror*, i.e. one who mediates between kings. Rev. T.H. Suter has noted in 1856 that the *Mukkandanmar* were an executive body and exercised supervision over the police of the village. By twentieth century, the *Mukkandars* had lost their powers and positions. *Mukkandar* Nadars are land lords and merchants. They too claim like the Nilamaikkarars, that they had never been in the vocation of tree climbing.¹⁰⁷

Nattathi Nadar

Nattathi is another sub-sect of the Nadar community who are residing in Nattathi; a place situated near the town of Saverpuram in Thoothukudi district of Tamilnadu. They were traditionally cultivators, traders and money lenders. This region of Pandiyan kingdom was ruled by Cholas for certain period. Cholas supporters started settling down in the southern region of Pandiyan region which was also known as *thenpandi* region.¹⁰⁸ Among the Nadars some of them accepted Cholas governance thereby they were separated within the major sect of Nadars. They also settled down by the river bank of Tamirabarani. The noticeable issue is that the place Nattathi is located in the centre of the river or Tamirabarani. So they claim them as Nattathi. It is a word which might have shrunk from the word *naadu* (middle) + *aaru* (river) = *nattaaru* (middle river).¹⁰⁹ The word *nattaru* was widely known among the other group

as well. And so *nattarum* might have been used as Nattathi there forth. When Pandiya region was under the later Cholas, it was divided into several Valanadus. In southern region of ancient Tamilakam, there was *Thiruvazhuthi Valanadu* and *Manaveera Valanadu*. Thiruvazhuthi Valanadu's capital was Perunkulam and later it was known as Nattathi. For Manaveera Valanadu, Manadu was capital. Both places were ruled by Nattathi Nadar. "For administrative purposes, Chola territory was divided into several divisions called Mandalams. Mandalams were sub divided into Valanadu and Valanadu into nadus, each of the latter consisting of a number of villages".¹¹⁰ Their familial usage of words was known as *indi*. As a result, their family was also observed as different kinds of *indi*. The other sub-sects of Nadars did not have marriage alliance with them. Nattathi Nadars claim to have lineage from the Cholas, and have no connection with toddy tapping.¹¹¹

Kodikkal Nadar

Another sub-sect mentioned in the Kulasekara Pattinam inscription is Malayalaththu Nadars. They are also called *Kodikkal* Nadars and their presence is found in the western part of Tirunelveli district such as Ambasamuthiram and Tenkasi and in Thoothukudi district in the villages of Atthoor, Mukkani, and Eral. Also it is interesting to note that in some places in western part of Kanniyakumari districts and Taluk of Neyyatrinkarai, Nadars do the cultivation of betel-nut.¹¹² They were supposed to have migrated to the Pandiya country from the banks of the Cauvery River in Thanjavur, coming under the patronage of the Pandiyan kings as their flag bearers.¹¹³ Most of them had abandoned their traditional occupation of betel creeper cultivation and some of them had taken palm climbing as their occupation.¹¹⁴ Pate identified the *Kodikkal* sub-group with the Nattathi. Then in the later years these Nadars started to look towards trade and thus migrated towards cities in northern Tamilnadu.¹¹⁵

Sirukudi Nadar

Among the Nadars one group of people is known as *Senathipathi/Kalla Shanars*. They are also known as Pulukka Shanars. The term Pulukka stands for 'Spear handed' in Ancient Tamil., The sub-group of Sirukudi Nadar among the Nadars is considered to

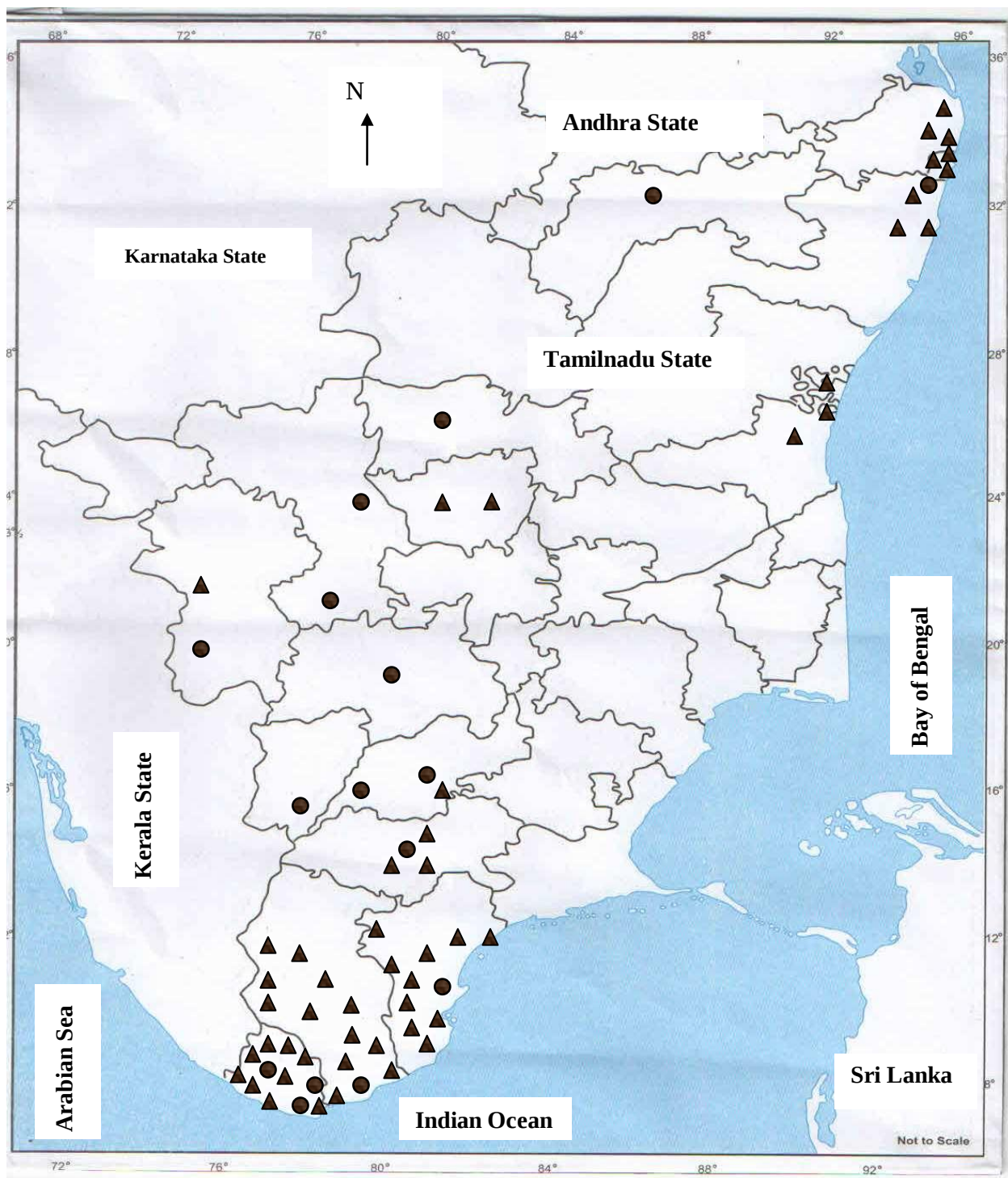
have lower status than the others. Pulukka Nadars made marriage alliance within their group.¹¹⁶ Originally believed to have been slaves and palanquin bearers of the Pandiyan kings, their traditional position in the Nadar community was as menial servants of the Nadan families.¹¹⁷ One group of this division, it is said, once served as domestic servants and attendants of the Nilamaikkarars/Nadans. Now-a-days, almost all of them have left their traditional vocation and entered into agriculture and trade.¹¹⁸

Nadars in Kongu Region

In the early twentieth century many Nadars migrated to northern parts of Tamilnadu. Some of them had migrated to Kongu region. Kongunadu comprises all the taluks of the modern districts of Coimbatore, Nilgiri, Tirupur, Erode, Salem, Namakkal, Dharmapuri, Karur, Krishnagiri and Palani taluk, Oddanchatram taluk, Dindigul Taluk, Vendasandur taluk, Natham taluk and Kodaikanal taluk of Dindigul district and Tirupattur taluk of Vellore district. Nadars have residence of in all the above said places especially Coimbatore, Erode, Salem, Namakkal and Palani. They are identified as follows¹¹⁹:

Kongu Nadars especially moopan are either toddy tappers or Land lords (Agirculture). Most of them are found in Coimbatore and Erode districts. Kalyana Nadars are found in Rasipuram and Tiruchencodu taluks of Namakkal districts. Among the Kalyana Nadars the following families and their family god/goddess are found. Rasipurathan Veedu (AnnanmarSamy), Vellattam Veedu (Pechiyayi), Kokkilaiyar Veedu (KokkilaiKaliyayi), Ponthuraiyar Veedu (Poonthuraikali), Yezhuran Veedu (YezhurPannayi), Mappiraimar Veedu (Mappiraimar), Madukkaraiyan Veedu (MadhukkariSellayi).Marutha Nadar(Marava Nadar): From KeezhakaraiPoonthurai of Erode district. Nattuva Nadar is supposed to be known as Nattathi Nadar. They all migrated from Srivaikuntam, Panaivilai of Thoothukudi districts of Tamilnadu and settled down in Kunnathoor and Vellaiyampathi, Nanjundaapuram of Kongu region.

Map 2.2: Map showing the Distribution of Divisions among Nadars



- ▲ Indicates the distribution of Nadan/Karukkupattai
- Indicates the distribution of Nattathi Nadars

There are other communities who assist Nadars in all their religious and life cycle ceremonies. They are: *Gurukkal*, *Kavithi*, *Vannar* etc. They are the priests of the temples found Nadars' villages. For example Mandaikkadu Amman Temple, UvariSuyambulingaSamy/Sri Kandeswarar temples are very much popular among the Nadars of Tamilnadu. These two temples priests are known as *Gurukkal*.¹²⁰ *Kavithi* is also known as *Navithar* (Barbar). They will assist only Nadars in all their life cycle ceremonies. Apart from their occupation of hair styling Nadars, they blow conch in funeral, send the message of death of a Nadar to all villagers, hold umbrella to groom during marriage, and conduct *anantharam* rituals in marriage. They are known as *dobby*. They will never go to others to get cloths for laundry but only to Nadars. They also do a crucial role during funeral, puberty and marriage.¹²¹ &¹²²

Sub-groups in the Present Day

Templeman gives four divisions which he found among Nadars when he was doing his research on northern Nadars. They are 1) Traditional divisions 2) Territorial divisions 3) Religious divisions 4) Present day's divisions.

Families (*Vahaiyara* and *Indi*) among the Nadars

The Nadar community follows the patriarchal social system. It must have had certain matriarchal social systems, because of the importance given to the maternal uncle in his sister's children's marriage, puberty and ear-piercing ceremony. Though some sects among the Nadars still have a ritual called *mamansadangu* (Maternal uncle ritual) at the weddings, now it has more or less lost its meaning. Nadars' consanguine is identified through their family names (it is known as *Koottam* or *Vahaiyara*) is considered on the male line and children inherit the father's *Koottam*. The sons continue to be members of their father's *Koottam*, the daughters, after marriage become a member of their husband's *Koottam* for most ritual purposes. The family comprises several unilateral descent groups that trace their descent from a common ancestor, either actual or mythical. Among the Nadar, the family name is identified in two ways. One is *Veedu* and another one is *Vahaiyara/Koottam*. *Veedu* means house, it is identified by house names and *Vahaiyara* is identified by village names. So, the Nadars marriages are

organised according to their family names. The same group of families are not allowed to get married. As they come under same consanguinity relations, they are not supposed to marry from the same group. A woman after getting married, she would be considered through husband 'Veedu' or 'Vahaiyara'. One more interesting thing is that *Veedu* or *Vahaiyara* name is given by their *kulatheivam* (family god), origin place of the clan, ancestor's name, and their occupation.¹²³ The agnates of the family perform formal ritual functions on important occasions such as marriage, funeral ceremonies and other life cycle ceremonies. Only male members of the known family can do or participate in the rituals.

There is an account which claims that among the Nadars of Virudhunagar there are two seventy five (275) *vahaiyara* (families).¹²⁴ It is given in the table. The detailed list is enclosed in the annexure.

Table 2.1: List of Agnates and Affine among the Northern Nadars

Agnates (non-marriageable)	Affine (marriageable)
KaraiyadiKaruppu, MunankiVakai, SiminiVakai	Other <i>vakaiyarai</i> (families) are marriageable
Idamaari, IdamaariVeeran	Other <i>vakaiyarai</i> (families) are marriageable
Vetri/Vetti Nadan, Pakalam, Koothan, Sivanthi	Other <i>vakaiyarai</i> (families) are marriageable
KopliVakai, S.P. Vakai	Other <i>vakaiyarai</i> (families) are marriageable
Other <i>vakaiyarai</i> (families) are non-marriageable	Velikandan, UndaiyanVakai, Senbakam Nadar, Senbakakutti
Thavasi, Thavasiperumal, M.A. Thavasi	Other <i>vakaiyarai</i> (families) are marriageable
PeriyavarVakai, EzhuAanpillaiPetravarVakai, ThoppuVakai, Othaampattiyar	Other <i>vakaiyarai</i> (families) are marriageable
Sivaram, Palvannan, Kumara Nadar	Other <i>vakaiyarai</i> (families) are marriageable
ValaiyaVettiyan, Uchan, PoolanKathan	Other <i>vakaiyarai</i> (families) are marriageable
Other <i>vakaiyarai</i> (families) are non-marriageable	Kooran, Karumalaiyaan, Kattaiyan, Manthan
Mukkiniyar, Sukkini, PathaamPeriyavar	Other <i>vakaiyarai</i> (families) are marriageable
Tholandi, Melakkadi, Velikkandan, Undali	Other <i>vakaiyarai</i> (families) are non-marriageable

Other <i>vakaiyarai</i> (families) are non-marriageable	Vaadiyaan, Pavaliyar, Thillaikovinthan
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Among the Nattathi Nadars their family name is known as *indis*. There are 63 families/*indis*, now it is believed to have increased into 113¹²⁵. The word *indi*¹²⁶, as it has been discussed above, it is observed as the equal word to *vahaiyara*. It is scheduled in the tabular form as in the follows:

Table 2.2: List of Agnates and Affine among the Nattathi Nadars

Agnates (non-marriageable)	Affine (marriageable)
Thiruvazhuthi Nadan, Lakshmana Nadan, Izhava Nadan, Karutha Pillai, Kulasekara Nadan, Kulaiya Nadan, Ilinga Nadan, Savar Nadan, Sitha Nadan, SokkanThiruppappu Nadan, PichaMarthandan Nadan, Vallikutti Nadan, Mappillai Nadan	All others than in the <i>indis</i> list are marriageable
MaruvaiMukkanthar, VendarMukkanthar, Malai Mukkanthar	All others than in the <i>indis</i> list are marriageable
Ennandi, Kallandi, Kooraiyaandi, Pichandi, Porpanmandi, Mannandi, Thollandi	All others than in the <i>indis</i> list are marriageable
Aavathukili, Akkaalai	All others than in the <i>indis</i> list are marriageable
Kandanki, Serankan, Aadumeichi, Aavukkarar, Alakkar, Pookkizhavar, Kuppa Perumal	All others than in the <i>indis</i> list are marriageable
Nayinaakkutti, Perpethar, Chozhekkar, Pizhapor uthar, ChozhaKumarar	All others than in the <i>indis</i> list are marriageable
Devalapichai	All others than in the <i>indis</i> list are marriageable
Sathan	All others than in the <i>indis</i> list are marriageable
Nottakkarar, Vedikkarar, Kambu Vetti, Kaliyar/K aliyathithan, Kandarakkar/Kandarathithan, Vathiyar, Thirukkulothunkan, Sirankar, Ilankozhi, Kan akkar, Savazhai, Veetrintha, Kuravadaiyaar, Kur ayamichar, Madankavadi, Aandarankavadi, Ilaiya aNadaiyar, Perumariyan/Perumanadiyan, Sonan kiyar, Manachiyan, Kuttiyali, Saravadaiyan, Natt ukku, Vaithan, Samayathar, UdaiyaSithan, Polma dan, Vellali/Villali, Karikkattiyar	All others than in the <i>indis</i> list are marriageable

The social organisation of Nadars is structured as Karukkupattai (also known as *Manattan*) and Nilamaikkaran of Nadars families who are identified from their regional names. Even though they do not have different family names as such, their names of families are identified with region and sometime their deity to which they belong.

Sometime their families are also known with the name of their ancestors' occupations whereas the Nattathi Nadars are identified with their various family names. For Nattathi Nadars, family has the predominant role in their marriage and in all other life cycle rituals in the family. Among the Karukkupattai and Nilamaikkaran nadars, religion was the new arrival in their social organisation, because the religion plays a major role in all their life cycle ceremonies. But among Nattathi Nadars, who are mostly Hindus, the family is observed to play the crucial role in all the ritual ceremonies in the family functions. Nattathi Nadar family is identified as *Indi* (family/house). Among the Nattathi Nadars 64 clans were found. Now it has increased to 113 clans. Due to migration within the state, in many districts, the clans are identified with different names such as their ancestors' names, place names, places of their recent migration and with new occupation names. Among the *Sirukudi* Nadar or *Pulukikai* Shanar there is no practice to call their family with any names. They do not have different family names as other groups have. As they had converted to Christianity in the early twentieth century as well as in the later twentieth century, their marriage alliance is made with other Christian Nadars. Despite the marriage alliances is made with other sects of Christian Nadars, sometimes when they come to know about the *Marumakka Vazhi*¹²⁷ or *AruthuKatti* (widow remarriage) there is a discrimination still seen as a case in point. The major factor is religion, once the family and region were seen as the important markers for the marriage alliance among the Nadars. Then gradually its importance got decreased in their social organisation. It happened due to the entry of Christianity and the new way of looking at the Hindu religious views through *AyyaVazhi* which made major changes in Nadars' social organisation and their religious observances and rituals.

Religious Divisions

Hindus and Christians are there among the Nadars. *Ayya Vazhi* is also a religious tradition which was founded by *Ayya Vaikundar*. One sect of people follows *Ayya Vazhi* worship. It has a separate cult and rituals. Though it comprises by Hindu Nadars, the rites and other practices are slightly different from the other religious practices especially Hinduism. Hindu Nadars and Christian Nadars are the major divisions among the community in terms of religion. It is very rare to have marriage

alliance between Catholic and Protestants Nadars. Among the Nadars in 1797 A.D first protestant baptism was performed in a village called Muthalur (first village). The main reason behind the conversion among the Nadars was that, if a village head (Nadan) converts to Christianity, the whole village would get converted. The village set up was like under the control of a headman of the village.

Conversion into Christianity

Through Christianity, people were able to get education from missionaries' schools and colleges. With the help of missionaries and British administrators Nadars were able to come out from social inequality (Breast cloth controversy, breast tax oppression through taxes, temple entry movement) among the caste Hindus.¹²⁸ The conversion into Christianity can be understood in two ways, one is Catholic conversion and another one is conversion into Protestant Christianity. Missionary had started working in south-eastern part of Tirunelveli in the early 16th century among the Paravars (fisher folk). After that in the early eighteenth century Protestant missionaries started their works among the Nadars. Bayly says that "the shanars of southern Tirunelveli soon became one of the largest bodies of Christian 'converts' in the southern hinterland, and this is one reason why the site of these early Shanar 'conversions' acquired such importance in the foundation stories which were disseminated by the missionaries and their adherents".¹²⁹ Vadakkankulam village is situated in the southern Tirunelveli region. In this village a Shanar woman known as SandaiNadathi (the term 'Nadati' is called for female Nadar), is revered as the actual founder of the village.¹³⁰ She was the first Shanar convert in the year of 1670 A.D. Her followers and the small population of Shanars, Paraiyars and other low-caste devotees who began to settle in the locality were almost certainly among the baptised by John de Britto in 1684 A.D. In the south, Tirunelveli Jesuits claimed that by 1720s A.D. Shanar converts were three thousands.¹³¹ Then Anglican missionaries' efforts in Tinnevely began in 1771 A.D., and still later Society for the Promotion for Christian Knowledge enters in the year of 1784 onwards.¹³²

Christianity had been spread among the Shanars throughout Tinnevely.¹³³ In the year 1799 mass conversion had happened in the place near Sathankulam later this place

was known as Muthalur. David was the first Shanar protestant Christian and catechist. He was the one, who first introduced protestant Christianity among the Shanars. His actual name was Sundarajan, which he changed as David when he converted to Christianity. He belonged to Kalangudi village located between Sathankulam and Mudhalur. But his relatives were there in nearby village called Vijayaramapuram.¹³⁴ There after many Christian settlements emerged near around the places such as Bethlehem and Nazareth by 1803. More than five thousand Nadars in south-eastern Tinnevely were converted to Christianity.¹³⁵ In the year of 1816 when SPCK was unable to resume its activities, Church Missionary Society (C.M.S) appointed a Chaplin at Palamcottah. By then half of the converts had given up Christianity.¹³⁶ In Kanniyakumari district in the year of 1799 A.D. mass conversion had happened among the Nadars in the village Mayiladi.¹³⁷

As already discussed the Christian Nadars are divided into Catholic Nadars and CSI Christians, the population of Catholic Nadars of Kanniyakumari district are found more in Vilavancode and Kalkulam taluks than in Agastheeswaram and Thovalai taluks. K.K.Pillai says that “when Jesuit Francis Xavier tried to convert among the costal people of Kanniyakumari district, Nadars of modern taluks of Vilavancode and Kalkulam also converted into Catholicism. The reason was that by converting into Catholicism, they would get arms for their protection”.¹³⁸ A hundred thousand Shanars, a devil worshipping tribe in South India, have accepted Christianity, and their "revival" meetings have been attended with remarkable physical phenomena, such as whip-like cracking of the hair, and violent jerking, similar to those witnessed in earlier times at camp-meeting in Kentucky and elsewhere. Gracey who wrote about a work on Indian missionaries in which the author emphasises about a missionary known John Thomas Tucker, of the English Church Missionary Society, has seen Nadars (erstwhile Shanars) destroyed their fifty four temples with their own hands and built sixty- four houses for Christian worship".¹³⁹ Susan Bayly a trained historian and anthropologist worked on Indian religion she mentioned in her work on caste and society that as Nadars got converted during successive waves of Jesuit missionary work from the seventeenth century onward the result was the majority of these Nadars settlements were Roman Catholics.¹⁴⁰

Jesuits inland colleague had a marked preference among the Nadars in terms of conversion. Unlike the commercially active Nadars of the surrounding area, most of these villages nearby the coastal area Nadars were poor toddy tappers and palmyra cultivators. As Bayly says further to the Jesuits, toddy tapping and Palmyra cultivating Nadars were all untouched rural innocents whose simplicity and sweetness contrasted very markedly with the 'corruption' and worldliness of the Paravas.¹⁴¹ In the words from a Jesuit, Fr. Bertrand, "these poor people are astonishingly simple. They show affection to their Palmyra trees as shepherds do to their sheep. Born at the feet of their palm trees, they know of nothing but them, and are almost strangers to the things of this world, to its delights as well as its sorrows, to its needs as well as its sins. Truly one would say that these good tree cultivators did not eat with Adam of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil and that they were created in the days of primordial innocence".¹⁴² Thus the catholic conversion had enlarged among the Nadars near by the coastal village that had toddy tapping as their occupation.

Catholic

The Nadars of southern Tirunelveli soon became one of the largest bodies of Christian 'converts' in the southern land, and this is one reason why the site of these early Nadars 'conversions' acquired such importance in the foundation stories which were disseminated by the missionaries and their supporters.¹⁴³ But while this really was an area in which John de Britto (though he changed his name *Arulanantham* as in Tamil but latterly he was known as St. John De Britto) carried out some of his most dramatic mass baptism ceremonies, there is an even stronger tradition about Vadakkankulam which focuses on the role played by independent Christian priest figures. One such individual has already been described: this is the Christianised Paraiyar 'faqir' who aroused so much hostility from the Jesuits, and who is known to have made contact with some of the early inhabitants of the Vadakkankulam locality. Even so the key figure in the early history of Vadakkankulam is not this Christian 'faqir' but a Nadar woman known as *SandhaiNadathi* who came to be revered as the actual founder of the village. In local legends and biographical texts, *Sandhai* is portrayed as a typical Christian priest or charismatic cult leader. She too is said to have been influenced by the religious

traditions of the Paravas, and at some point in the 1670s she appears to have built up a group of disciples in her home village, ten miles from Vadakkankulam. Here again there is a wilderness theme: the story is that the group migrated with her to what was then an unclear forest tract, and like the other founding cult figures of the period, she is said to have set up a small shrine containing a cross. Her followers and the small population of Nadars, Paraiyans and other low-caste devotees who began to settle in the locality were almost certainly among these baptised by John de Britto in 1684. By about 1690 Vadakkankulam was known as an established Christian centre, and the Jesuits had claimed it as part of their jurisdiction.¹⁴⁴

Initially the followers of the independent Christian cult tradition at Vadakkankulam had no more than the usual loose and uncertain affiliation to the Madurai mission, but over the next thirty years the south Tirunelveli palmyra country became the scene of a great wave of Christian mass conversions: this was the sort of lower-caste conversion movement which made the region so well-known during the colonial period.¹⁴⁵ By 1720, the Jesuits claimed to have converted over 3,000 Shanars. With its strongly rooted autonomous cult tradition, Vadakkankulam became the natural focus for these new converts.¹⁴⁶ The social customs, vocation and the life style of Nadar community varies from place to place and between the sub-sects and different faiths. The Nilamaikkarars lived like barons and adopted several customs and practices of Kshatriyas. They used to wear sacred thread, used sandal paste, sacred ash and *kumkum* and *dotis* with *panchakachcham*. Tying head wear (*thalaipagai*) was a necessity during weddings and other functions and in village panchayats. Some of Nilamaikkarars used to travel in palanquins. It was mentioned in folk ballad of *Kattabommankummi* and also in *Valangai Varalaaru* edited by VedanayakamSastri. Edgar Thurston has also recorded that he had personally seen some of the palanquins used by Nadars.¹⁴⁷ During wedding the groom will proceed to the bride's place in palanquins or on horseback, accompanied by horsemen and fireworks.

Protestant

There is also an established population of Protestant Christians (CSI Christians) among the Nadars. A beginning was made among the Nadars of the south by the Society

for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge (S.P.C.K.). The first conversion had occurred among the Nadars of Kalankudiyiruppu, village located in ten miles east of Sathankulam in the Tinnevely District (the present Thoothukudi district). After receiving the name David, he was put to work in his native area.¹⁴⁸ The Rev. Jacnicke, Rev. Gericke, Rev. James Hough and Rev. Bishop Heber had infused new life into the Mission. In A.D. 1820, Rev. C.T. E. Rhenius was sent on behalf of Church Missionary Society (C.M.S). He was perhaps the most notable missionary. He founded a number of societies, the important of which was the Dharma Sangam (Philanthropic Society) by which lands and houses were purchased for the converts.¹⁴⁹ The merchant Sawyer, who had befriended the young catechist David, died in 1816 leaving the lands to the Mission which became the village of Sawerpuram in Thoothukudi district.¹⁵⁰ In 1824, the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge (S.P.C.K.) transferred the charge of their mission to the Society for the Propagation of Gospel (S.P.G.). In 1841, a young Scottish Missionary, the Rev. Caldwell was sent to Tinnevely, in south Tamil Nadu by the S.P.G. At the time of Caldwell's arrival in Tinnevely, a mass movement began among the Shanars/Nadars. They were converted to Christianity, not as an individual or families but as entire villages.¹⁵¹ In 1877, the Rev. Caldwell was consecrated as the First Bishop of Tinnevely and he served thus till his death; he lived and worked among the Nadars causing enormous influence on the community's history. He established his Mission at Idaiyangudi, south of Sathankulam of Tinnevely. The village name Idaiyangudi means "Shepherds Abode". Though it was almost Nadars in population, in speaking of the Nadars, Caldwell observed that with a few honourable exceptions they had made little progress towards Christianity.¹⁵²

Sattampillai Vedham (Hindu Church of Jesus Christ)

Another denomination in Christianity is known as Sattampillai Vedham. ArumaiNayakam Sattampillai (1823 – 1918), was popularly known as Arumainayagam Sattampillai, a native of Mukuperi village of Thoothukudi district. He was a Tamilian, convert of Anglican Church, a catechist and the founder of first indigenous and independent Hindu Church of Lord Jesus.¹⁵³ By rejecting Western missionaries' domination for the first time in the history of Indian subcontinent he introduced this

subversion. This paved the way to develop a fusion model of Hindu-Christian religion while remaining will free from the interference of European missionaries. It was established to fight against the leading Western dominated institutionalized churches and also to express and interpret Christianity and Biblical text in Indian context socially, culturally, and religiously.¹⁵⁴ In the year of 1857 he founded Hindu Christian Church of Lord Jesus. People of Ayangudi, Kulatthukkudi, Saalaiputhur, Vazhaiyadi, Pattaikkarai, Pantrimadal and VavutthaanKuppam embraced this new form of religion. This new religion did not accept the whole bible but it did accept Old Testament where the Jewish customs are much explained. However people started to call this new religion as a “sattampillai vedham” which means religion of a Sattampillai. The early companions of Arumainayakam Sattampillai are: Samiyadiyan from Mukuperi (Sattampillai’s native place) and Madhuranayakam from Prakasapuram. In the year of 1882 A.D. some of ArumainayakamSattampillai’s alliance after some controversial issues started one mission called “Indian Christ Church”. Although they got divided into two groups, they did not forget to give respect to Arumainayakam.¹⁵⁵ After some years (after the death of Sattampillai in 1919 A.D.) the Hindu Christian Church of Lord Jesus came to be known as Indian Christ Church. “The first church of Seventh Day Adventists in South India was formally organized with 50 members on 30 January 1915 in Prakasapuram, although, it was functioning from 1908 itself; James and C.G. Lowry conducted the religious service. Later, SDA church also started an educational institution with name James Memorial School in Prakasapuram”.¹⁵⁶

Hindu

Among the Nadars there are two major Hindu practices. One is goddess worship (*ammavazhi*) and another one is Ayya Vazhi worship. Mother goddesses such as Mutharamman/Muthalamman, Isakkiyamman, Muppidathiamman, UjjaiyiniMakali, Shenbakanachiyar, Sivananainchi, Virgin (*Kanni*) worship and women ancestors worship of Ananthammal of Kazhukumalai are seen among the Amma Vazhi Hindu Nadars. Apart from these deities SudalaiMadan, Vellaikkarasamy, Pichaikkalansamy, Sivananaintha Perumal, Periyandavar are also worshipped by the Hindus. Although above said deities are found among the Hindu Nadars, Bhadrakaliamman and Ayyanars

worship are widely found among the Hindu Nadars settlements. Even though some of the Nadars migrated to northern districts of Tamilnadu and their economy and social status improved a lot in the towns and cities of northern districts, they did not forget to worship their guardian deities at *Manadu*. A few Nadar folks install new temples for Ayyanars and engage in annual festivals which attract many and popularise such worship. They even put their tutelary deities name to their children, companies, factories, shops, hotels, vehicles etc. They too retain their identity as in the case of marriages and other customs. They organize endowments and *Mahamai* for the welfare of the community.¹⁵⁷

Ayya Vazhi

Ayya Vaazhi is another religious denomination which is followed by Nadars of Tamilnadu. It originated in Samythoppu village situated in Kanniyakumari district and its founder is known as Ayya Vaikundar who was born on A.D. 1809 to *Ponnu Nadar* and *VeyilaalAmmayyar* in *SathanKuttivilai* (currently known as Samythoppu) in Kanniyakumari district. His parents named him *Mudisoodum Perumal* but he was called as *Muthukutty* due to urging of caste hierarchy by his teacher.¹⁵⁸ The story of Ayya Vaikundar is known as in the follows: “In his seventeen years of old he got married to *Parathevathai*. At that time his wife’s age was twenty seven years old. As he was attacked by the long day illness, he was sent to Tiruchendur (abode of Lord Muruga) to recover by obtaining god’s grace. There he went into sea to take bath. He never came back but only after the third day. On his returning from inside the sea he said that he was an avatar of *Narayanan*¹⁵⁹. Then he preached to the people of Kanniyakumari district especially in Agastheeswaram and Thovalai taluks. Thereafter, many who encountered him, started following his new religious path. The followers of *Ayya Vazhi* pursue his thoughts in two ways. One is called *Pathis*¹⁶⁰, and another one is *Nizhalthankal*¹⁶¹. “*Akilathirattu*” is the main religious book of *Ayya Vazhi*. As per internal evidence, HariGopalan, alias SakatevanSeedar, wrote this book on the 27th of the Tamil month of *Karthikai* in the year of 1016 M.E. (A.D. 1841). The language of *Akilathirattu* is Tamil and the literary genre is that of a ballad.¹⁶² Ayya vazhi did stop the people from their religious conversion and migration. Many Nadars of Southern Travancore, as they were

under the oppression (in terms of *Oozhiyam*¹⁶³, and many taxes) given and imposed by the caste Hindus made them converted into Christianity and some of them had migrated to Tirunelveli, Thoothukudi and other northern districts of Tamilnadu. At this point of time the arrival of *Ayya Vaikundar* with new religious ideas in Hindu way of life made most of the Palmyra cultivators (toddy tappers) to embrace his paths. Thus the *Ayya Vazhi* never allowed its devotees to embrace other religious sects. Having criticized the traditional views of Hindu practices, *Ayya Vaikundar* formed new paths in Hindu religion which is identified as *Ayya Vazhi*. It is to be noted that *Ayya Vaikundar* could stop the people's conversion to Christianity as well as turn the people to his new path of religious ideas rather than going through the oppression of Hindu hierarchy.

From the above description it is to be noted that among the Nadars of Tamilnadu there may be two types of changes and mobility from observations of their history and culture. According to Robert L. Hardgrave they are identified as situational change and processive change, both in urban and rural settings.¹⁶⁴ It has also been found in all their migration and history, the evidences of which can be found in historical documents and oral literature. Among the Nadars, the conversion into Christianity was indeed an evidence for the upward mobility of this community. Mass conversion had happened and that spread throughout the southern districts of Tamilnadu namely Tirunelveli and Thoothukudi districts.¹⁶⁵ New villages were formed and biblical names were given to those villages.¹⁶⁶ After the arrival of British in India, transport developments were given more importance. As a result of this transport facility, many businesses emerged among the Nadars as an offshoot of their traditional occupation of toddy tapping and other Palmyra products. After adopting new occupation of trading they became as merchant community and business people. In order to develop their own community, merchants built many schools and colleges. Templeman who worked on Northern Nadars (northern districts such as Virudhunagar, Madurai and Ramanathapuram etc.) had divided the occupations of Nadars in the following manner: 1) Merchants and business people 2) Professional and semi-professional (occupation requires high or relatively high educational levels) 3) Agriculturists 4) Agricultural Labourers 5) Non-Agricultural Labourers. These economic changes of Nadars brought them in higher social status. The social status of Nadars in urban and rural divisions came into community.

The sub-groups of Nadars when they had a chance to change their residence to urban areas, their cultural practice were also compelled to change by having social interaction with people of other communities in the north which affected their religion and their rituals. They stopped coming to native villages from their town. Instead of going to their native places they built temples in their new towns. It is the major change which was seen among the Nadars. At the same time within the southern Nadars, Christian community made major influences in their rituals especially in their life cycle ceremonies. Although they were known as different sub-groups, most of the Christian Nadars made as one sect after some decades of the conversion in the later 19th century. The sub-groups' kinship pattern slowly emerged out of new religious groups and social mobility of the community. As Christian Nadars embraced the Christianity for their emancipation from caste Hindus, and acquiring health and education as equivalent to caste Hindus, Hindu Nadars started embracing Sanskritisation practices at their temples and family shrines, which they built in their new towns. Thus religion is seen as one of the major factors which influenced in the political and social mobility of the community. It had also made major changes in their day to day life. These changes are notable even in the ethnic genres of Nadars wherein kinship and marriage play a vital role in generating such version and variation in the expressive traditions. This dimensions clearly brought out in the forthcoming chapter.

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- ³² They are known Ezhukannikal or SaptaKannikal in Tamil
- ³³ Lord Indra
- ³⁴ It is also called as *Ertram*. This is the name for the male palmyrah palm
- ³⁵ It is also called as *Pennai* ("penn" female). This is a very common name for the more productive female palmyrah
- ³⁶ a pair of small pincers, which can be used while cutting the spadix of the palm tree while toddy tapping
- ³⁷ It is known as one of the pots varieties.
- ³⁸ It is a pot used for gathering toddy sap in it.
- ³⁹ Respondent could tell only about two names. They are as follows: one is Kandikai, another one is Ezham
- ⁴⁰ Respondent said that it is true.
- ⁴¹ *Vazhipaattu* is also known as *mangalam*.
- ⁴² Ganesa is considered as the remover of obstacles.
- ⁴³ Sathan means Ayyanar in local term of Tamil language. It is known as guard of village. So, they are given importance in the ballad at the initial stage as *Villupaattu* performed in villages.
- ⁴⁴ Tamil months of *Thai* (mid of the month of January to mid of the month of February) to *Chitthirai* (mid of the month of April to the month of May) and *Vaikasi* (mid of the month of May to mid of the month of June).
- ⁴⁵ Most of the folk ballad or folk epic is started with the parasody of sathan (ayyanar). Sathan is known as local deity in every Nadar settlement especially among the Hindu Nadars. Sathan (ayyanar) deity is considered as guard of every village. Thus sathan is given importance in the story of every folk ballad. As Bhadrakaliamman story begins with praising the sathan, nowadays Ganapathi is given importance in the position of sathan.
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- ⁶⁰ Ulakudaiya Perumal & Sariyakula Perumal *Kathai* (Folk ballad of Ulakudaiya Perumal and Sariyakula Perumal)
- ⁶¹ Thavasimuthu, T. 2008. *Thiyaga Boomim Arumuganeri*, Arumuganeri: Taminadu Art Literature and Culture Research Centre. Pg. 196.
- ⁶² Natarajan, T. 1981, *Ulakudaiperumal Kathai* (A Folk Historical Ballad). Madurai: Madurai Kamaraj University Publication.
- ⁶³ Tenkasi Pandiyan Seevallamaran. Seevallamaran was known as later Pandiyas (16th Century A.D.)
- ⁶⁴ Sivananaichan fell in love with a dobbie girl. So his family was not ready to accept his love.
- ⁶⁵ Ramachandran, S. 2004. *Valangaimalaiyum Santror Samukac Ceppetukalum*. Chennai: International Institute of Tamil Studies. Pg. 169.
- ⁶⁶ Thankswamy, P.Y. 1993. *Kumaraswamy Nadan Villuppattu Kathai* (The bow song story of Kumaraswamy Nadan). Chennai: Thangam Pathippakam. Pg. 7.
- ⁶⁷ Thankswamy, P.Y. 1993. *Kumaraswamy Nadan Villuppattu Kathai* (The bow song story of Kumaraswamy Nadan). Chennai: Thangam Pathippakam. Pg. 35.
- ⁶⁸ Mr. R. Ramachandran (61) (Udangudi in Thoothukudi).
- ⁶⁹ Mr. R. Ramachandran (61) (Udangudi in Thoothukudi).
- ⁷⁰ This is a place name, which is located in Kanniyakumari district.
- ⁷¹ Places where known the free gruel was offered by Travancore government.
- ⁷² Perumal, A.K. 2003, *Thenkumariyin Kathai* (The story of Kanniyakumari), Chennai: United Writers.
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- ⁷⁴ Thasarathan, A. 2001. *Manadu: A Social History of Manavira Valanadu*, Chennai: Centre for Preservation of Tamil Palm-leaf Manuscripts. Pg. 136.
- ⁷⁵ Fortified compounds, where lodging cum warehouse are available.
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- ⁷⁷ Hardgrave, L. Robert. 1969. *Op.cit.*, Pg. 97.
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- ⁷⁹ Robert L. Hardgrave Jr. "Urbanization and the Structure of Caste." In M.S.A. Rao; C. Bhat and L.K. Kadekar (Eds.). *A Reader in Urban Sociology*. New Delhi: Orient Longman. 1991. Pg. 267.
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- ⁸⁴ Mr. A. James (Retired teacher) (Avudaiyanur of Tirunelveli district).
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- ⁸⁸Ludden, David E. 1989. *Peasant in South India*. Delhi: Oxford University Press. Pg. 157.
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- ⁹⁶Bayly, Susan.1989.*Op.cit.*, Pg. 325.
- ⁹⁷Ludden, David. 1989. *Op.cit.*,
- ⁹⁸Bayly, Susan. 1999. *Op.cit.*, Pg. 407.
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- ¹⁰²The poster has been enclosed in the Appendix.
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- ¹⁵⁶ A. Packiamani, 1983, *Indhiya Eha Ratchakar Sabai* (an unpublished M.Phil dissertation), submitted Department of Tamilology, Madurai Kamaraj University, Madurai. Pg. 117
- ¹⁵⁷ Thasarathan, A. 2001. *Manadu: A Social History of Manavira Valaadu*. Chennai: Centre for Preservation of Tamil Palm-leaf Manuscripts. Pg. 8.
- ¹⁵⁸ Patrick, G. 2003. *Religion and Subaltern Agency*. Chennai: University of Madras. Pg. 77.
- ¹⁵⁹ Lord Vishnu
- ¹⁶⁰ *Pathi* is the name of the primary centres of congregational worship of Ayya Vazhi. There are seven *pathis* in number such as Swamythoppu Pathi, Ambalapathi, Muttapathi, Thamarai kulapathi, Poopathi, Vakaipathi and Avatharapathi or Thuvarakapathi.
- ¹⁶¹ It is a secondary worship place of Ayya Vazhi, smaller in size compared to Pathis built as per the instructions of the Sacred book 'Akilathirattu' of Ayya Vazhi.
- ¹⁶² Patrick, G. 2003. *Religion and Subaltern Agency*, Chennai: University of Madras. Pg. 118-119.
- ¹⁶³ Free labor (without pay).
- ¹⁶⁴ Robert L. Hardgrave. 1991. *Op.cit.*, Pg. 265.
- ¹⁶⁵ In *Records of the Early history of the Tinnevely Mission of the S.P.C.K. and S.P.G.F.P.*, Pg. 61.
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CHAPTER - III

KINSHIP AND MARRIAGE: REFLECTIONS IN ETHNIC GENRES

The lifestyles of a community may be understood by receiving the resources of oral traditions, which constitute the whole knowledge system of a community, further it reveals all its life styles of the community through its ethnic genres. As kinship is a complex, dynamic and likely to change in practice, it is indeed important to study the particular element of unit of a community which makes larger changes at societal level. This chapter on *Kinship and Marriage: Reflections in Ethnic Genres* deals with folklore genres of Nadars which has field data on kinship and marriage. There are many collections of folklore such as folk songs (children songs, folk games, and marriage songs), folk tales, myths, proverbs, ballad and customary practices, but less of works has dealt on kinship and marriage. Moreover no one has dealt on kinship and marriage of Nadars. Nadars' social network and records in folklore is an important area to be studied which remained unexplored in terms of folklore perspective.

Kinship and Marriage in Ethnic Genres

Myths deal about origin of the species including human being become intelligible when it is realized that they are the scheme of political and ceremonial relationships.¹ As Meyer Fortes noted about myth, myths especially origin myth of Nadars narrate about the kinship and marriage pattern and marriage alliance between two groups and denial of marriage as because of the person from outside the group. William R. Bascom emphasizes the importance of the study of folklore in Anthropology especially in the fields of kinship, economics, law, religion.² Richard Bauman quotes with those words that “folklore is a function of shared identity”.³ Malinowski states that “human culture gives its members a definite vision of the world a definite zest of life”.⁴ Robert Redfield opines worldview as “the way of people characteristically looks outward upon the universe”.⁵ According to Clifford Geertz worldview is nothing but the way community thinks, what actually they are, and the concept of nature, of self and of society/community.⁶

Kinship Pattern of Nadars

After the details obtained from the informants in various regions of Southern district of Tamilnadu, it is understood that joint family system gradually declines and extended family system is found among the Nadars at present. As a result of modern education, migration towards town, emerged as a business community, many changes occurred in socio-cultural

values, which have brought about a decline of joint family systems among the Nadars. Basically Nadars' kin group is associated with following categories namely family and lineage. The table given below describes it.

Table 3.1: Marriage and Kinship among Nadars

Family	Lineage
Nattathi Nadars	Karukkupattai Nadars
Primary occupation is related agriculture and trading	Primary occupation is connected with toddy tapping
<i>Koottam</i> is locally known as family is basic unit for marriage and kinship relation	Lineage identified through the term <i>pangali</i> , which means 'sharer'. This is the basic unit for marriage and kinship
Clan members are identified through a family deity at a common shrine	Clan members are identified through a known ancestor and the worship tradition connected with it
Clan members have independent names for each family. As of now, among the Nattathi Nadars there are 63 families are found.	Clan members have patrilineal descent through a known ancestor

Consanguinity and Affine of Nadars

As discussed earlier about the sub-groups within the Nadars in Tamilnadu, they are divided into two major segments: one is as Nadan/Karukkupattai and another one is Nattathi. The above said divisions are observed based on their occupation Palmyra land owners/labors and agricultural group respectively. As the basic division found based on occupation, social association of Nadars are also found as segmental system. For an example, Nadan/Karukkupattai never had such a name for denoting their family as Nattathi Nadars is identified through the family names. Village as family/family deity as marker for identification the group within the Nadan/Karukkupattai whereas Nattathi Nadar follow distinct name for each and every family.

Among the Nadan/Karukkupattai of southern Nadars (Thoothukudi, Tirunelveli and Kanniyakumari districts) village and family deity are seen as an identification criteria for the group. To Nattathi Nadars their names of each and every family decides it for the identification criteria for the group. Thus the criteria for identifying the group are known as agnates and affine

to each and every one. The following list also provides the information about group within the Nadars.

Table 3.2: Kinship groups among the Nattathi Nadars

Agnates (non-marriageable)	Affine (marriageable)
Thiruvazhuthi Nadan, Lakshmana Nadan, Izhava Nadan, Karutha Pillai, Kulasekara Nadan, Kulaiya Nadan, Ilinga Nadan, Savar Nadan, Sitha Nadan, SokkanThiruppappu Nadan, PichaMarthandan Nadan, Vallikutti Nadan, Mappillai Nadan	All others than in the <i>indis</i> list are marriageable
MaruvaiMukkanthar, VendarMukkanthar, Malai Mukkanthar	All others than in the <i>indis</i> list are marriageable
Ennandi, Kallandi, Kooraiyaandi, Pichandi, Porpanmandi, Mannandi, Thollandi	All others than in the <i>indis</i> list are marriageable
Aavathukili, Akkaalai	All others than in the <i>indis</i> list are marriageable
Kandanki, Serankan, Aadumeichi, Aavukkar ar, Allakkar, Pookkizhavar, Kuppa Perumal	All others than in the <i>indis</i> list are marriageable
Nayinaakkutti, Perpethar, Chozhekkiar, Pizhaporuthar, ChozhaKumarar	All others than in the <i>indis</i> list are marriageable
Devalapichai	All others than in the <i>indis</i> list are marriageable
Sathan	All others than in the <i>indis</i> list are marriageable
Nottakkarar, Vedikkarar, KambuVetti, Kaliy ar/Kaliyathithan, Kandarakk ar/Kandarathithan, Vathiyar, Thirukkulothunkan, Sirankar, Ilankozhi, Kanakkar, Savazhai, Veetrintha, Kuravadaiaar, Kurayamichar, Madankavadi, Andarankavadi, IlaiyaNadaiyar, Perumariyan /Perumanadiyan, Sonankiyar, Manachiyar, Kuttiyali, Saravadaian, Nattukku, Vaithan, Samayathar, UdaiyaSithan, Polmadan, Vellali/Villali, Karikkattiyar	All others than in the <i>indis</i> list are marriageable

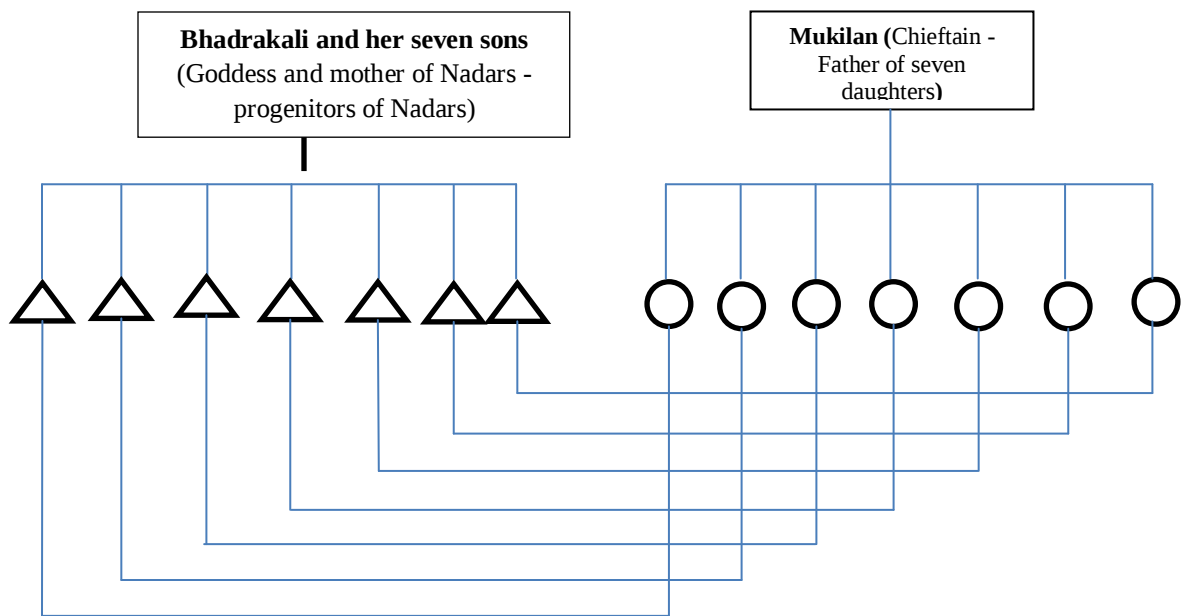
Kinship and Marriage: Reflections in Ethnic Genres

This chapter is dedicated to family, kinship from folklore founding various genres particularly on oral narratives. Oral narratives such as myths, folk ballads, folk songs, folk tales and proverbs have been taken into consideration for the interpretation.

Origin Myth and Kinship

Myth is knowledge of pre-scientific society⁷; Myths are sacred narratives, having the connection with ritual and also associated with religions. Myth becomes a common assets for a group the same is available from the community.⁸ Lauri Honko, a Finnish folklorist defines myth as, “myth, a story of the gods, a religious account of the beginning of the world, the creation, fundamental events, the exemplary deeds of the gods as a result of which the world, nature and culture were created together with all the parts there of and given their order, which still obtains”.⁹ Thus myths emphasize the creation of human, society, animals and landmarks, it also explains the characteristics of human society and animals.¹⁰ This segment on myth and kinship is dealt with origin myth of Nadars which are collected from the field and taken from edited volumes. A myth¹¹ says Bhadrakali, who had taken care the seven sons (latterly known as seven divisions of Nadars) made an arrangements of marriage with daughters of a local chieftain known Mukilan.

Figure 3.1: Marriage Alliance 1

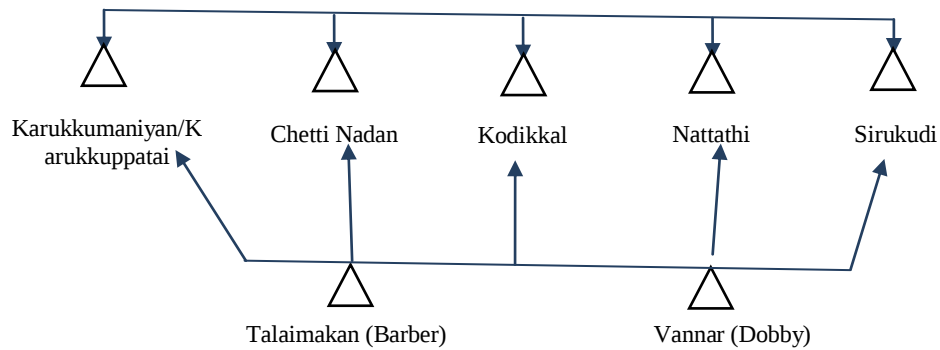


From the above figure it can be understood that all the seven sons of Bhadrakali got married from the same group. As they were all brought up by Bhadrakali, everyone had shown his gratitude towards Bhadrakali by showing various objects and occupation. After seeing all those

offering, mother Bhadrakali, felt happy. After this incident, Bhadrakali named all the sons and made marriage alliance with the daughters of local chieftains.

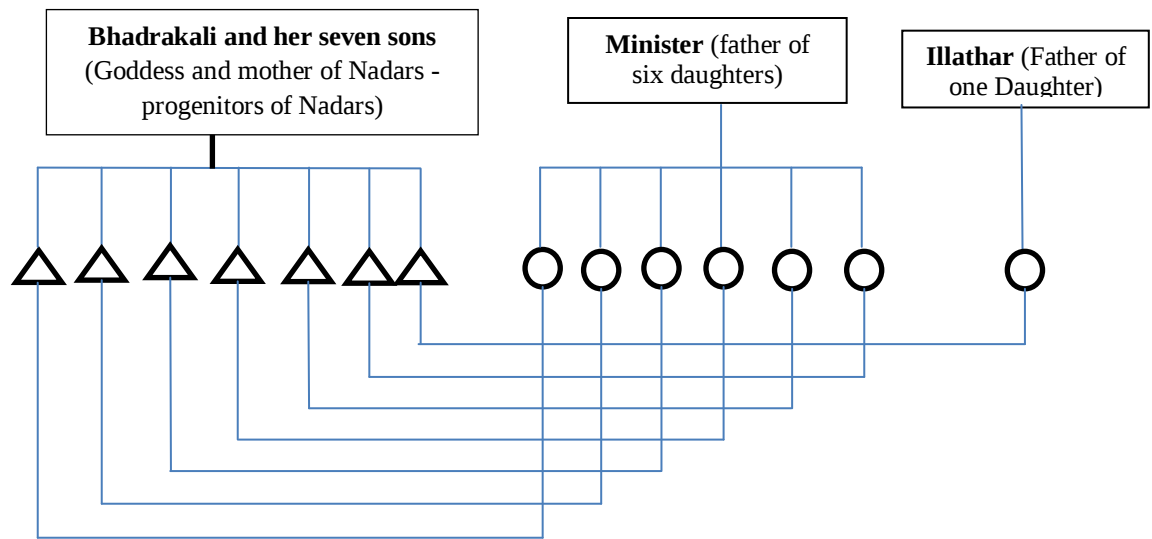
Another version of origin myths of Nadars emphasizes the kin groups within the Nadars.¹² After trampling two of them, they were replaced with the King's son and minister's son by the goddess Bhadrakali. After this relationship first son was known as *Talaimakan* (Barber), second son was known as *dobby*, and others were known as follows

Figure 3.2: Names of Nadars and their Siblings



The source of this origin myths are found in palm leaf manuscripts form of *Bhadrakaliamman/Venkalarajan Kathai* or *Valangai Malai/Valangai Nool*. Origin myths of Nadars provide not only their origin it also gives an account of their migration, occupation, kinship and marriage etc. Among the origin myths of Nadars, marriage is identified as one of the major motif and it has been interpreted for understanding kinship of Nadars. For the understanding purpose, two myths have been taken for the consideration in identifying kinship and marriage of Nadars. Two of them are distinctively differing from one another. One of the myths¹³&¹⁴ says after taking cared by the Bhadrakali, six sons of Bhadrakali got married with the minister's¹⁵ six daughters. The left seventh son got married with *Illathar*¹⁶ girl.

Figure 3.3: Marriage Alliance 2



Kinship and Marriage of Nadars mentioned in the figure shows that among the seven brothers, six were given more importance of getting marriage alliance from the same family, the seventh brother got married with outside the group. The reason for the two dimensions of marriage alliance for the same agnates is noted in their myth that as they were asked to obey the king's order, six were not ready to obey but the seventh was ready to obey the king's order. Having heard this incident Bhadrakali got resented over the King. Then Bhadrakali came to know that it is all because of his minister who gave this idea to the king. Thus Bhadrakali told minister to give his daughters to her sons. But he had only six daughters, after requesting of six sons the seventh brother got girl from the Illathar family.¹⁷ This myth particularly focuses on the division among the Karukkupattai Nadars as *valangai* (right hand caste) and *idangai* (left hand caste). Those who own the palmyra trees are considered as right hand communities and those who draw toddy from the palmyra trees are considered as left hand caste since they are only laboring community working for the other group. The left hand caste as considered low within the Karukkupattai.

In general, all myths say about kinship and marriage of seven brothers. The marriage is arranged as follows: Two myths say that six brothers married the minister's six daughters. Then six brothers requested Bhadrakali to get the seventh brother married. Bhadrakali made an arrangement with Illathar girl for the seventh son. Another two myths reveal that seven brothers

married seven daughters of a local chieftain and the seven daughters of Mukilan. It is also to be noted that the replacement of the elders of the kin of Nadars known as barber and doobby. It shall be taken as the justification for having the community of barber and doobby in every Nadars' settlement. Though both of them (first and second) were trampled by the king, after asking Bhadrakali king and minister were ready to give their sons as the replacement of the trampled sons of Bhadrakali. As the first one was replaced from the King's family, he is known as *Talaimahan*, which means he is the eldest one among the Nadars. He had customary rights of doing all kinds of religion and life cycle ritual done at Nadars family. The second one was replaced from the minister's family known as doobby, who was also one among the resident in a Nadar settlement. Despite both of them had the residence rights in a Nadars settlement, barber role is much prominent with comparable to doobby. Barber is considered as the eldest son (*Talaimahan*) of Nadars. In both the myths one can observe the emergence of hierarchy within the Nadars based on occupation be it barber, doobby are toddy topper who are invariably considered low.

Bhadrakali as mother of Nadars

According to the origin myth of Nadars, Bhadrakali is known as their tutelary deity. Nadars believed that the goddess Bhadrakali has come through their community tree Palmyra tree.¹⁸ She took pity upon the seven brothers (Nadars), who abandoned by the seven virgins. Then she brought them up as her children. The origin myth of Nadars *Valangai Malai*¹⁹ is known as various names such as *Valangai Nool*, *Valangai Malai*, *Valangai Charithram* and Bhadrakaliamman Kathai. It is believed that keeping the palm leaf-manuscript at house and temples is sacred one. The story of *Valangaiyar*/Bhadrakali is being narrated in the form of *Villuppattu* (Bow song tradition) in all *Bhadrakaliamman* temples.

In all Ayya Vazhi temples (it is known as *Pathi*²⁰ and *Nizhal Thankal*²¹ in the local term) the myth is narrated. Every year especially in the month of Tamil *Masi* (February to March) it is narrated in the temples (*Nizhal thankal*). Ayya Vazhi temples in all over Tamil Nadu and Kerala the story is being performed in the form of storytelling in the temples by village people. On the occasion of birth anniversary of "Ayya Vaikundar" this myth narration is being made important roles in all Ayya Vazhi temples.²² Easan Thanku, a village in Kanniyakumari district where a famous Bhadrakaliamman temple is there. During the festival, *Valangai Malai* is performed in

the form of Bow song. The story of *Valangaiyar* must be read from the beginning to the end. It is expected from the bard to sing or narrate the whole lines from palm leaf-manuscripts.²³

Folk Tales and Kinship

Tale tradition is purely oral. As it is repeatedly remembered with addition or changes, there is a chance to find a new storyteller and stories in a culture.²⁴ It is to be noted that analyzing folktales having two distinct methodological steps. They are namely identification of the genre, interpretation of the genre.²⁵ As folk tales are having the tendency to express the exact material through the genre, they are considered as the mirror of human psyche, society as well.²⁶ Stories are adapted to any local and social climate. As they are old and vulnerable, there is a chance for the art creation shaped and carried by various cultures.²⁷

This section on kinship through folk tales, excavate the model by interpreting the folk tales. From the following folk tale, it is found that the hospitality given to son-in-law by a mother-in-law and in a Nadar community.²⁸ A son-in-law went to his mother-in-law's house. As he reached house, she felt frightened. The reason is that nothing was there at home to give to her son-in-law. She did not know what she should do. Finally an idea came to her mind that about boiled paddy on the other side of her neighbor house. She ran away there to take some paddy. As she sat there for a while, paddy was caught in her sari. Then she returned home and tapped the buttocks to release the paddy which were sticking on it. She did it for eight times. As she was pounding the paddy, a crow was flying over the place. She did beat the crow with trunk which was used for pounding. Beaten crow died immediately. She cooked the rice as well as curry of the beaten crow. Before making curry she was searching oil for making it. Now she went to cattle barn to take some cream which came out from the eyes of cow. Now she made a crow curry out. Now she served it to her son-in-law. Happily eating without showing as he knew how these were cooked by her. Then he came back his house. His wife asked how was my mother's hospitality did you like it. He replied that "Yes, others paddy, your mother buttocks, crow meat and cream of eyes of cow". I never expected it.

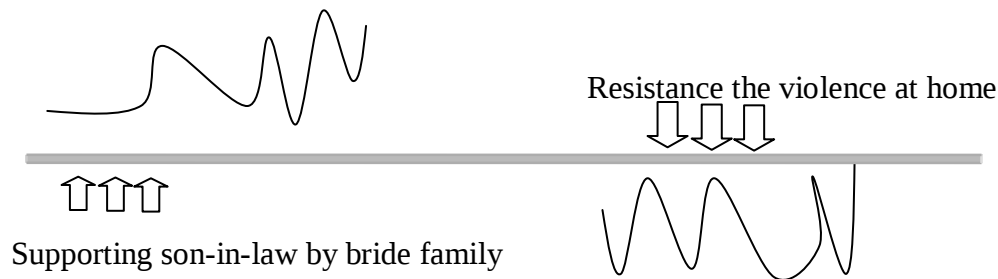
Thus this tale can be interpreted as in the following way 1). At any cost one should respect his/her son-in-law (because he is their daughter's husband thus he is supposed to be respected) 2). Without having anything how it was managed is a sarcastic and strategic moments taken by wife's side as well as husband's side 3). The hospitality of Nadars towards son-in-law has sarcastically been described by husband side or may be from other than the community. It is

to be noted that this folk tale fosters the tension between husband and wife sides. At the same time by not getting solved the issue between bride giver and bride taker, there is a chance of having further of tension prevails in the family.

Another genre of folktale in which information on unresolved issues in a family is found. One day husband said to wife that after our marriage we never met my parents, I was going home. His wife agreed him. It was heavily raining. Heavy flood was on his way to home. He was waiting for until the rain was over. As it was getting drained, at end of time one fish was jumping out from the land. As he was interested in having fish curry, he caught that fish and handed it to his wife for making curry. (See the reference for the full view of tale).²⁹

From the story mother-in-law had given much reputation to her son-in-law. Although her daughter was supposed to be given much importance as her daughter, she gave special attention to her son-in-law. It is observed that son-in-law has to be respected then only daughter can survive. In order to follow that principle, she has exposed her shrewdness without affecting anything to her daughter in future. One can also observe this as strategy to manage the family and guiding strategy. So as not to follow any unwanted values at home, it is told as well as advised to the society or in the family.

Figure 3.12: Support and Resistance Formula at Family



Another interpretation from the genre of folk tale is found that the **jealous of maternal uncle** towards a boy who lost his mother. His maternal uncle was supposed to take care of the boy known as *Karuvatti* life after the mother but maternal uncle refuses it. Thus the boy started working menial jobs near around his village; he was getting some penny amount to survive. Meanwhile his uncle burned all his stuffs including house. He gathered all the ashes and started walking after some time he got golden treasure trove by his fortunate in a forest.³⁰ As maternal came to know about this golden treasure trove, he enquired about the gold. Son-in-law cleverly answered without telling what exactly happened at forest. Maternal uncle also planned to burn

his house and started selling the ashes. But no one was interested in buying ash except scolding the seller. Vexed maternal uncle as he came back from the market, he went and tied his son-in-law to send him away from home. He did so. Finally son-in-law escaped with the help of a shepherd. Meanwhile son-in-law brought all cattle of shepherd to his home. Then he happily lived with enough wealth.

From the tale it is found that after the mother's absence even his maternal uncle also may turn against him. The whole tale is narrated as jealous of maternal uncle and son-in-law cleverness is proved in the story.

The relationship between **mother-in-law and daughter-in-law** is concealed in many folk tales. Most of the motifs are common in explaining the characters. The following observation is given from the folk tales. See the reference for full view of the folk tale.³¹

Table 3.3: Assessment of Individual in Family

Expectation and Notion on bride by Bride taker	If expectation is fulfilled	If expectation is not fulfilled
Mother-in-law demands a daughter-in-law from poor family	If the girl is obedient to mother-in-law, husband; she is branded as good girl by the family	If she is not obedient to husband and his family then she is branded as adamant
Girl from a poor family will listen husband and mother-in-law		

The girl who made married with boy is taken from outside the family. As mother-in-law was fond of having a girl from poor family, it shows that she was seeking a girl who would listen her words. The above said observation derived from the stories collected in the field.

In all the above tales one can find overtly expressed antagonistic relationship between the following pairs:

Mother-in-law X Son-in-law

Mother-in-law X Daughter-in-law

Husband's relatives X Wife's relatives

Husband X Wife

Rich (son) X Poor (daughter-in-law)

All the tales mentioned above represent oppositional didactic relationship. No mediation is found in the tales and hence remains unresolved, ever persisting conflicting relationship. In all the above tales the tensions between these two pairs seem to remain unresolved and persist

within the kin relationship. Even today this opposition is glaring found within the community yet the community survives within this tension.

Indication of Kinship in Ballads/Songs

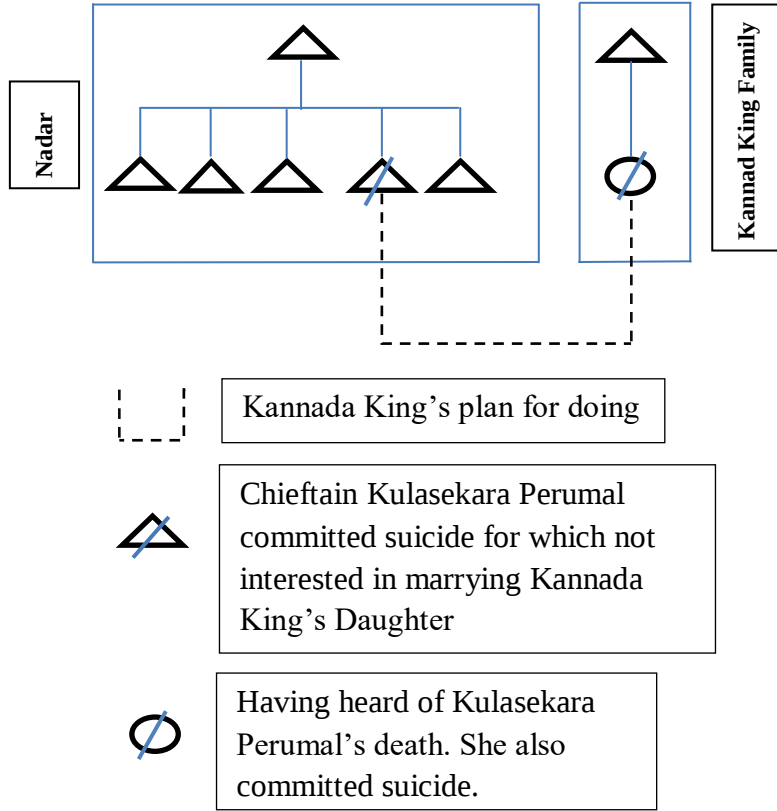
Kinship and family elements are found in verbal arts of Nadars. In particular, verse narratives are having significant role in expressing kinship of Nadars. Verse narratives such as Folk ballad, folk songs are used in this section to be interpreted. Folk ballad is the form of a narrative folk song, which is known by various names in each language. The standard dictionary of folklore says ballad is a story, narrative, ballad is sung, belonged to the folk in content, style, and designation; a ballad focuses on the particular incident, the action moving of itself by dialogue and incident quickly to the end.³² In this section of kinship and marriage, deals folk ballads in order to excavate the kinship elements found in ballads for the interpretation.

1. The Story of Kulasekara Perumal (Ivar Raja)

Kulasekararaja was one among the five brothers and they were chieftains in the southern region of Tirunelveli (region not mentioned in the ballad). A Kannada king (name is not mentioned) invaded south.

As five chieftains were against to him he was not successful in the battle. Daughter of Kannada king fell in love with one among the chieftains of Kulasekara Perumal. After hearing this Kannada king sent a message to Kulasekara Perumal for marriage. As Kulasekara Perumal refused to marry his daughter, resented the Kannada king planned to attack Kulasekara Perumal. By attacking Kulasekara Perumal, he thought that he would surrender to king's wish. But it was not positive to the king. As the result of fighting with Kulasekara Perumal and his four brothers, four of them were killed by Kannadiyan king. Meanwhile Kulasekara Perumal as he had swallowed some amount of diamonds, died soon. The princess having heard of the prince and vow of her father to marry her to him decided to die as Kulasekara Perumal had swallowed the diamonds, she also died.

Figure 3.5: depiction of the story of Kulasekara Perumal

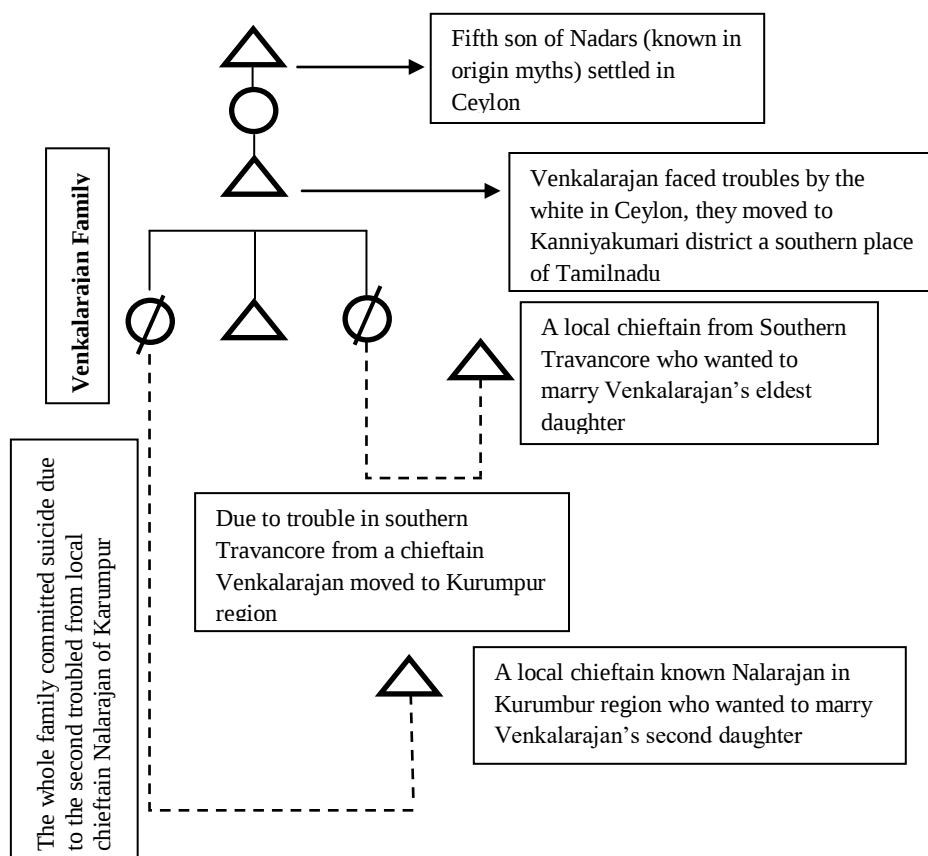


It shows the endogamy nature of Nadars. At the same time chieftains were not interested in others hierarchy over their land as well not as just tax collectors to others. In this ballad, the Kannada king is known as non-native and as he had an interest in controlling the region of chieftains, he tried by providing his daughter in marriage, so that he could influence the land. But he was not successful as the chieftain committed suicide after the loss his brothers in the field.

2. Venkalarajan Ballad

Venkalarajan is traced through myth as he was grandson of one of the seven brothers identified in origin myths of Nadars.

Figure 3.6: Story of Venkalarajan from Folk Ballad



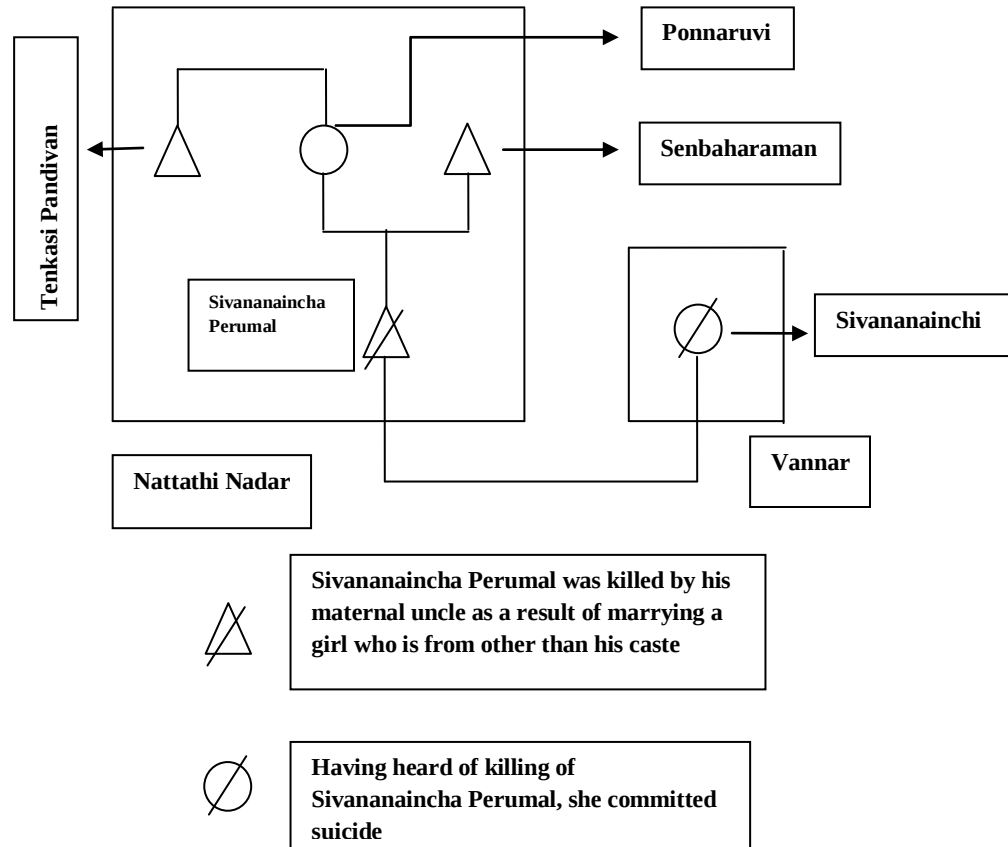
As *Valangai man*³³ got much trouble from a white, he was killed by him. Then his grandson Venkalarajan and his family migrated to south along with his servants. He settled down in the south. There he faced trouble from the local chieftains who sought marriage alliance with his daughters. Since, he denied it; he could not stay in the same place. Finally he and his family migrated to the place called Kurumpur (a village in the present Thoothukudi district). They ended their life at Kurumpur because yet another trouble came from a local chieftain who sought to marry his second daughter.³⁴ It is also to be noted that Venkalarajan family wanted to have a patrilineal system. The same is found through the ballad by interpreting it that daughter's lineage is not primary, but son's lineage is only primary. So, purity of the race lies with son.

3. Sivananaincha Perumal Ballad

Thenkasi Pandiyan³⁵ made marriage alliance for his sister known Ponnuruvi with Shenbakaraman (a Chola clan person) in marriage. Sivanancha Perumal was born to them. As the Tenkasi Pandiyan did not have child, after him there was no one as his descendant. Hence,

Sivananainchan was supposed to take the position after the Tenkasi Pandiyan as his successor. The king was not happy with Sivananaincha Perumal's bride selection from outside the community.³⁶

Figure 3.7: Sivananaincha Perumal Story

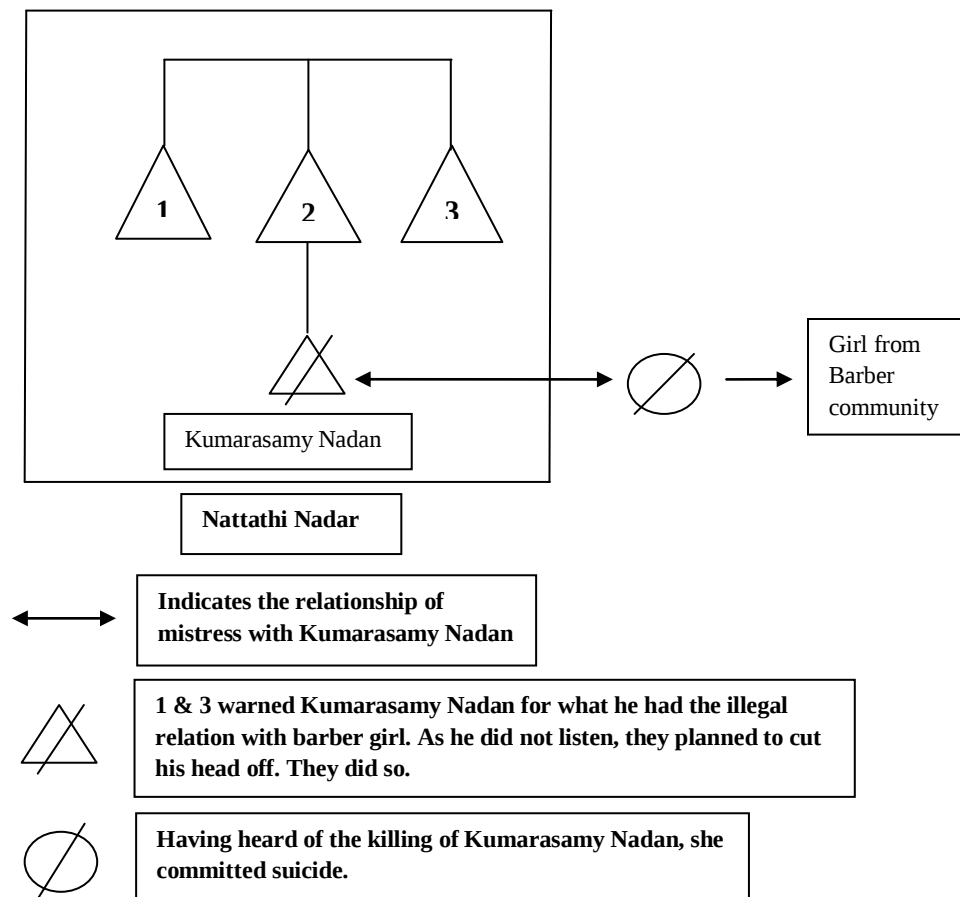


But he did not listen to his maternal uncle (king) at all. He married the *Vannar* (dobby) girl and she was latterly known Sivananainchi. As he got married with Sivananainchi, his uncle killed his son-in-law. Upon hearing about the husband's death Sivananainchi also committed suicide. He is worshiped by the clan known *Vellaali* of Nattathi Nadars.³⁷ Denial of hierarchy is spoken in this ballad. As ballad emphasizes strong sectarian bond, it is told to maintain same status within the group. As Tenkasi Pandiyan was Saivite, he wanted his son-in-law to follow his religion and marry a girl from the same group. But Sivananaincha Perumal has not followed as his maternal uncle's wish.

4. Kumarasamy Nadan Ballad

Kumarasamy Nadan was tax collector to the Nayak rulers.³⁸ Although he got married, he fell in love with a barber girl. His uncles (father's elder and younger brothers) warned him for his disloyalty to his wife. But he did not listen to them. He continued the practice of going to the house of concubine regularly. Then his agnates made a plan to chop off his head. They did so with the help of their servants. At later stage Kumarasamy Nadan's uncles felt guilty for what they had done to his son. To rectify their guiltiness they built a temple for Kumarasamy Nadan. Some of agnates migrated to southern part of Tirunelveli district and some of them settled in Aralvoimozhi, Rajakkamankalam and Kalvilai of Kanniyakumari district.³⁹

Figure 3.8: Family of Kumarasamy Nadan



This story of Kumaraswamy Nadan is narrated in bow song in all Kumaraswamy Nadan temples. Apart from his story, this ballad informs also about the moral life, socio and cultural life of Nattathi Nadars.

From the above ballads one can notice murder or suicide as a common feature in the origin stories. On one hand it suggests that the community wished to maintain purity and on the other, due to circumstances it is forced to amalgamate with the other. Therefore this dichotomous paradigm at the deep structural level persists within the community and perhaps resulted in the antagonist relationships within lineage or *koottam* (family) at the surface level. This feature is more so when the numbers of lineage or *kootam* (family) enter into differential status relationships as seen from the above ballads. The same is being reflected even in the present situation wherein one can notice in the matrimonial columns “caste no bar” tag as long as the status is equal between bride taker and giver. This phenomenon is explained in detail in Chapter V.

Kinship Expressions in Proverbs

The following section deals with proverbs for interpreting the kinship and marriage of Nadars. In general, proverbs ordinarily suggest a course of action or pass a judgment on a situation. Roger D. Abrahams states that “proverbs are short and witty traditional expressions that arise as part of everyday discourse as well as in the more highly structured situations of education and judicial proceedings”.⁴⁰ It is wise one; belongs to a society and it is applied by an individual to a particular situation.⁴¹ From the proverbs it is observed that the reality of kinship relation of Nadars by adopting different tools for analyzing with following titles.

Nadars about their Lineage

Lineage is a term in kinship study which gives a meaning to a corporate descent group whose members can be traced by their genealogical links to a known common ancestor. In other words it can also be taken as the kinship relation between an individual and the individual's ancestors. In terms of lineage, Nadars identify themselves as a joint family system. The extension of a lineage is identified with the following proverbs.

Proverb I

<i>Ottan</i>	<i>kandaal</i>	<i>uravuatru</i>	<i>pokum</i>
Great-great-grandfather	if one sees	relationship	will come to an end

If one has great-great-grandfather, then he may be the last to that generation and he is about to initiate new generation

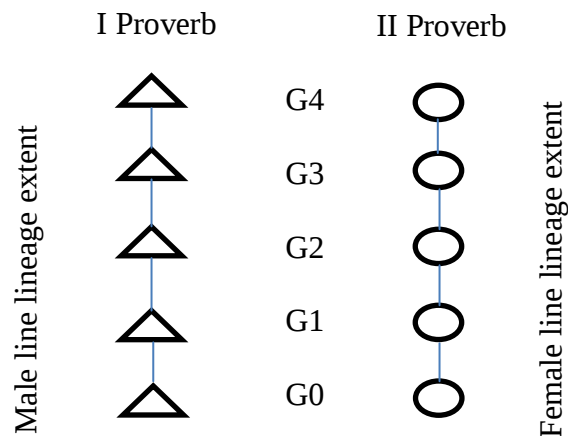
Proverb II

<i>Thaai</i>	<i>petru</i>	<i>Makal</i>	<i>petru</i>	<i>makaludaiyamakal</i>	<i>petru</i>	<i>uravu</i>	<i>Muriyum</i>
Mother	gave birth	daughter	gave birth	daughter's daughter	gave birth	relation	Will end up

As granddaughter of a woman gives birth to a child, that time the woman will be unknown to her granddaughter's daughter. Thus there is no available kinship term to call/address the relatives beyond this.

From the proverbs above said the length of lineage in a family is identified for four generation to the ego.

Figure 3.4: Family/Lineage



First proverb symbolizes that if ego has '*ottan*'⁴² then he is about to start a new generation through his lineage. Beyond *ottan* there is no words to call or term the kinship, at the same it is very rare the relative of *ottan* to be alive. Second proverb also highlights the lineage which is meant as the following: as a mother gives birth to a daughter, then the daughter gives birth, and daughter's daughter also gives birth; now, a new lineage or next generation is started by cutting those entire existing element in the kinship.

The Nature of Parallel cousin relation of Nadars

Proverb III

<i>venumna</i>	<i>sakkai</i>	<i>verileyum</i>	<i>kaachum</i>
If need	Jack fruit	At the bottom	Will give yielding

Jackfruit can also give its yielding at its trunk

The feature of jack-fruit is that giving yield of jack-fruit from any parts of the branches especially at the bottom of the tree. For that, there can't be as special place for giving yielding in its part. As a matter of fact, it is said that yielding/producing from the jack-fruit trees it is symbolically denoted that the demand of harmony among the agnates in the family. The word 'jack-fruit tree' shall be taken to denote the kin groups in a family. Yielding shall also be taken for the consideration of "state of mind" of a family member. The word stem refers the status of "without expectation" a habit is expected from the kin groups. If anyone from the family has the tolerating tendency, then the relationship with kin groups will be going in harmony. Otherwise it is expected to be conflict loaded at all level in the family. If someone wants to have relationship with each other, he/she will certainly follow the harmony for approaching at family. He/she will not do any harm to that family. In order to have good harmony at family in all the way this proverb is told. In short it is identified as "if agnate is interested in having relation with each other, relationship or bond will be maintained".

Proverb IV

<i>aruvakk aaran</i>	<i>oravu</i>	<i>arutherin thaalum</i>	<i>pOvaat hu</i>	<i>sokkaaran</i>	<i>oravu</i>	<i>sountherin thaalum</i>	<i>pOvaathu</i>
Agnate	Bond	Cut	Will not go	Agnates	Bond	Scoop	Will not go

One can never neglect his agnate's relationship by cutting or scooping its roots. It is within it.

'One's own sibling'/ 'immediate sibling' are used for describing agnates among the Nadars of Tamilnadu especially among the Kanniyakumari district. This proverb emphasizes the harmony and bond between the siblings in the family. Although they are own sibling or distant level siblings, their bond cannot be concealed by any other activities. It will always bloom or grow as new whenever they meet. Despite they had quarrel each other, they are brothers. That

relationship has special affinity toward one and other. No one can underestimate it. In order to expose the strong bond among the agnates, this proverb might have been created. From the above said discussion it is highlighted that agnate relationship is fixed one they will never go away from the bond.

Proverb V

<i>Sethaalum</i>	<i>sokkaran</i>	<i>kadakkaaran</i>
Though dies	agnates	debtor

Despite a death of an agnate, he is indebted to him

Agnates in the family has very important role to play in kin group of a family as well as in society. They need in all the vents of the family namely birth to funeral. A family's strength is measured by the quantity of the agnates in the family. Even today the strength of one's agnates is well appreciated by other families. Thus quantity of agnates will be the indicator of the family's strength. A function at family will be more harmony when agnates' number is increased. So, that relation is decided by the birth in the same clan. Then it is recognized during the agnate's marriage. Finally it gets rewarded all by the relatives. So, agnate can never think to detach his membership in that clan. Knowingly or unknowingly he is included as an agnate role in the family by his birth in the same clan. That relation of agnate relation is not only used for getting rewarded by the fellow agnates, it is a ritual and also has the ritualistic status in a family to honor his agnate to his agnate in the funeral by providing/sharing his contribution of cloths or cash. It is understood as the token of respect as his agnate feels it even at last days in the earth. If anyone forgets or does not come for honoring his agnate at funeral, the family and the society will not respect him. By having this practice at family and the society, he becomes an obligatory responsible person towards his agnate's family till he is alive. So, wherever he lives, his representation should be made to equate his obligatory responsibility, either by his son when he is absent. By doing this ritual he is relieved from the obligatory responsibility from his elder/younger agnates. Though his agnate dies, his indebt is supposed to repay by doing his customary rights at his funeral ceremony.

Proverb VI

<i>Panambazhathaiyum</i>	<i>pankaaliyaiyum</i>	<i>paathu</i>	<i>vettu</i>
Palm fruit	agnate	take care	cut

One should be very careful when he cuts palm fruit and cuts off his agnates bond with others.

The term '*pankali*' is described as men of the same lineage, who can be traced their descent through males alone, to a common ancestor. The term literally means those who share customary rights in a family the term derived from the verb *panku* means 'to share'. The word '*panambalam*' is known as 'palm fruit'. It is advised to the person who cuts the palm fruit should be very careful before cutting the palm fruit. Palm fruit may have two to three nuts together, as a single fruit within that two to three nuts are seen also it is compared with a family and siblings of the family. People used to eat the palm fruit by chiseling it. The process of chiseling the palm fruit has to be attempted in a very cautious manner. Otherwise person's hand/fingers may be wounded. Likewise an agnate is one among them at family in clan. As he lives one among the crowd of clan, the bond among the agnates are seen as a stronger one than any other relation in a family. The person who isolates himself from his agnates will only be affected. Despite the bitterness and disappointments among the agnates, one should have the tendency to tolerate it. That is why the society advises its members that if someone finds faults always, then he/she cannot have harmony with anyone. It is advisable to follow tolerance with agnates, and so to be maintained till the end. Through this genre it is symbolically instructed to the other members of a family that the relationship between agnates should be handled with care.

Proverb VII

<i>Valarra</i>	<i>varaikkum</i>	<i>annan</i>	<i>thambi</i>	<i>valarnthaannaa</i>	<i>pankaali</i>
grow	Till	elder brother	Younger brother	after grown	agnate

One can be an elder or younger to someone till he is getting matured⁴³; when he is matured from then onwards he is known as an agnate of his relatives.

With the passage of time individual differences appear and set apart members of the same family. 'grown/growing' or 'matured' indicates that the person is attaining the age of marriage.

Generally Nadars of Tamilnadu he/she is giving importance to maturity. Thus getting matured is the status and stage for considering one's marriage. A new family is originated when a marriage is occurred. A male becomes the head of the family after the marriage. Now he strengthens his clan by adding his as the strongest one among the family. He gets a chance to produce an agnate for the next generation. That is why this proverb says till time of marriage, brothers are known as sibling; after the marriage they are known as agnates. In short, brothers (elder and younger) can go together, sleep together till they get married. But after the marriage they are agnates by having incorporated new affine bond with them.

Proverb VIII

<i>annan</i>	<i>thambi</i>	<i>renduperume</i>	<i>jenma</i>	<i>pakaivarkal</i>
Elder	younger	both	life	enemies

Elder brother and younger brother in a family are born enemies

Though brothers are born to a same mother, their sense is different, their taste is different, their selection may be different and their whole life style will be different. From childhood onwards they are grown up with different taste in terms of their needs and circumstances. Each of them knows about their strengths and weaknesses. If any sharing happens in the family elder may get more than younger or sometimes younger may get more than the elder. Sharing could be properties of parents or any other earning by the brothers themselves. So, these things can easily separate the brother as well as their link with the family in course of time. Thus elder and younger brothers are birth enemies.

Proverb XI

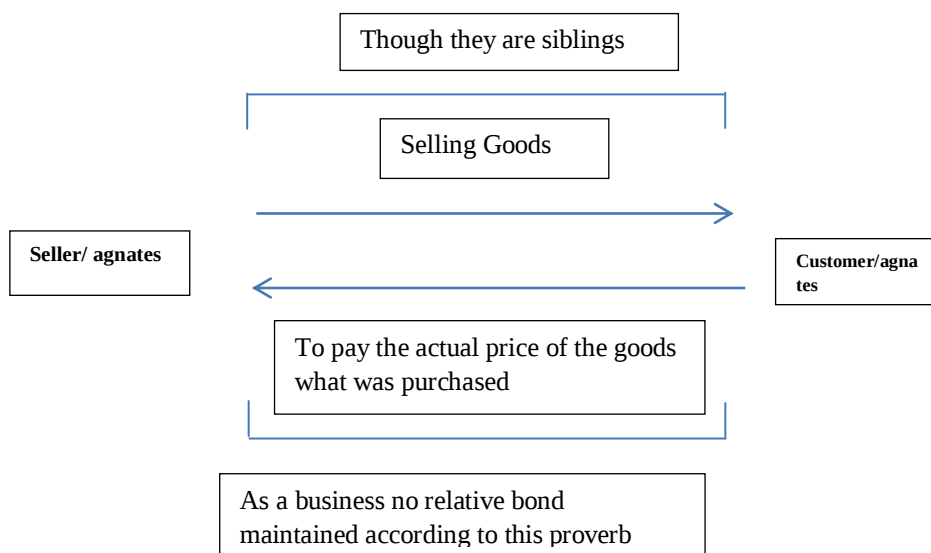
<i>Annan</i>	<i>annanthaan</i>	<i>akkaanikku</i>	<i>kaasu</i>	<i>kodu</i>
Elder brother	is elder	palm juice	cash	pay

Even though he is an agnate (brotherhood) to the man who is owning the shop, he is obliged to pay for the materials he purchased

This proverb says that if a person comes for having palm juice, though he is relative to the person who sells the palm juice, he is supposed to pay the money for the drink. He cannot

say that I will give it on some other day. The seller is also the climber so he needs money to meet his family expenditure. If the person manages to pay later, seller may feel sad about the deed. Although customer is brother/sibling to the seller also it is the responsibility to pay the actual amount of the product. Thus it is advised to the people, that when we do business, it should be a business way. He must not use his emotional role by enrolling his relatives in that. Relatives are relatives at family and societal level. But they are just customer to one's business. Thus one should follow in order to have honest and good profession.

Figure 3.9: Depiction of Parallel Cousin Relation of Nadars



It is extracted from the parallel cousin's role in a family among the Nadars is that if anyone wants to have alliance within the group; it is advised to maintain the relationship good. Thus, the above dealt proverbs stress on harmony of neighbor. The same is reiterated by telling through proverbs to recommend the community and family to follow/having relationship within.

Importance of Father in a family

Proverb X

<i>Uppillaavittal</i>	<i>theriyum</i>	<i>uppin</i>	<i>arumai</i>	<i>appanillaavittal</i>	<i>Theriyum</i>	<i>appan</i>	<i>arumai</i>
If salt not there	will know	salt	excellence	Father not there	Will know	father	excellence

The preciousness of salt is realized when there is no salt; excellence of father is realized when he is not alive.

When children do not listen/obey their parents that time the above proverb is told. Sometime relations will also tell to the children especially boys, when they are not obeying parents especially father.

Two meanings are hidden in this proverb. One is the importance of the salt in the kitchen; and another one is importance of father in a family or to a son. When there is no salt in the food, then only the need of salt or the relevance of salt will be notified to all. Like that when son or daughter, especially to son, he/she will realize the need when there is a need for father in the places such as family functions (marriage, children's function), moral support.

Father	=	Salt
Father's Kinship Bond at Home	=	Culinary Practice at home

Father's role cannot be replaced by any other kinship as like salt cannot be replaced by any other objects in cooking. Thus father's role and his position in family is equivalent to adding salt in food.

Mother as origin of all

Proverb XI

<i>Petra</i>	<i>thaai</i>	<i>sethaal</i>	<i>petha</i>	<i>appan</i>	<i>sithappan</i>
Gave birth	mother	dies	gave birth	father	uncle ⁴⁴

Father may behave as like uncle when one's mother is not alive

Here two kin roles are mentioned through this proverb. One is father's role in a family; another one is the role and limitations of father's younger brother towards his agnate family.

Father's younger brother role in family is very limited. He cannot give full support to his elders' brother family when he has his own family. He does not need to be taken care of his eB's children when he is having his own family. Although he is asked by somebody, he cannot be forced to do duty towards his brother's family. Like that where mother is not there in a family child upbringing will be different and father's duty also cannot be controlled. His behavior towards children will be like as a third person. It emphasizes the mother's significance in a family.

Proverb XII

<i>Theroda</i>	<i>mudinchathu</i>	<i>thirunaalu</i>	<i>thaayodu</i>	<i>mudinchathu</i>	<i>pirantha</i>	<i>veedu</i>
Car	Ends	Festival	Mother	Ends	Birth	Place or house

Festival comes to an end with Car procession; as like that birthplace of a girl comes as last visit when mother is not alive

This proverb emphasizes the changing pattern and uncertainty in and around the village and family. It has two parts. First part says about village festival is ended with car procession. Second part says daughter's affiliation to her mother is detached as she is getting married. Car is more important and auspicious one in the village festival. Like that, customary practices in family freed from the rights to be a part in the home place for daughter. For daughters (females) if her mother is alive, then she can visit her birth place along with her husband at any time. If her mother is not alive then the chances of visiting her mother's house or birth place is not possible at all. Once a girl is getting married, her relationship with her birth place is almost cut by having new relation of husband lineage. It is understood as henceforth all the things will be done through the husband. This is how this proverbs emphasizes the uncertainty situation occurred in a family when daughter is getting married.

The role of Maternal Uncle

The following discussion taken from ethnic genres criticize maternal uncle positive as well as negative. They are identified as follows in respect to maternal uncle, jealous of maternal uncle, maternal uncle as slave.

Proverb XIII

<i>Thaaimaaman</i>	<i>kitteyaa</i>	<i>kulam</i>	<i>kothiram</i>	<i>pesuvathu</i>
Maternal uncle	To him	family	clan	telling

One should not pose his family's name to his maternal uncle.

The Aforesaid proverb emphasizes that there is nothing to be unknown to a maternal uncle. As he is elder in a family, he knows everything than the children at home. So, no one needs to ask him to tell for small things to be answered by him. And also mother and maternal uncle are from same side of a clan. So he is more important in a family next to the mother. As he knows all about life and mother's and father's lineage, he is getting respect from both families. And also, he has prime role in rituals, kin relation in a family. Thus he has enough rights to hold position in a family of his sister. That is why he has to be given much respect than others in all events.

Maternal Uncle = Motherhood

Proverb XIV

<i>Pennai</i>	<i>koduttha</i>	<i>maaman</i>	<i>kannai</i>	<i>koduttha</i>	<i>kadavul</i>
Bride	gave	uncle	eye	gave	god

The maternal uncle who gave his daughter in marriage is equivalent to the god who gave eyes to us

From above said proverb it is observed that the maternal uncle who has given his daughter to a man in marriage considered as gift given by god. And he has given eyes not his daughter. This proverb symbolically tells that girl is given as the organ of body as equal to eyes. If brain functions properly then it will reflect in healthy eyesight. The brain is most vital organ, allowing living complex lives. As like that, a woman at family is considered as eyes in human body.

Proverb XV

<i>Ammanum</i>	<i>marumakanum</i>	<i>oru</i>	<i>veettukku</i>	<i>aal</i>	<i>adimai</i>
Maternal uncle	son-in-law	a	to house	person	slave

The maternal uncle and the son-in-law are the slaves of a house

The aforesaid proverb says that maternal uncle and the son-in-law both are slaves to a family. When the boy marries his maternal uncle's daughter, from there onwards he is considered as one of their sons. He may not get many compliments from the family. As far as family is concerned, if any new girl or boy comes from outside the family they would get certain respects and values from the newly joined family. If the boy or girl already known by the family they would not get much compliments from the family. It shows that as maternal uncle is getting compliments from the family, son-in-law will also be getting it. If a son-in-law stays at his mother-in-law's place which means the place of wife, he will be treated as like as what his maternal uncle is being treated at his home. It is understood that if a person visits occasionally to a relative house, then he/she will be considered as guest and precious object for the family members. But being a family member one will get nominal privilege as what should get as a family member. In that way if a son-in-law stays permanent at wife's house, he will also be treated as par with his father-in-law/ maternal uncle.

Others about Nadars' occupation

Proverb XVI

<i>Shanan</i>	<i>karuppatti</i>	<i>thinnathu</i>	<i>aruthi</i>
Shanan	palm jaggery	would eat	sure

It is sure that a Nadar would certainly eat the Palmyra jaggery

It is true that a Nadar will certainly eat palm-jaggery. This community has special affection towards this eatery of sweet. As palm juice and toddy tapping is the traditional occupation of this community, it has the chance to touch it by having at house.

Proverb XVII

<i>Arunkadal</i>	<i>povorum</i>	<i>karumbanai</i>	<i>eruvorum</i>	<i>thirumbi</i>	<i>vanthaal</i>	<i>vakai</i>
Sea	Fishing	palm tree	climbing	returns	come back	May not be back

It will be fine for them to come back home to the people who are doing the profession of fishing and palmyra climbing

It is more dangerous as well challenging job for climbing Palmyra tree and fishing in sea. Anything may occur amidst the fishing in sea as well as climbing the tree. Fisher folk at sea and climber at the top of the tree will be facing natural disaster. If they overcome that then only they can survive and return home. So, both the occupation are considered as challenging profession by the people.

Proverb XVIII

<i>Appanai</i>	<i>ariyaatha</i>	<i>ooru</i>	<i>aaralvaaimozhi</i>
Father	unknown	village	Aralvoimozhi

The village of Aralvoimozhi does not know father

It must have been told for the reason of occupation predominately seen in the region of Aralvoimozhi by the nearby villages. The natural condition of palm juice tapping occupation is systematically practiced by the climbers. As they have to go early in morning. They will only return after ten or eleven in the morning. After that, they go at evening also to maintain the materials at top of the tree for tapping juice. So, one child may not be able to see his father in proper time as other community child has the opportunity. This is how this proverb may have been created by the other community people.

Proverb XIX

<i>Maanaattukku</i>	<i>ponavanu m</i>	<i>pizhaithaan am</i>	<i>matt ai</i>	<i>koottathukku lle</i>	<i>kidant ha</i>	<i>Naayu m</i>	<i>pizhaithatha am</i>
To Manadu	who went	survived	bat	A mass of bats	laid	Dog	survived

Man could survive who went to Manadu and the dog could also survive which laid at the mass of bats

If a Palmyra tree-climber goes to a place known Manadu, he and his family will get lot of income by palm juice and toddy tapping. Palmyra climber when he stays, he keeps a dog with him for making palm jaggery; he needs to fire woods. So, he has to keep crowd of fire woods. As it will be looking a form in heaps, it will be a place for hiding to rat, wild lizard, garden lizard, and squirrels in the crowd of fire woods. What happens naturally the dog will have the opportunity to capture and eat them. This is how this proverb might have been created on seeing this life style.

Proverb XX

<i>Oorichaa m</i>	<i>kallu</i>	<i>uthichaalaa m</i>	<i>shaanaat hi</i>	<i>Vathichaam</i>	<i>kallu</i>	<i>varandaalaa m</i>	<i>shanaathi</i>
More quantity	juice	risen	Nadar woman	Less quantity	juice	dried	Nadar woman

She rose high when her yielding is more; she became stale when her yielding is less

This proverb emphasizes the Nadar woman's character in two important points. One is during the time abundance of the wealth, another one is during lack of wealth. It is compared with the profession of selling palm juice. Generally Nadar women works involved in making palm jaggery, basket making, mat weaving in cot, selling palm juice, tender palm root etc. It is to be noted in this proverb that the abundance of production of palm juice from the Palmyra is appreciated and will be an asset to the climber and his family. By selling the juice family will get enough money to meet their expenses if they get more than what they expected, instability of patience will be noticed. The same has been mentioned and explained in the proverb form. But during the time of lack of palm juice, climber's wife will have to work hard and need more patience to get the wealth to meet family expenses. In order to explain these characteristics, people other than Nadars might have created it.

Proverb XXI

<i>Sanaanukku</i>	<i>Yeraiyile</i>	<i>oru</i>	<i>puthi</i>	<i>irankaiyila</i>	<i>oru</i>	<i>puthi</i>
To Shanar/Nadar	While climbing up	a	mind	While coming down	a	mind

A Nadar will certainly have different speculation while Palmyra climbing up and climbing down

The traditional occupation of Nadars is tapping palm juice from Palmyra tree. It is bound to climb a tree two to six times in a day in mandatory for the Palmyra tree climbers. It will not have much effect when a climber gets enough quantity of juice from his work. When it does not happen naturally he thinks what to be done for the lack of product, do I need to have climbed over one or two more Palmyra tree. This is how his thinking will go according to the yielding of the day.

A healthy climber can earn two to three tin of palm juice. A single tin will have 12.5 liter of juice. So if there is two to three tin it will be around 25 liter to 37.25 liter of palm juice. Sometime selling of palm jiggery is getting income more than the selling of Palmyra juice. So most of the climbers would decide it for making palm jiggery from its juice. One can earn 10kg of palm jiggery out of twenty five liter of palm juice. When one is earning minimum 10 kg of palm jiggery then only he will be joyful at his family. If not, he will keep on thinking about the next possibilities. That is the reason this proverb tells that the thinking of climber will be different with the comparison of climbing up and climbing down. It happens also that some time the climber may think about the less amount of juice but he may get abundance of palm juice. Thus his scarcity of wealth will be equated by having the large quality of juice.

Proverb XXII

<i>panai</i>	<i>yeriyaavathu</i>	<i>pillaiyai</i>	<i>kappathuvan</i>
Palm	by tree climbing up	girl	would save

He would certainly save the parent/his family by his profession of Palmyra climbing

In those days people used to tell to a parent who has male child, that he would certainly save the parent/his family by his profession of Palmyra climbers.

Here the meaning is that though he has the toddy tapping as his occupation he will save his family. Actual meaning of this proverb is that community recognizes his occupation and believes him. When family is seeking a groom for their bride they found that one toddy tapper. So, they come to a decision that they need not worry about the grooms (who has the toddy tapping occupation) if we gave our girl to him, he can save his family. Here toddy tapper and toddy tapping are emphasized for the giving importance to the groom's occupation. Before getting married groom should have one profession. If the groom has profession then one he is able to provide or lead family in wealthy and healthy way.

Proverb XXIII

<i>Sanaan</i>	<i>echila</i>	<i>karuppukkatti</i>	<i>sarkkarai</i>	<i>vellam</i>	<i>uzhavan</i>	<i>echila</i>
Shanan	saliva	palm jaggery	sugar	sugar jaggery	farmer	saliva

Palm jaggery is defiled by a Nadar saliva and sugar by that of ploughman

Here saliva indicates their occupations. As far as Nadar community is concerned, it has been doing toddy tapping for the last several decades. Though people do this profession today, many of toddy tappers started to give up it. For making palm jaggery one needs to have toddy sap. Toddy sap is obtained from the palm tree. Tapper extracts it from the spathe of palms. To get one pot of toddy sap one needs to wait half day. That sap will fall as drop by drop from the spathe of palm. Then this toddy sap will go for boiling. After that it will be made as palm jaggery. As a result of boiling toddy sap, we will get semi solid kind of product out of it. Then it is poured in the mold (according to the palm jaggery size) to get the palm jaggery.

As mentioned, for the palm jaggery preparation, sugar jaggery is also prepared in the same method. For palm jaggery we need to have toddy sap, which will extract from the palm trees. Whereas sugar jaggery is obtained from the sugarcane and it is cultivated in the land as like paddy. Sugar juice is made from sugarcane and then it goes for boiling. Once this process gets over semi solid sugarcane juice is poured in the mold (according to the jaggery size) to get the sugar jaggery. So, to indicate this drop of toddy sap or sugarcane juice with saliva, this proverb may have been made by the caste people.

Sister is as primacy of all kinship

Proverb XXIV

<i>Akkaal</i>	<i>irukka</i>	<i>varaiyilum</i>	<i>machan</i>	<i>uravu</i>
Sister	be there	till	brother-in-law	relation

Until sister is alive the relationship of brother-in-law will be maintained

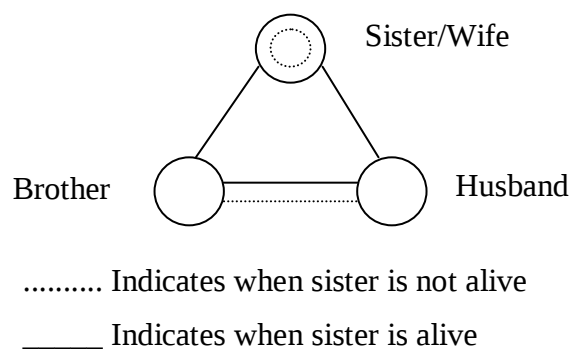
Proverb XXV

<i>Akkaa</i>	<i>irukkaannaa</i>	<i>machan</i>	<i>uravu</i>	<i>undu</i>
Sister	if there	brother-in-law	relation	there

If sister is there then there will be a brother-in-law

Above said proverbs state the same meaning which emphasize about brother-in-law relationship. This proverb emphasizes two relations, one is sister; another one is brother-in-law. To call or address these terms one needs a parallel cousin relation. Her brother is considered for the parallel relation. Brotherhood is appreciated by honoring his brother-in-law as well as sister. Thus this is given more valuable or honoring towards the brother-in-law. Inherently these proverbs emphasize the relation between brother and brother-in-law only will continue till the sister (to brother), wife (to husband) alive in a family. In other words culturally it is advised that a brother to sister will be term a maternal uncle to his sister's children. Maternal uncle will be given a status of fatherly figure to the children of his sister. Mutual relationship is maintained only when brother and brother-in-law relation moves in harmony in the family. On the other hand, wife's brother will be a bridge between the husband families. In order to make it live in a family, the relation of husband and wife should be maintained popularly. Otherwise there will be negative role taken place to wife's and husband's family. If sister is not alive (due to her death), then there will be no position to have bridge over between husband and wife families. So, from husband side wife/sister of brother is considered as a significant one; from wife/sister of brother is given a cultural position to have further doings at sister's family. It is also to be noted that in due course of time, the relationship between brother and brother-in-law shall be stood on the basis of their harmony towards the issues in the family. The above said description can be illustrated as below;

Figure 3.10: Sister as primacy of all Kinship



Sister or wife relationship is the connecting relationship of blood relatives as well as affine relatives. If sister is alive then brother's bond with sister, mother's bond with his daughter, husband with wife, husband's family connection with wife's family will be in the active manner.

If sister or wife is not alive, the bond between sister with her family; sister/wife with her husband family gets cut off partially. Culturally it is understood that the family does not have ground to deal with any of the family.

Proverb XXVI

<i>Arisi</i>	<i>koduthu</i>	<i>athai</i>	<i>veettil</i>	<i>thinkanumaa</i>
Rice	gave	aunt's ⁴⁵	house	Should one eat?

One needs not to give rice to have a dinner at his aunt's house

Proverb XXVII

<i>Arisi</i>	<i>koduthu</i>	<i>akkaa</i>	<i>veettil</i>	<i>thinkanumaa</i>
Rice	gave	sister	house	Should one eat?

Should one give rice to have a dinner at his sister's house

Athai means FZ/MBW to a son-in-law. *Akkaa* means eZ to a brother. In a family especially in Nadars though they are Hindu and Christian maternal uncle role is welcome in all the life cycle ritual. Mother's brother role is understood as '*nallappan*' (first father). And also it is given importance to the son-in-law in a family.

Here these two proverbs emphasize the importance of maternal uncle, son-in-law and their privilege at their sister and FZ/MBW house.

'*arisi koduthu*' (giving rice) to the FZ/MBW and to sister. To a son-in-law, maternal uncle it is enough to visit the FZ/MBW house and sister house respectively. They need not bring anything to their relative house.

Thus it is understood that privilege should utilized and it is an obligation to the opponent side to receive the invitees.

<u>Athai</u> FZ/MBW	<u>Son-in-law</u> BS(ws)/DH(ws)
<u>Akka (sister)</u> eZ	<u>Maternal uncle/brother</u> B (eB/yB) – MB (to the children of <i>akka</i>)

Athai would think as our son-in-law has come and same kind will be by *akka* my brother (elder or younger) has come to my home. People say that in our community one needs not to bring rice or any things to be cooked at *athai* or *akka* house. It is a privilege to a person for having dinner at *athai* or *akka* houses. We need not to show ourselves as foreign to the family.

As the person more familiar and relative in nature, he is allowed to have privilege like having dinner at the respective place. If food and hospitality is given then the relationship with *athai* or *akka* is understood as cordial relationship and son-in-law and brother are important in family.

But it is also to be noted that house of aunts like *sithi* (MyZ/FyBW) *periyamma* (MeZ/FeBW) will be the issue of having cordial relationship with other persons is always questionable. One cannot enter into the house of aunts of *sithi* and *periyamma* as he enters into the house of *athai* and *akka*.⁴⁶

It is reflected from the above seen figure that the harmony between consanguine and affine. Father's sister and elder sister are seemed to be same level as considered to father and brother. Providing hospitality is appreciated in all the culture by the human behaviors.

Father's Sister	=	Brother's Sister
(FZ)	=	(eZ)

This bond will never be able to vanish from the kinship of Nadars until the notion of brother and sister bond questioned. In those two houses, in which brother or son-in-law can enter and have the privilege of getting hospitality rather than any other kinship in a family.

Son-in-law in a family

Proverb XXVIII

<i>Mathi</i>	<i>mayanki</i>	<i>maappillaiyai</i>	<i>'makkaa'</i> ⁴⁷	<i>entru</i>	<i>kooppittaalaam</i>
Values	without knowing	to son-in-law	<i>makkaa</i> ⁴⁸	say	called

As she forgets about son-in-law who is nearest to her, she calls him as *makka*

Proverb XXIX

<i>Mappillai</i>	<i>Kathai</i>	<i>vittathile</i>	<i>kanchiyile</i>	<i>uppu</i>	<i>poda</i>	<i>maranthaalaam</i>	<i>Kolavudaichi</i>
Son-in-law	story	narrated	gruel	salt	to put	forgot	Mother-in-law

After having the conversation with her son-in-law, she forgets to put salt in the food

Mother would be very happy when she gets a good husband for her daughter. So, she would share it to nearby her neighbors. Then her neighbor would say that “as she gets the threshold, she is exposing to all people about her son-in-law”.

Among these two proverbs first one indicates, one is not in the position of having consciousness; second one indicates, interestingly listening the words of son-in-law, so, she (mother-in-law) has forgotten to add salt in the rice.

In the concern of meaning of these proverbs are understood as identically one. Nevertheless, first proverb is about a mother-in-law who pays respect to her son-in-law at every time. She uses the word '*makka*'. '*Makka*' the word denotes as dear friend in the region of the villages of Kanniyakumari, Tirunelveli and Thoothukudi districts.

It is understood that the relationship between mother-in-law and son-in-law in a family is as respectful and mutual relationship with the son-in-law and his family.

Nadars View on Sister-in-law

Proverb XXX

<i>annan</i>	<i>kitta</i>	<i>aar</i>	<i>masam</i>	<i>irunthalum</i>	<i>anni</i>	<i>kitta</i>	<i>arainazhihai</i>	<i>irukka</i>	<i>akuma?</i>
Elder	near	six	month	be there	sister-in-law	near	<i>arianazahikai</i> ⁴⁹	To be	will be able

Staying himself for six months is possible with a brother, but it is not possible at all for while with his sister-in-law

Although one can live six months with an elder brother, it is impossible to stay with his brother's wife for a while.⁵⁰ It means how relationship should be maintained with the brother's wife. By using this kind of proverbs community tries to regulate the moral values and maintain the taboo over the interest of desires towards sister-in-law in the society.

View on relatives

Proverb XXXI

<i>Thoorathu</i>	<i>thanneer</i>	<i>thaakathukku</i>	<i>uthavaathu</i>
Distance	Water	For quenching thirsty	Will not use

The water available in far will never be used to quench thirsty for all the time

By explaining it in literal way, it emphasizes that if someone feels thirsty at the place; in this cannot get any drinking water, finally he would accept the salty water, and he will certainly have it. Something is better than nothing. More like that though he is enemy to oneself, he will somehow help in needy time than the fellow relative living far away. It is to be noted that the need of kin at need of help in a family. Thirsty is known as need or any demand in a family. The availability of water in far is related with kin live far away from the person's place. If any person

meets any issues, then he definitely needs support in any form. In case the relatives are very far from the actual place, then it is better to ask enemy to help him out. Although he is enemy, one should not hesitate to ask for help from one when he is in the need of help.

Slur on Nadars

Among the Nadars (most of the agricultural land lords) there is a phenomenon that selling the first quality of paddy which they get in their field and they will use only low quality rice to cook. *Muttaiyaivitthu Azhuvuna meen vaangina Kathai* – getting rotten fish by selling of a fresh egg. Rotten fish is bought by selling country hen's eggs.

This saying is told among the fisher folk of Kanniyakumari district. These two events show us that by selling quality resources one will get enough wealth. From that wealth one can buy a cheap and best to live. In addition to that he/she is also got some amount of money as a result of selling the quality materials. Here the outcome of selling is understood as earning, getting something as well. In other words it is the process of selling/business the products at home.

Proverb XXXII

<i>Oora</i>	<i>Oora</i>	<i>thanni</i>	<i>korinalum</i>	<i>oothanaari</i>	<i>Karankaadu</i>
Draw	Draw	Water	Take	dried	Karankadu

Despite the Karankadu is drawn water more and more from its sources, it always seems to be a dried

Karankadu, a village located in the western part of Kanniyakumari district.⁵¹ This whole village of Karangadu has full of red soil. Neither well nor bore water we cannot find a pure water for drinking. Water will be available for some time thereafter full of orange colour water is getting leaked from the fountain (well or bore well). So, getting drinking water is big task to them. Even though they have any guest for them they would tell them to use water with care. The tastes of water will also not that much better. Outsiders would never be interested in asking water from Karankadu. One thing is that water is not good and another one is that scarcity of water. Though they get enough water, which would not be useful for quenching thirsty or any other edible purpose. That is the thing whenever water is coming people collect it soon.

Naturally the physical location of the village Karankadu is located in elevated area when compared to other villages. So, one cannot easily get water as others get water naturally. When

water is substantial level, then only people can do their life cycle without any distraction. Water is determined as yardstick for all the progress in life cycle when water is considered omnipresent in all our life needs. Thus the need is decided based on water and its availability. When it is being low level, others started criticizing the present availability of the source. It is also reflected on marriage and to denote the characters of the local. So, others to indicate and mocking of Karankadu use this 'phrase' with others or to the Karankadu people.

Kinship Expressions in Ritual

A **ritual** which speaks about the maternal uncle's role in family is ritual conducted for new born baby at family. If a child seems to be getting tired by not holding the child properly, aforesaid ritual is conducted. Sometime new born baby given to the child who is three years old may be facing this tiredness problem. It comes because of others who are not properly carrying the child and kiss and other affection activities are also taken with forcefully in his/her cheek. So, he/she receives the whole weight of the person. Now it became as a burden to him/her. This tiredness is known as *baaram* in local term. To cure this problem family takes a practice called *baaram pothal* (to get rid of pain).

Sign for the tiredness

1. Child will be dull
2. Will not sleep properly
3. Child will keep on crying

Conducting the ritual

When it is found out from the child mother tells to his one of brothers (probably eldest among the brothers) to give his lunki⁵²/dhoti, which was worn by him. The lunki or dhoti should have been recently used by her brother. The lunki is kept by four persons in each corner of the lunki. Then child is kept in the middle of lunki and cradled by the persons who hold it. While cradling persons have to tell these lines:

"baaram po baaram po

Vantha baaram thooram po

Maaman athai thangiduvaar thooram po

Baaram po baaram po"

The translation of the above said folk song which is sung in the ritual done for a child is given below:

**“Go burden go burden
You go to very far
My maternal uncle will bear this
Go burden go burden”**

The song and event tell that the burden which the child is having it would leave once this burden removing (*baaram pothal*) practice.

Nadars Marriage and Kinship in the Expressive Tradition (Lore)

To surmise from the examples taken from the tales, ballads and proverbs the following can be drawn on the marriage and kinship practices of Nadars. Despite Nadars having faith in Hinduism or Christianity, they consider Bhadrakali as their mother of origin. As the word *Bhadra* means as ‘*panai*’ in Tamil language which stands Palmyra. Juice drawing from Palmyra was as their traditional occupation taught by Bhadrakali. Spiritual goddess who taught their profession, they have named as Bhadrakali.

Denial of marriage is found in most of the ballads narrated among the Nadars. The alliance of Nadar boy and with Nadar girl from his own caste it is not narrated in ballads. But denial of marriage, violation of actual kin rules are found in ballads which speak about Nadars. Marrying a person from his own community is stressed here throughout the folk ballads.

Most of the people among the informant from the three districts, they kept on using the word and telling about the role of maternal uncle role in a family. The role of maternal uncle is not only ritual it is also a blissful to a child. From folklore it is emphasized as equivalent to father as well as mother. So, he is honored in all the occasions of the family. In his absence materials are placed at the place where maternal uncle is supposed to be present. The used materials known are materials which used kitchen and reception. Here the materials found from the field are coconut and areca nut cutter.

And another important thing found through data that the primacy of kinship in a family is sister. She is considered as the representation of a family. As she is the medium of husband and her family, her position in a family is considered more a significant than other kin in a family.

Parallel cousin is known as *pangali* (sharer). As they are sharing their clan of each and every lineage, they are considered as *pangali*. Reflections from the genres about the *pangali* are

found as in following: each and every *pangali* is bound to be committed to everyone. As they are sharing equal responsible, it is also having reflexive nature in the ritual. So, *pangali's* duty is to honoring other *pangali* in all the life cycle ceremonies is considered as obligatory. Another view on *pangali* of Nadar from the ethnic genres is that agnates (*pangali*) relationship is brought when a new lineage is born in family. It is brought by the blood, as this relationship of lineage is derived from the blood; it has the large extent till the known lineage. From the informant it is found that there is an opinion about the agnate is, to deal careful with *pangali*. It is compared with the process of cutting palm fruit. One cannot easily cut the palm fruit as cutting other fruits. Palm fruit will have fiber & fleshy types over the nuts. Each palm fruit has two or three nuts together. So, one can tear the fruit into two or three pieces according to the nuts in a fruit. The same technique has to be employed with *pangali*. Thus it is to be noted that *pangali* are interlinked each other. As they are connected with each one their characteristic dealing the matters will also be same. So, others rather than the *pangali* should be very cautious about *pangali*. Otherwise the whole agnates will get together whenever need arises to an agnate. It is also to be noted that, though they are *pangali*, the dealings between *pangali* should be dealt very clear as others. Despite all of them are considered as agnates, each and every one has different needs and scope in every family.

Father is in a family considered as equivalent to salt used in kitchen. As salt is very crucial for all kind of dishes at home, father is above to all in a family. Biologically as well as culturally his presence is given priority in a family by providing importance all the activities. Economic and political consciousness of a family is observed through father in a family as taste and satisfactions fulfilled by salt in cooking.

As Nadars observed father's role in a family is as equivalent to salt used in cooking, they also opined the importance of mother in a family by furnishing two important examples. One is the situation of daughter's arrival of her mother's home after the marriage; another one is when child at home with mother. In both context mother is biologically as well as culturally observed as a notable kinship in a family bond. If daughter or a child does not have mother (her it is taken as after the death of mother) they will be abandoned. A daughter may have a chance to interact with all the members between mother and her family when mother is alive. But if her mother is not alive, it is cut off her relation from his mother. The same is applicable to a child when his/her mother is not alive, his/her father is not committed toward children as has not governed by a

mother role in family. Many of the informant opined that “father is father when he is governed by mother, but he will be *sithappa* (FyB) when mother is not alive”. As she had a chance to govern a family, everyone is morally connected with each other but after the mother no one will be there to take care of the family.

Nadars have three forms of kinship pattern, as they have feminal kin within the feminal kin sister kinship has crucial role in a family for connecting agnates and affine groups. As she gets married with a man, she is obliged to maintain a relation with husband family and her agnate’s role with her brothers, family as well. So, she is not alive or if one does not have sister, he will certainly not have any feminal kin relation through his sister. And also it is told that if cordial relationship is maintained with sister, brother in-law will have it too. Most of the Nadar women express their view that if a girl is obedient to her husband and his family she is branded as good and clever girl. If she fails to do, then she is branded as adamant.

It is also observed from informants as well as through data that the formula of support and resistance in a family. When son-in-law shows his dissatisfaction over his wife’s family, then mother-in-law shows her support through her daughter and other obligatory receipts. Dissatisfaction is explored by the son-in-law; in order to resist that supporting will be provided by the mother-in-law/wife’s family.

Though it is customary rights to marry a girl, when she is married to an agnate then it is understood that the marital relationship with that girl is protected from having marital relationship. In order to explore this view by its clan/lineage, folklore is told through proverbs, tales. That is, one can even stay for six months with his agnate but cannot stay with agnate’s wife for a while. So, inherently the incest and taboo is told by clan to its members through folklore.

Apart from that the role and functions of kin groups in a family, as whole Nadars kinship is determined by a proverbs they are all unique as they practice what the religion, region, clan directs to a family. Now the status of economy is also being included in role play.

For example, if the elder son gets married with a MBD, to second son the family may look from the FZD. It needs not to be from the father or mother immediate sister’s daughter and brother’s daughter respectively. It can be distance relative. So, Nadars may make alliance like this too. For this reason this kind of proverb might have been made.⁵³

This saying⁵⁴ can be explained in two ways. One is about employing the person in field; second one is about nature of kinship role in a family. Described phrases ‘*satti*’ & ‘*petti*’ are the

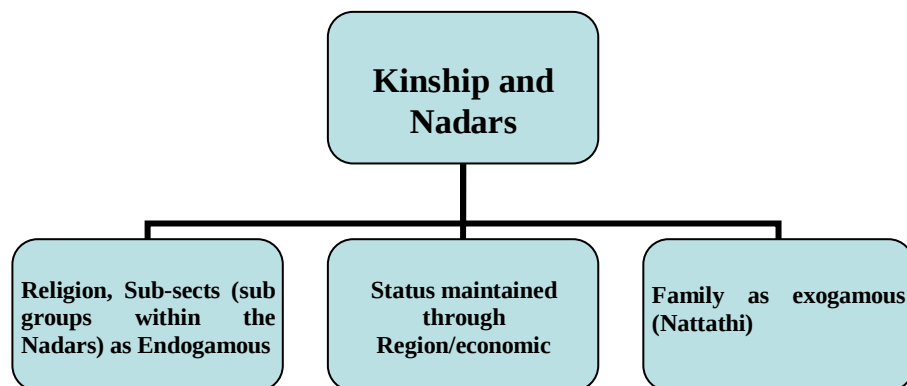
words, which used in kitchen at family regularly. These two words are frequently used one in all culture. The word ‘*adukkalai*’ refers kitchen in a house. Kitchen is a place where major three functions are occurred they are storage, preparation and cooking. Nowadays one can find many types of kitchen based on its structure and functional aspects. Traditional types of kitchen will have a space for cooking and a space for keeping/storing cookery materials and utensils. Especially in a way of usages of a kitchen will be an interesting that a utensil may be used for boiling the material at the same time for frying the food items. In the same way it is also be noted that the alliance and the relationship practice among the Nadars are observed as very closure and also within the close relatives of the family.

The same thing can also be explained in the following example. In those days for working in a farm only close relatives or the people from the same village were called for. They believed that close relatives and the own village can work properly. Others may not work as their local people do. Thus the quantity and quality of work will be more smoothly done by the natives but not by the people from the outsides of the village.

It is to be noted that, in the same way of having pattern of employing labor in the field, marriage alliance is also seen. Once a marriage alliance is made for girl/boy, then the family of boy/girl will make clear on their alliance and move further. Now they do enquiry in the girl/boy’s village, at end of the enquiry family would have found a person or a family from that village as their relative. It is one of the special features of the Nadars.

Although they did not have any connection with that village, after having certain enquiry with the new alliance made families they will have found close or distant relatives of them.

Figure 3.13: Nadars’ Kinship



Nadars follow the endogamous practice. It is also to be noted that though Nadars (religious, sub-caste, clan wise, religion, and economic status) are divided into many groups their kin bond is getting connected with each and every sects of division. The reason for division is also observed as the vindicating point of getting closure according to the sects of various divisions. However, in the urban and global (NRI) scenario this trend is found to be less regarded at the cost of status affinity rather than other bonds. Though the lore of the Nadars suggests the importance and role of kin groups, due to changing in the urban and global scenario most of the practices as seen in the lore above are confined to rural and town folks.

The following chapter discusses the marriage practices of the Nadars.

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- ¹⁰ Maria Leach (Ed.). (1972). *Standard Dictionary of Folklore: Mythology and Legend*. San Francisco: Harper & Row. P.778.
- ¹¹ It had been written in palm leaf manuscript form by bow song bard S. Krishnamani (late). It was collected from his wife at Manavalapuram in Kanniyakumari district.
- ¹² It was collected from Mr. S. Thankadurai (71), Bow song bard from Ariyappapuram of Tirunelveli district.
- ¹³ Nadarajan, T. and R. Jothimani. 1980. (Eds.). *Bhadrakaliamman Kathai or Valamkaimalai*. Madurai: ShanmugaVelliyeedu. Pg. 6-7.
- ¹⁴ This myth was collected from Mr. Ponnusamy (72) of Eachavilai (Agastheeswaram) in Kanniyakumari district – 629701 on 01.10.2011.
- ¹⁵ Minister name is not mentioned. It has been mentioned as minister in the local term.
- ¹⁶ *Illathar* is a Tamil speaking Community, spread over in south Tamil Nadu. It is also to be noted that this name *Illathar* is known to be another name as *Ezhavar* in Kerala state.
- ¹⁷ Samuel Mateer was a missionary, in his work on *The Land of Charity: A Descriptive Account of Travancore and Its People* emphasises about Nadars (they were known as Shanar) of Tamilnadu and Elavars of Kerala. The Elavars and Shanars (Nadars) differ from one another in employments character and there are no doubts identical in origin. The term *Illathar* is also known as a community in modern Tamilnadu. It is to be noted that *Illathar*, *Illathu Pillai*, *Ezhavar* in Kanniyakumari districts, and from Southern districts of Kerala are having marriage alliance with each other.

¹⁸ To justify the statement a proverb is used that Mandaikkadu a religious place where goddess Mandaikkattamman located. Goddess Mandakkadu believed to be present there because she has come through hill. As goddess dwells in anthill, it is believed that as it grows goddess's present also to be visible in every year. And also goddess Kannalamman has known as goddess for fisher folk who is believed to have come from sea. It is to be noted that all the above said folk goddess are known as sisters.

¹⁹ Book of Right Hand. A palm leaf manuscript of Right hand/Nadar

²⁰ A Temple of Ayya Vazhi Tradition

²¹ A Shrine like small temple of Ayya Vazhi Tradition

²² Ponneelan. 2004. "Introduction." In T.V. Jegatheesan. *Sons of Bhadrakali (Bhadrakaliyin Puthirarkal)*. Chennai: United Writers. Pg. 6.

²³ Jegatheesan, T.V. 2004. *Sons of Bhadrakali (Bhadrakaliyin Puthirarkal)*. Chennai: United Writers. Pg. 22.

²⁴ Stith Thompson. (1972). "Folktale". in Maria Leach (Ed.). *Standard Dictionary of Folklore: Mythology and Legend*, San Francisco: Harper & Row. P.408

²⁵ Alan Dundes. (1980). *Interpreting Folklore*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press. P.211.

²⁶ Marie-Louise von Franz. (1996). *The Interpretation of Fairy Tales*. Boston: Shambhala.

²⁷ Linda Degh. (1972). "Folk Narratives". in Richard M. Dorson (Ed.). *Folklore and Folklife: An Introduction*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press. P.52.

²⁸ As this story collected from Kanniyakumari region it has the regional influence of the hospitality nature of the land

²⁹ In a village husband and wife were there. One day husband said to wife that after our marriage we never met my parents, I was going home. His wife accepted for it. It was heavily raining. Heavy flood was on his way home. What he did was that he waited for till it was getting drained. As it was getting drained, at end of time one fish was jumping out from the land. As he was interested in having fish curry, he caught that fish and handed it to his wife in the home.

He cut into many pieces as in the following:

As he was cutting

Fish came into sixty pieces

As he was counting the fish

It came for eighty pieces

As he was pinching the fish

He could count for three hundred

After doing this he went for taking bath. Now he told his wife to make curry out of this fish. He also told her that he would also bring banana leaf for having food. His wife I would certainly make curry out of it. While she was making fish curry by smelling the taste she took some pieces as she was waiting for her husband she took some pieces. Finally only head and tail left in the fish curry.

Husband returned come with banana leaf. Now he said her to serve food. She also served food with head and tail of fish. As he was shocked by seeing only head and tail of the fish, he scolded her by telling 'no one left for me'. Where are they? She could not reply to him for the reason. Resented husband beaten her like anything while taking the following things:

I cut the fish into sixty pieces Oh...wife

I counted the fish it was eighty Oh...wife

I pinched in it were three hundred Oh...wife

Tail is here, head is here

Where is the body

Then he had beaten her like anything. As she was getting pain, she got angry with and left her mother home.

As his mother-in-law knowing this incident through her daughter, came to son-in-law home. Once reached homes she was talking him as follows:

How shall you beat my daughter, son-in-law?

You shall not be cheated

Why do you not beat her by *seruppu*?

How shall you beat my daughter, son-in-law?

You shall not be cheated

Why do you not beat her by holding at the corner?

How shall you beat my daughter, son-in-law?

You shall not be cheated
Why do you not beat by dipping her in ash?
How shall you beat my daughter, son-in-law?
You shall not be cheated

He listened all the words said by his mother-in-law. He thought that oh...I have got a good mother-in-law; his angry with wife came down by noticing his mother-in-law words and her support to him

³⁰ There was a boy called *Karuvatti*. He had one maternal uncle. Maternal uncle was a rich man and he had number of cattle in his house. But *Karuvatti* had owned nothing than his one useless cow. But his duty is that make all of the cattle of maternal uncle to graze. *Karuvatti* never put his uncle's cattle in the green land. In lieu of that he put the cattle in the dry region. But his cow will be there in the green land and will graze as much it wants. When he returns back home, he plugs some graze in the back of all cattle. For that he will tell that "uncle, your cattle never graze properly that is what the food which they ate has come out now". One day his uncle came to know about his mistakes. What he did was he killed his cow. After knowing this incident *Karuvatti* peeled its skin and made it as drum. Then he was going some places by walking. After the darkness of the day he took rest in a tree. He sat in the tree and did not stop beating drum. At that time four thieves came there under the tree. He stopped beating drum and started listening them. There they were sharing the things which they stole. One among them told "share equally otherwise sky will fall on you, so share is carefully". He did not even complete his speech the drum which was in the hand of *Karuvatti* slipped and fell down. All were escaped as they had thought of sky would fall down on their heads if anyone not getting shared equally.

After all thieves left from that place *Karuvatti* slowly came down and took all golden jewels and other costly things. Then he returned back home. As he returned with much costly things, he became rich man in the village. His uncle asked about *Karuvatti*'s recent growth. He replied that it came all because of the skin of cow, which you had killed. Uncle thought of peeling all cow's skin for selling. He did it so. And he went for selling those skins. Everyone laughed at him for his absurdness. Then he realised that *Karuvatti* has cheated him. As he returned from the city, he burned *Karuvatti*'s house. *Karuvatti* gathered all the burned stuff of his house and started walking as his legs went. There he saw one bullock cart with having so many sacks. He asked the bullock cart owner to put his sack too. In his sack he had put all the burned stuffs. After awhile he stopped the bullock cart and took his sack back. After so much wandering from here and there he returned home with full of tired. There he opened the sack. He was frozen. There was full of gold in the sack. By mistake he had taken the bullock cart's sack. Uncle came to know this event. Uncle also did so. But it was no use. Then he thought that I will not leave him and to leave this kind of disturbances the only way is to kill him. Uncle tied him in a *valvam*³⁰ (cover) and carried it till a *pazhunkinaru* (unused well). There he kept the *valvam* and went to have water to quench his thirsty. Meanwhile a shepherd (in local it is known as Konar) who had hunch in his back came and saw a man whom was tied in a *valvam*. He asked him why have been tied in a *valvam*. *Karuvatti* replied that I had a hunch in my body for the treatment of recovering that I had been tied in a *valvam*. As the shepherd was interested in recovering from his hunch, he said that I also want to have this treatment. *Karuvatti* accepted and he told shepherd to relieve from the *valvam*. Then *Karuvatti* tied shepherd in *valvam* and escaped by the time *Karuvatti*'s uncle returned back. Uncle threw the *valvam* in the unused well and happily returned home. Meanwhile *Karuvatti* brought all cattle of shepherd to his home. Then he happily lived with wealth.

³¹ In a village, a mother and her son were there. They earned lot by their hard work. As her son was in the marriage age, she started searching an alliance for him. She also thinks about alliance should be taken from a poor family. Then only the girl can listen her words. If bride is taken from the well to do family, she may spend all the wealth what they have earned by their hard work. The boy's actual character of the boy is to obeying his mother's words.

A girl was there at nearby his home. She stays with her grandpa. Mother went and asked the old man to marry his daughter to her son. Old man says that as he is not in the position to give the wealth equal to fifty thousand what others are ready to give to the boy. But she replies, brother, it doesn't matter to me I will take care of your daughter as she is right now. She also told him that you should send your daughter only with what you have.

Old man accepted her interested in marriage alliance with her son, he sent his daughter along with groom. Mother-in-law started showing her actual face of adamant. As a result of this, whatever the cookery comes in her thought it should be made and the same has to be given. For an example her interest was curry has to be made by cutting three brinjal into nine pieces, so, the same has to be provided without fail.

One day mother-in-law told her daughter-in-law that I was going to market; you do prepare rice for us. As soon as mother-in-law has returned from the market with things, daughter-in-law made good curry. Mother-in-law checked her daughter-in-law dishes, which she had cooked. Among the one of the pieces of brinjal got smashed. So she closed the vessel and she gave some edible things to all the people at house from what she purchased from the

market. Now she (mother-in-law) brought meals to his son and told about the damaged brinjal (actually his mother only damaged the brinjal in the name of checking curry which made by her daughter-in-law). Now she called her son and told him that as his wife did a wrong thing and I was shocked and it is an inauspicious to me too. Go and kill her. Otherwise our life will be spoiled, said to him.

As he did listen his mother's word, he asked her what I could do for that. She replied that son, go and get hundreds of manure to burn her. He went and got it. She said now you allow your wife to go in front of you and take some hay. Having taken all the things which he was said, but he forgot to take match box. He and his wife reached the place. Now he is ready to do all the practices for cremation. After setting the all he took her into cremation altar. Now he searched the match box, it was not available with him. Then he returned back home, there his wife was crying lonely. God appeared to her by showing him as a Sheppard who was carrying a lamp on his shoulder. God asked her why you were crying...?

She replied that my lord, I have not done any wrong, this was happened (she told the cooking matters happened at home). For that my mother-in-law told my husband to give a punishment of cremating me. As my husband forgot to take match box with him, now he has gone home to get it. Sheppard told her to keep his lamp over the cremation alter and told her to hide at the temple which was near to the cremation yard.

Her husband came back with match box to the place where his wife is supposed to be burned. After burning the thing he went back home. His mother asked to his my son that did you burn her properly. Yes mother, I did it, he said. This is the ash taken from cremation ground, he showed it. As daughter-in-law hidden at the temple, she had to see some thieves coming with lot of golden ornaments. They all said to goddess in the temple as we all got enough gold today this is the offering for you kindly accept this. They put their offering in the temple premises. As she stood behind the statue of goddess, she replied if you don't offer the whole thing your eyes will never be able to see anything. So offer as much you all got it. They all realised and put all the objects at the temple premises. Now, what she did that picked up the things from the temple premises and also from the goddess's hand and neck. Now she put all those in her hand, neck and ears. Then she went back to her husband house.

In the morning mother-in-law came in front side of the house to broom the ground. Daughter-in-law was standing in front of the house. Mother-in-law was frozen on seeing her daughter-in-law. She went to back side of the house and told her son that she had come. Your wife has returned as ghost. But he replied that mother I showed her ash, how she could return. He also came to front side of the house and asked her I burned you thoroughly why you have come to my home. She replied to her mother-in-law that my dear mother-in-law after the cremation I went to heaven. There I saw grandma of east and west side, aunt, sister-in-law, father-in-law all. I told my father-in-law that I have married your son only. But he replied me that yeh...your turn has not yet come; you are not supposed to be here. I have plenty of gold take all these, give it to your mother-in-law and tell her to come here I would also give her many more. So, I have returned back home from the heaven.

Mother-in-law asked her that Oh...did my husband tell like this. Then, she told her son to get some hundreds of manure to burn her. So that she can also take gold enough from her husband who is in the heaven. He took hay too. Now he told her wife to take match box. She took without fail. He allowed her mother to go front as he was coming back to her. Now he burned his mother.

First her hair was burning. As she jumped, she told my hair is burning, hair is burning. Her son replied for that, wait my mother now you will be burned. She (mother) replied to that yes...yes...I will bring gold from my husband and come back. Now she told yeh...my hands are burning. Her son also replied the same as earlier. Thus her whole body was burned. She turned as ash. As he was thinking about his mother's would come back from heaven, the husband and wife returned home. He and his wife lived happily.

³² Leach, MacEdward. 1984. "Ballad." In Maria Leach. (Ed.). *Folk and Wagnalls Standard Dictionary of Folklore, Mythology and Legend*, San Francisco: Harper and Row. Pg.106.

³³ He is known fifth son among the seven brothers of Nadars according to origin myth.

³⁴ *The Dateless Muse: The Story of Vengalarajan*. 1988. Madras: Institute of Asian Studies. Pg. xii-xv.

³⁵ Tenkasi Pandiyan Seevallamaran. Seevallamaran was known as later Pandiyas (16th Century A.D.).

³⁶ Sivananaichan fell in love with a dobby girl. So his family was not ready to accept his love.

³⁷ Ramachandran, S. 2004. *Valankaimalaiyum Santror SamukacCeppetukalum*, Chennai: International Institute of Tamil Studies. Pg. 169.

³⁸ Thankswamy, P.Y. 1993. *Kumaraswamy Nadan Villuppattu Kathai* (The bow song story of Kumaraswamy Nadan). Chennai: Thangam Pathippakam. Pg. 7.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, Pg. 35.

⁴⁰ Roger D. Abrahams. (1972). "Proverbs and Proverbial Expressions". in Richard M. Dorson. *Folklore and Folklife: An Introduction*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press. P.119.

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- ⁴¹ Archer Taylor. (1981-reprinted). “The Wisdom of Many and the Wit of One”. in Wolfgang Mieder & Alan Dundes (Eds.). *The Wisdom of Many: Essays on the Proverb*. New York: Garland Publishing, INC. p.3.
- ⁴² Great-great grandfather.
- ⁴³ According to the informants maturity is the ability to respond, behave and knowing when to act, according to the circumstances and the culture of the society one lives in.
- ⁴⁴ Here it meant that father’s younger brother.
- ⁴⁵ Father’s sister /Mother’s brother’ wife.
- ⁴⁶ Mr. M. Cyril (Rajavoor, Kanniyakumari District).
- ⁴⁷ In the joy of listening son-in-law words, mother-in-law called him as ‘*makkaa*’
- ⁴⁸ This term *makkaa* is used for calling sons/daughters and relatives’ (agnates) children by the people of Kanniyakumari district. Also some of the south eastern and south western taluks of Tirunelveli, Thoothukudi districts respectively. It is also used to call among the friendship and it became as a kin terms.
- ⁴⁹ It is a folk measurement for time management (12 minutes).
- ⁵⁰ Twelve minutes (this time measurement twelve minutes is known as *Arai naalikai* in Tamil).
- ⁵¹ This tale was collected from Mr. D. Joseph Christu Raj (51) (Alanvilai of Kanniyakumari District).
- ⁵² A ethnic wear which is worn by men at home. This is known as lunki in local.
- ⁵³ Mr, M.V. Ananthakumar (Nattathi, Thoothukkudi District).
- ⁵⁴ Shaanan uravu sattikkaikum pettikaikum (Nadars’ relationship/kinship is everywhere when is looked into)

CHAPTER - IV

MARRIAGE PRACTICES OF NADARS: A STRUCTURAL PERSPECTIVE

Kinship systems are built up on the complementary relationship of the two sexes in marriage and parenthood.¹ This chapter discusses the marriage practices of the Nadars of Tamilnadu. Nadars follow the pattern of patrilineal kinship pattern at largest level as seen in the last chapter on kinship. The community of Nadars follows cross cousin marriage practices as it is one of the basic elements, which is also observed as part of Dravidian kinship in pan south Indian level. The marriage alliances are made with FZS/D, MBS/D and eZD among the Nadars. It is more visible among Hindu Nadars rather than Christian Nadars of Tamil Nadu. In terms of marriage alliance, endogamous practice as well as exogamous practice is observed within the community. For instance in terms of families, the alliance is made on the basis of exogamous practice that means the marriage alliance is made with outside the family.² Secondly, the practice of marriage is seen as an endogamous practice when marriage alliance is made within the community. Families are identified with different names among the Nattathi Nadars. But other divisions of Nadars such as Karukkupattai and other than Nattathi Nadars are divided by region such as villages, district etc. Among the Karukkupattai Nadars, alliances are made within their sub-sect namely villages, district as their outside the family, whereas the family is decided for the marriage alliance in Nattathi Nadars. Community as a whole when a marriage alliance is made, the role of religion is crucial and the same has to be studied. It is dealt in the upcoming chapter on Religion and Ritual dynamics.

There is a view about grooms of eastern districts (Thoothukudi; Tirunelveli) that they would not ask much dowry rather the grooms from Kanniyakumari district. At the same time Nadars are very much interested in immovable especially who are the residence of Thoothukudi and Tirunelveli. As they are holding land and other assets enough, many of Christian Nadars (Catholic and CSI) from Kanniyakumari district are interested in giving brides to eastern wards. Moreover, there is a notion among the Nadars from Thoothukudi and Tirunelveli districts that brides from Kanniyakumari would bring more dowry and other gifts rather than brides from their land.

This chapter highlights the marriage practices of Nadars as its nature of practicing in the family in their social system. It documents marriage practices and interprets the role of the kinship in marriage. The accumulated data are divided into three major categories they are: i) marriage practices which are there in the folk narratives (folk songs); ii) based on observation in the field from the respondents and marriage practices; iii) marriage practices, which have been procured from the

secondary sources (missionary works, gazetteers, manuals, census reports and other research works).

After globalization, seeking alliance for marriage has started expanding among the Nadars. At present middle and upper middle class Nadars search suitable alliances for their children beyond kinship. It is to be noted that recent changes also to be studied with folklore methodology. Next chapter on religion and ritual dynamics is dealt on this issue in detail.

Constitution of Marriage Rites of Nadars

Marriage rites which have collected from various sources are given in the tabular form here for doing further analysis. Apart from the marriage rituals are found in folk songs and folk ballads in which marriage ceremonies are narrated. It is also having a significant role in ritual sung by members. Folk ballads of *Valangai Vazhthu* (Right hand songs) and *Nattathiyar Vazhthu* (Left hand songs) have note on Nadars particularly on origin, agnates of Nadars as they are seven sons known different names *Karukkupattai*³, *munivar varampetron*⁴, *viyabari*⁵, *irattai sangon*⁶, *Chetti Tholerum Perumal*⁷, *Keerthi Petron*⁸, *Vazhaikkiru kulaikandon*⁹.

The role of father of groom had to seek bride for his son. Groom gives his bride wealth to bride's father in the form of gold and ornaments along with his agnates, maternal uncle is honored in the ritual by groom, bride and their family, as maternal uncle is considered as *Nallappan*¹⁰, first he has to be honored by family, elders of the family bless the new couple are told in the ballads. The detailed marriage rite in table is given below:

Morphology of Marriage Rites	the Order of Ritual	Marriage Practices	Role of kin for doing this ritual	Any honour/reaction towards the ritual
Selection and Confirmation	1	Proposal (<i>VaranParthal</i>)	Groom and Bride family elders; now marriage brokers are also seen	Acceptance given by bride to proceed further
	2	Partial Confirmation (<i>Pattukattuthal/Poovaithal</i>)	Groom's sisters and sister-in-law	As a mark of acceptance, this function is held at bride's house
	3	Betrothal (<i>Nichayathartham</i>)	All the relatives of Bride and Groom are invited.	For catholic and protestant Christians, priests or pastors conduct. For <i>Ayya vazhipriest</i> will be a person from the same community. Other Hindu Nadars (including <i>Amma vazhi</i> Nadars) person from the community or sometime Brahmins may be called for conducting the function
	4	Bangle and Oven	Groom's sisters going for installing oven and giving bangle to bride	Bride family will be ready for receiving it.
	5	Melting gold for Tali	Close relatives are present and goldsmith	Close relatives
	6	Pole is fixed for marriage	Family members and Barber	Family members and Barber

		shed (<i>PanthalKaalNaattuthal</i>)	(<i>thalaimakan</i>)	(<i>thalaimakan</i>)
Feast	7	Feast to bride/groom (<i>PongiPoduthal</i>)	Groom/Bride relatives i.e. sisters, father's sisters/mother's brother's wife	Food is given to bride and groom respectively at their home for making them fit for the marriage
Invitation	8	Invitation to village (<i>Ur Vethalai</i>)	Groom/bride father has to clear the dues of tax at village level	As soon as clearing the tax dues, village accepts the invitation and allowing the family utilize the village premises
	9	Invitation to relatives	Issuing invitation	Recognize the participation of the ceremony
Blessing by Family God/ancestors	10	Rice ritual (<i>ArisiSadangu</i>)	Groom's sister-in-law conducts this ritual at groom's house	As a mark of giving respect to ancestors, this ritual is celebrated at house
	11	Family god/goddessworship (<i>Kula deivaVazhipadu</i>)	Groom/bride family members go to ancestor's tomb/family god/goddess premises to worship	Elders' blessing is much precious to the family
Feast	12	Feast for all (<i>Asanam/SoruVaippu</i>)	Invitation is given to close relatives of the family	Family is recognized by participation of invitees
Blessing by Elders	13	Bride wealth (<i>parisam/NazhiVeedu</i>)	Some of agnates of groom will go to bride house there they give the bride wealth to the father of bride	This is considered as confirmation of the marriage between groom and bride
	14	Maternal uncle ritual (<i>MamanKalyanam</i>)	Groom/bride mother honours his brother by conducting the ritual Barber of the family conducts the whole ritual	It shows the harmony of maternal uncle with that family
	15	Blessing (<i>kumbittukattu</i>)	All elders are allowed to bless	Blessing purpose

			the groom and bride at their respective home	
Marriage	16	Groom's Sister (<i>Pezha Petti</i>)	Groom's sister carries the materials which are needed on the day of marriage to groom and bride	She is honoured by groom during the time of surul
	17	Groom's Brother-in-law (<i>Tholathan</i>)	He is going along with groom till reaches to bride's house	As groom's sister gets honoured by the family, he also gets a nominal honourable position in the marriage
	18	Receiving Groom and his relatives (<i>Ethirmalai Sandhanan</i>)	Bride's father/brother receives groom and his relatives	Reception is indicating the harmony
	19	Lighting lamp (<i>VaadaVillakku</i>)	One of the sisters of bride is lighting the lamp at marriage altar	Now groom gives <i>alathi Selai</i> from the <i>pezha petti</i>
	20	Tying tali (<i>Tali Kattuthal</i>)	Groom ties thali	Bride accepts it
	21	Vows (<i>ManamedaiSutruthal</i>)	As soon as thali tying getting over, couple are allowed to take vow in front of the marriage altar where family gathered	They become as couple
	22	Feast to relatives	All the invitees are given feast by the bride family	Feast is part of accepting and blessing the event
Transition and Transformation	23	Milk and Banana (<i>palum pazhamum</i>)	Milk and banana are given to bride and groom by father of bride or maternal uncle	First food after the marriage
	24	Agnates blessing (<i>Anantharam</i>)	All the agnates of groom are allowed to perform this ritual	By participating in this ritual they all become the agnates of

				groom, reinforcing the relationship as well.
	25	Marriage Song (<i>Nalanku Pattu</i>)	Song in which family god and ancestors' blessing and other elements of family life narrated in a song form	But nowadays song turned into greeting the couple
	26	Procession (<i>Pattinapravesam</i>)	Couple are sent to take a procession in the major streets of the village	As a mark of noticing the newly married couple
	27	Couple's first visit (<i>Veedu Kanuthal</i>)	Couple are sent to groom's house	Groom's sister-in-law receives the new couple to the house
Honoring	28	Sweet to Mother-in-law (<i>Madipalakaram</i>)	Bride carries some sweets for mother-in-law	It is known as bride has not come with empty and she has brought reputation to the house
	29	Sweet and Water to bride family (<i>Karuppukkatti and Thanneer</i>)	Palm jaggery and water are given to the bride's family whoever visited groom's house in the evening of the marriage day	Invitation is explored by providing palm jaggery and the same is recognized by accepting the sweet
	30	Gifts (<i>Moi</i>)	All the family members are advised to give gift to bride/groom	symbol of showing their solidarity
	31	Second visit (<i>Maruveedu kanuthal</i>)	Bride's family visits the groom's house where bride is given	Groom is honored with home appliances
	32	Surul (Honouring agnates and affine)	All the agnates are honoured by the groom; all the affine (cross cousin) of bride are honoured by bride family	Symbol of showing the solidarity and indebtedness by the both family
	33	Feast to relatives	All the close relatives of bride	Bride's family participates in the

			and groom are invited for dinner	feast of groom arranged at his home
	34	Rice for those whoever has not attended (Eduppuchoru/Pettichoru)	Rice is given to those who has not attended	It is an another ritual which shows the closeness with the relatives especially elders
	35	Oil ritual (<i>Ennei Sadangu</i>)	Celebrates at bride's house	All the agnates of groom are honoured with this ritual
Strengthening new affine and existing agnates	36	Third visit to Groom's home (<i>Moonam Maru Veedu/Mamiyar Veedu Kanuthal or Adukkalai Kaanuthal</i>)	Ceremony held at groom's place	All the parallel cousins of bride gathered at groom's place, the following vow is taken. There they tell to the groom's mother that take care the bride as her daughter.
	37	Feast to groom (<i>Mappillai Virunthu</i>)	Couple is invited for the feast by the bride's family.	The duration of the feast depends up on the wishes of the family.

Folk Views on Girl and Boy in selecting them as Bride and Groom

Since the mythological period marriage rite and other marriage related ceremonies are followed according to the verses suggested in folk ballad of Nadars. Age is a major factor in seeking marriage alliance. There is a saying about age in term of marriage related to occupation of Nadars as follows:

<i>Paruvam</i>	<i>mutrinaalum</i>	<i>Panan kizhankum</i>	<i>naar</i>
Age/Days	Matured	Palmyra root tuber	fibre

Though it is a delicious food, it is then just fiber when the day went Palmyra root is found in the field

In the aforesaid proverb virginity, age of marriage, child boon are explained. For denoting above said things Palmyra root has been metaphorically used in this proverb. It is culturally conceived by a society that when a girl attained puberty or coming of age, she will be able to give birth.

The proper age for harvesting Palmyra root is three months from the date of its plantation. Like that for a girl, it is the time for marriage and giving birth for child, particular age is decided or prescribed by the community. It is observed that thirteen to twenty one year of old girl is matured enough to get married. If that period is crossed, physically one may not be able to have/maintain good health due to her age. It is believed that well-matured girl may give disabled baby birth. In order to have healthy people in a society, it is being reiterated by telling or phrasing this saying in a community.

The same saying is strengthened by another form of saying as below;

<i>Kumari/Pen</i>	<i>Oru</i>	<i>Kuzhanthaikkum</i>	<i>Kodi</i>	<i>Oru</i>	<i>Vellaikkum</i>
Girl	a	for child	new cloth	a	for washing

Virginity till getting a child Newness till getting washed

This saying inherently says about the beauty of a virgin as well as the quality of new cloth. Woman's virginity is compared with new cloth. A virgin, after giving birth to child, she will be losing her beauty which she had earlier and the physical appearance. It is considered that the biological development in her body may reduce her physical appearance and it is seen into two ways prior to the pregnancy and after the pregnancy. She will get new physical appearance after the pregnancy and delivering the child. As like virginity, new cloth

is also seen into two segments of its life. One is as new cloth worn by the people and another one is as a cloth after washing it.

It is to be noted that age for marriage and delivery are significant to an individual as well as to a society as a matter of individual concern of a society. Generally marriage and child birth are considered as highly an auspicious matter in a family. If anyone delays in doing so, this saying or proverbs which have meaning as it is said is told to its fellow members in family or in society. It is explained in the following table.

Table 4.1: Age as factor in marriage

Factor	Objects	Duration	Fitness	Beyond the actual duration
Period	For Palmyra root	90 – 100 days to matured	Good for eating/tender	Fiber
Age in reality	For Girl	13 – 21 years	Fitness for healthy reproduction (virginity)	Known as Aged and hard to have healthy reproduction
On Wearing	Cloth	New	Brightness	Gradually losing its brightness

From the data shown in the table, it is structurally arranged and in the following:

Material/Objects	Fit (within the period)	Not-fit (Beyond the time period)
Palmyra	Tender	Fiber
Girl	Healthy reproduction	Hard to have healthy reproduction
Cloth	Brightness/Shining	Losing Brightness/Shining

Thus one can understand the views observed from the data expressed by the community through their lore. Age is having major role in making new family in the society. And it is also told to everyone in the society through various forms of lore to its members by community.

Criteria for Bride Selection

Selection of bride is really a process which clearly defines some minimum criteria in terms of education, physical appearance, social status, family values; future career plans above all are observed as the characteristics of bride. It is also applicable for the selection of groom. In addition to that occupation of groom is much appreciable by the family. According

to that only groom stands among the bride for selection. The following folklore which was taken from the field will explore the nature of bride selection occurred among the Nadars.

<i>Thannee rukku</i>	<i>pokira</i>	<i>thallaiyai</i>	<i>paarthaal</i>	<i>veetil</i>	<i>irukkira</i>	<i>pillaiyai</i>	<i>paarkka</i>	<i>Vendaam</i>
For water	would go	mother	if see	at home	there	girl	to see	Need not

<i>Thaay ai</i>	<i>thanneeru kku</i>	<i>pokumpot hu</i>	<i>paartha al</i>	<i>Veetil</i>	<i>irukkum</i>	<i>makalai</i>	<i>paarkka</i>	<i>Thevaiy illai</i>
Moth er	for water	while goes	if see	at home	their	daughte r	to see	Need not

If you see mother in the street, need not see her daughter at home

If a groom's family wants to see bride by visiting bride's home, it is not necessary when they get a chance to see bride's mother in the street. In this proverb it is emphasized that "mother, who goes for taking water", by looking at mother's attitudes, manners with others are observed by the groom's family. Then, if mother's attitudes are considerable to groom's family; groom's family will make a plan for the alliance. Although it was followed some decades back, even today some families in various village follow this method, but not in the water shed. Instead of that, marriage broker is asked to collect the details about the family. Marriage broker shares groom and bride families' interest. Thus the role has been taken by marriage broker. It is also an important one to discuss about the character of a bride. The character of bride is compared with the quality of tree. As the tree's characteristics are considered as good, if the same character is seen in the bride then it is good sign for the groom also. The proverb is given below.

<i>Athi-ithi</i>	<i>aal</i>	<i>arasu</i>	<i>punku</i>	<i>puli</i>	<i>poolaathi</i>	<i>vaakai</i>
Fig tree	banyan tree	peepal	Pongamia	tamarind	poolaathi ¹¹	sirissa
<i>koohai</i> ¹²	<i>Manjanaathi</i>	<i>vakkan aathi</i>	<i>vaazhum</i>	<i>veettukku</i>	<i>aakaatu</i>	
big owl	Yellow-fig tree ¹³	creeper	living	house	good for nothing	

Fig, banyan, peepal, tamarind, yellow fig, will be good for nothing to a living house.

This proverb is literally identified in two meanings, they are: if there any house construction is going on, the carpenter will say that above said trees are not to consider for furniture items in a house. And also if there is any bride seeking event is going on, for stressing the characters of bride, this proverb is told.

Carpenter would say that the trees such as fig, banyan, pepal, tamarind, *poolathi*, sirissa, and yellow-fig are not quality woods for constructing a house on considering the endurance. So, he would suggest some other woods to the owner for the furniture items.

Like that the second meaning of this proverb is told in connection with the bride's selection. Fig tree, banyan tree, peepal tree are parasitic in nature. So the bride always should not depend upon some others help. It is burden to husband. Banyan tree, pipal tree, tamarind tree, *poolathi* (wild fig tree) are easily perishable woods in nature once it is being cut. So, they will not be used for the furniture. Like that women characters also very important in a family to lead a family. So, while selecting the bride characters and enduring capacity are also given more importance. And also if any girls/women have a character of telling lie and slandering is not considerable for marriage.

Criteria for groom Selection

As the selection of bride is really a process which clearly defines some minimum criteria in terms of education, physical appearance, social status, family values, future career plans and above all characteristics of bride. This is also applicable to the groom selection.

<i>Naazhi</i>	<i>arisi</i>	<i>paanaiyile</i>	<i>thedaathavan</i>	<i>naanaazhi</i>	
Naazhi 14	rice	pot	who did not earn	four naazhi	
<i>arisi</i>	<i>selavu</i>	<i>Vantha</i>	<i>peraku</i>	<i>theda</i>	<i>mudiyuma</i>
rice	expense	Came	after	to earn	Will be able?

If one is not able to earn little, will he be able to earn when the need is more

“*Naazhi*” is a folk measurement which used for measuring grains. A nuclear family can survive with one size of “*Naazhi*” rice for two times in a day. If a person is not able to earn even one “*Naazhi*” of rice for family how he will be able to earn four *Naazhi* rice when a family in need. Here the four *Naazhi* rice indicates that providing food or earning to a family rather nuclear family. The underlying meaning of this proverb is the persons' responsibilities in the family and after the marriage how he will be able to earn. That is the reason elders used to advice jobless and lazy youngsters by telling this kind of proverbs.

Need of Quantity	Perfect	Imperfect
Small	Available (by getting through his hardwork)	Not available (all because of one's laziness)
Big	Will be available when it was available at small level	Not at all (as because/result of laziness)

It is also to be noted that by using this proverb elders assess the younger's character, when they have any notion on savings for future concern. As it stresses on future views, it is also observed as one of the significant elements for those who are entering into new family structure.

Folk Philosophy behind the Confirmation

Common idea of group can be found in folklore such as oral narratives and their material culture. Particularly the wisdom for any events to be done or conducted is perfectly covered with folklore in every culture by its group. As the same manners, most of them are found as proverbs among the group. Proverbs are used metaphors taken from nature and day to day life of every human. As like that Nadars are usually said proverbs in their day to day life to denote or advice. In this regards for seeking marriage alliance some proverbs are also used. Among them the following proverb is highly notable one in relation to marriage alliance. It is also used for describing on matching for husband and wife. That proverb is given below.

<i>Sakkaikku</i> ¹⁵	<i>yEtha</i>	<i>koodai</i> ¹⁶
jack fruit	Match	basket

The basket which is suitable for the jack fruit

It means that both characteristics of husband and wife are seemed to be same and matched. If someone wants to carry a jackfruit to somewhere, he/she has to carry it with covered. For covering the jackfruit sack, basket etc. are used. If the sack or basket is lesser than the size of jack fruit one cannot cover the jackfruit. It is understood that to cover with little bigger size than the size of the jack fruit is needed. Then only it can accommodate the fruit. Like covering the jack fruit, bride and groom are compared by using this proverb. When a bride is handled by groom then only the family will be able to conduct a family life smoothly. When a groom is matched with bride then only she will be able to run a family life smoothly. Thus the core idea of the saying is that to advice on match/alliance which is made for groom and bride.

Another important proverb in which how alliance is sought and done between bride and groom is described. Mutual understanding between the families and the customs between bride and groom family are much appreciated when both families clearly speaks about the customs and other obligation now and then. This is stated in the following proverb.

<i>Arappesi</i>	<i>urakkolla</i>	<i>vendum</i>
Talk clearly	to have a relation	need

Have a clear decision before doing it

If there is a process of seeking bride/groom, it is remembered that during the time of alliance everything is supposed to be clearly dealt. Sometime groom/bride might not know each of marriage practices as well as dowry/gifts giving practice. So, in these situations it is being reminded to the families. Among the Nadars, most of marriages are arranged through the parents and relatives. Sometime they may go for alliance within their villages or outside the villages. The customs and rites such as Surul, marriage ceremony and other economic responsibilities such as dowry, gifts will have to be clearly talked with bride/groom families. There should be no demerits in the function. To eliminate misunderstanding between bride and groom families in the customary and economic responsibilities both families must have talked about the custom and existing practices. So, there will be no difficulties between bride and groom families.

***Varan Parthal* (Seeking for bride/groom)**

As soon as the decision is made for the alliance, promise is taken by elders of the families at bride's home. For confirming the alliance groom, and his relatives including mother, father, brother, sister-in-law and maternal uncle and aunt are going to bride's place.

Figure 4.1: Selection of Bride and Groom



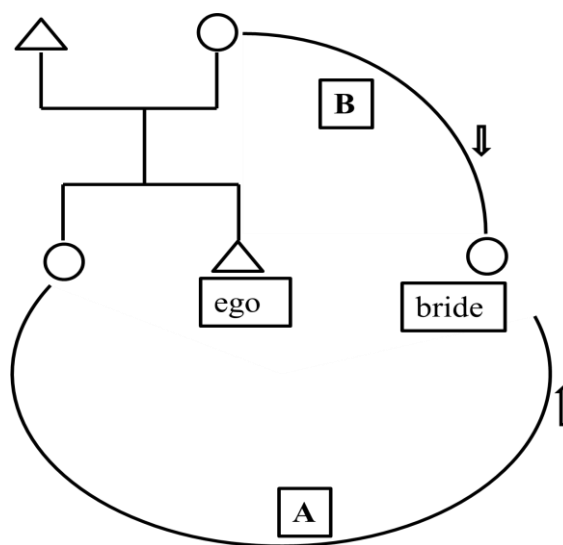
This event is initiated by groom's side. The term used for seeking bride and bridegroom is known as *varan paarthal* (seeking bride and bridegroom). Seeking bride/groom and followed by the confirmation is conducted as an auspicious event in the family. It has been understood that bride's father accepts a better groom for his daughter on

reading horoscope after the function. Despite the horoscope has a major impact at present, most of the people look at the family and groom/bride's wealth. Some of them are looking horoscope for groom and bride with the help of astrologer. Going to bride's house in odd numbers for the confirmation is considered as an auspicious one.

Poovaital (Adorning by flower)

This ceremony is commonly found among Hindu and Christian Nadars of Thoothukudi and Tirunelveli, Ayya Vazhi Nadars as well. Only close relatives are invited by bride and groom. Groom's sister takes a key role in this practice. By doing this ritual, bride is confirmed to the marriage.

Figure 4.2: Bride Confirmation



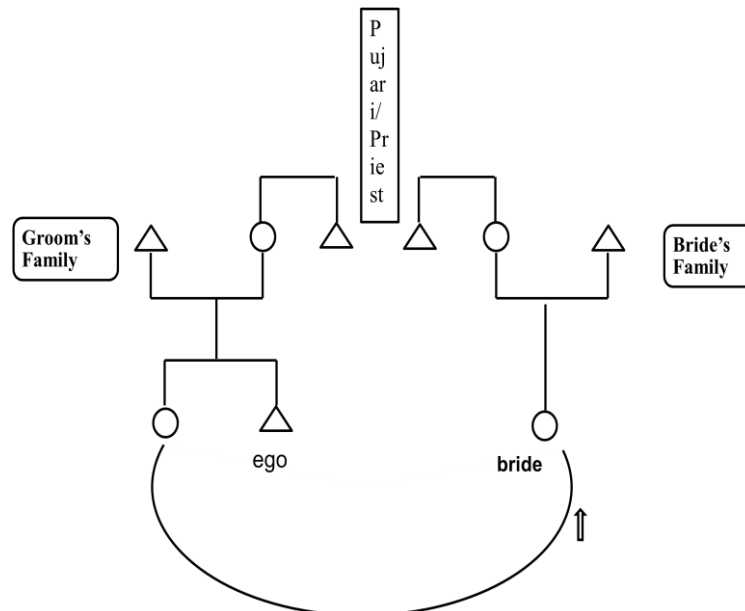
As seen in the figure mentioned above, 'A' (groom's sister) and 'B' (groom's mother) are given priority to adorning bride by giving flower. Once this *poovaital* is done in couple of days to this event betrothal will be organized. Groom's sister and mother take crucial role in this practice. Sari is given by groom's sister and mother adorn flower to bride. It indicates that the marriage between this groom and bride has been confirmed by the both families.

According to informants from the field, they express their view on adorning flower and giving sari to bride is known that flower and Sari are auspicious things to a woman. It is interpreted by culture a man who gives it is the expression of interest in marriage. He wants to have a customary right in marriage. As he does not have right to deal with the girl in the initial stage of seeking his sister takes this role to fulfill his wish. Man's mother will accept the course of action after her decision.¹⁷

Nichayathartham/Varthaipadu (Betrothal)

Nadars from Kanniyakumari district follow a practice as the symbol of acceptance of groom and bride families by exchanging plates of fruits, dress, ornaments etc. which is known as *thamboolam* (betel leaf & arecanut). Once the *thamboolam* ritual is held it is understood that the mutual acceptance has been made between both families for the marriage. Maternal uncles are having crucial role this ritual event. During the ritual of *thamboolam*, for protestant Christians, instead of *thamboolam* bible is taken for that place. So, Bible is exchanged between groom and bride with the presence of pastor. By exchanging the Bible it is promised by the family for the marriage and the same makes known to family as well as village. Catholic Nadars from Kanniyakumari, Tirunelveli and Thoothukudi during betrothal, groom's sister takes the main role in introducing bride to her family. Then groom gives all the things which he has taken along with him. Then bride and groom will be exchanging the garlands, ring and chain in the presence of family elders. Sometime dowry will be given on the day of betrothal to groom by the bride's father or maternal uncle. But in the case of Nattathi Nadars, astrologer takes an important part in the fixing marriage date, on the day of betrothal.

Figure 4.3: Betrothal Ceremony



It is a confirmation function where most of the relatives will gather. At the same time through this event, it is emphasized to the community that henceforth the girl and boy are future couple. So, whenever they need to go anywhere permission is needed from the respective family. After the confirmation bride and groom are considered as an important people in the community. For denoting them as an important asset in a community ornaments or any threats tied/fixed with them. If it is girl bangle/ring is given to wear, if it is boy ring or

bracelet is given. In this ritual groom's sister makes bride to be ready for the function. She also gives the sari which groom has already taken for the bride. Priest and maternal uncle role is found mediating the following events are also conducted during the betrothal.

Ponnurukkal (Melting gold for Thali)

Melting gold for making *thali* is a common practice among the Hindu Nadars of Tirunelveli and Thoothukudi regions. Once the betrothal is held, this melting gold ritual starts in the presence of family members. Another sub-sect of Nadars, Nattathi Nadars also follow this practice. This ritual is considered as an auspicious one. Here groom's sister plays a crucial role. She also gives some amount of share to make thali.

Pen Panam/Parisam (Bride wealth)

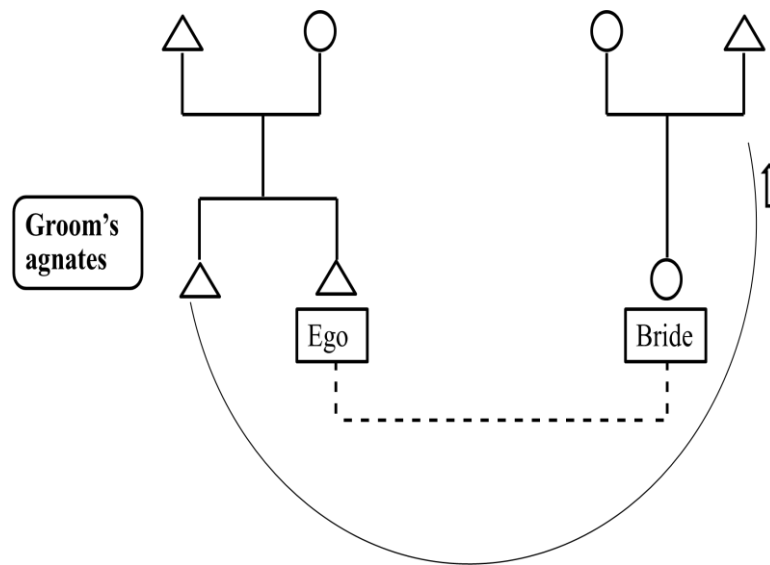
Although very idea of bride wealth is found by anthropologists in various cultures, bride wealth in this function is known as *pen panam/parisam* groom gives some presentation to the bride's father through his agnates, when groom gives this amount then only the agnates are honoured by the bride family not seen in marriage rite of Nadars. Thus it may be considered as equivalent to bride wealth and at the same time bride is not taken without any presentation. In order to make a good relation with new alliance some amount is given to bride by groom as a token of conformity. This practice is known in ethnical category as '*parisam*' at the same time it is analytically identified as bride wealth. The ballad which exclusively talks about Nadars' marriage rites has a note on *parisam* that 'once *parisam* is done then seventh day of that *parisam* marriage date is fixed'¹⁸. But nowadays the yesterday of marriage *parisam* is given and other rituals are proceeding thereafter.

Parisam is known as gift of cash giving to bride; jewels will be given to bride by the groom's parents. It is also called *pen panam*¹⁹. The day before to the marriage, bridegroom's family goes to bride's house to give the *pen panam* which is analytically known as bride wealth. Groom's father, agnates of groom, groom's brother-in-law (sister's husband) go to bride's house. Then the bride wealth is given to bride's father. This amount which given as bride wealth is given to the bride during the time of *surul* by her father. In addition to that betel vine, betel nuts, banana, and some amount of 121 panams (this amount may vary) or gold or silver coins are presented to bride. This amount is called *parisapanam*.²⁰ Apart from this, groom's family has to meet the expenses of the day which called *chelavu* is normally fixed as 121 (it may vary) and in gold or silver coins as *panam*. During this event, the exchange of *kappu* (ring) giving ritual is organized in the presence of family. This is also

known as *kola-udai* feast. It is to be noted that each party should bring their family or village barber²¹ during the time of *parisapanam* event.

Among the Nattathi Nadars there is a practice which is ethnically termed as *nazhiveedu* analytically classified as bride wealth. On the morning of wedding day, groom's family members (three or five of his elder agnates) will come to bride's house. They would bring some amount of cotton seeds covered in a white cotton cloth. It is given to bride's father, brother and his uncle (FeB or FyB) by groom's father and his agnates. While giving the cotton seeds groom's relatives would tell thousand, now the bride's relatives will receive it by telling it as thousand one.

Figure 4.4: Bride Wealth Shown in a Diagram

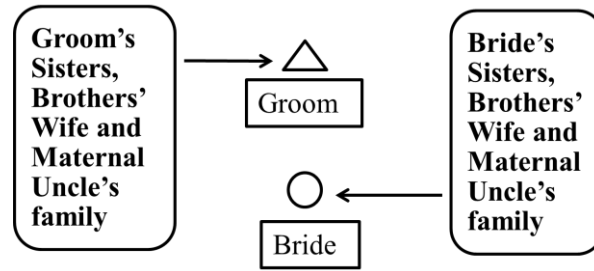


From the above explanation and figure among the two major groups within the Nadars follow bride wealth in order to have marriage ritual by the acceptance of both families. It is to be noted that the amount of bride wealth is given to bride's father by one of the agnates of groom, when there is elder brother of groom he takes this role to give it.

***Pongi Poduthal* (Feast to bride/groom given by the relatives)**

This practice is separately held at their respective place of bride and groom family. As it is led by their relatives such as siblings of bride/groom (brother, sister), affine relatives of bride/groom (in-laws/maternal uncle/paternal aunt) very close relatives will only be joining in this ritual. The aim of this ritual is to strengthen the relationship between the boy and girl along with the relatives.

Figure 4.5: Feast given by relatives



Offering feast is an independent celebration. This feast giving to bride/groom celebration is celebrated according to bride's and groom's families' personal interest. Some decades ago this celebration used to happen for five to seven days. But now they gather in their respect relative premises to celebrate it for one or two days. Most probably this event of *pongi poduthal* is taken care by the married sisters, brothers of bride/groom and also their maternal uncles. The reason behind to continue this event is that so as to strengthen them (both boy and girl) physically. As marriage is having the connection with biological reproduction or producing new generation through a family, they are expected to have a healthy physical nature before the marriage.²²

Vazhipadu (Blessing Ceremony)

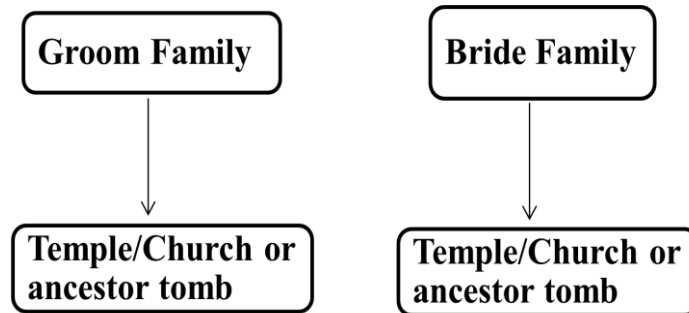
Kula Vazhipadu is common in Nadars of Tamilnadu. Most of Nadars are having the practice of burying dead person. Though they are Hindu or Christians they will have common burial ground at their respective village. For Hindu Nadars this burial place is additional one to their worship of family god.²³ Person who died and his/her tomb is considered as holy for the upcoming generation. Especially persons who are died before getting married, during pregnancy are having special worship in all family. So, those tomb as well as family god has special attention on this day. A folk ballad known as Valangai vazhthu emphasizes that couple was blessed to grow like banyan tree, to be rooted like lemon grass, to have relatives like bamboo tree. Then couple was also blessed with sixteen praising as follows they are: long life, health, education, wisdom, efficiency, bravery, victory, renown, youth, beauty, love, good children, paddy, gold, good conducts, experience etc.

Kula Vazhipadu (Worship of family god)

On the day before to marriage, family god/goddess worship is conducted by both the families of bride and groom at their respective places. Many of the families do offering to

their family god/goddess. Notably, in a basket, coconut and prayer materials are kept in front of the deity.

Figure 4.6: Worship at Family God and Ancestor Tomb



If it is groom's family god, silk sari for the bride, thali and dresses for the groom will be kept along with the prayer things. If it is bride's family god, sari of the bride, groom's dress, ring for groom and jewels of bride are also kept in front of the god. Then garland is put on groom's and bride's neck. Sacred ash is applied on the forehead of bride and groom by the elders of both families.

Ancestor tomb

Worshipping ancestor is as an important ritual among the Nadars. Groom and bride do worship at their ancestors tomb. After that close relatives sit in front of the family god/goddess temple. Food is served for five, seven or eleven people as marker of food offering given to god. Generally, rice along with *sambar*, *rasam*, tomato chutney, snake guard curry and potato chips are offered to god/goddess as well as served to the people. Then groom and bride wear new cloths for receiving blesses from the elders of family. This event is celebrated separately at bride and groom's places and also their family god/goddess temples.

Maman Sadangu (Maternal uncle ritual)

As maternal uncle's daughter/son has the customary right to get married with the girl, in order to accept alliance from the new family bride/groom family seeks maternal uncle's permission.²⁴ Nadars from Tirunelveli do custom of maternal uncle ritual at night on the day before of marriage. Some of them practice this ritual on the day of marriage. This is the function of giving presentation to their maternal uncle. The whole event is called *maaman saasthram* or *maaman sadangu*. There had been a practice for bride, giving jewels; sari and large vessel known as *andaa*²⁵ is a tradition from maternal uncle's mother. But nowadays the practice is going off. Instead of that, maternal uncle gives some gifts which bride may prefer,

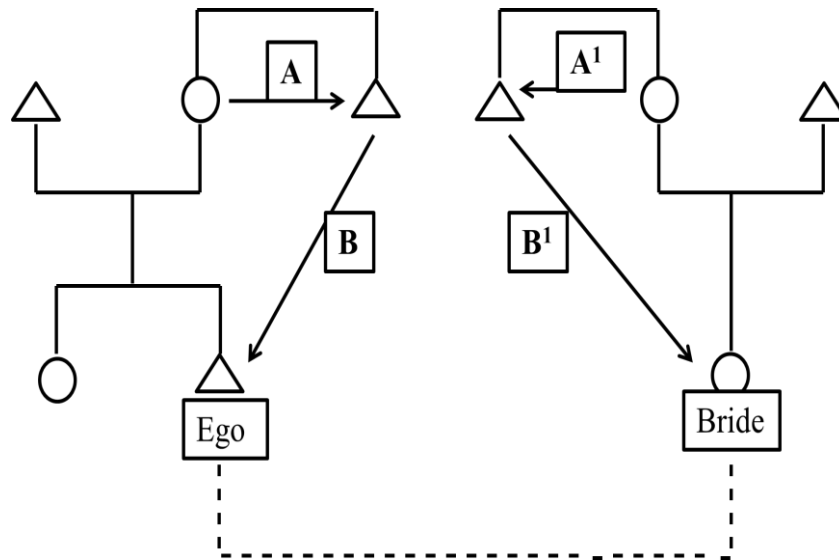
for instances gold, silver or cash. Now the family barber will tie a *kaappu* (bangle) in the hands of bridegroom's maternal uncle. The bangle (*kaappu*) is a safety band which would be made of peepal or reed leaves. Now maternal uncle is asked to sit in front of the *manamedai*²⁶

Nadars from Thoothukudi district do the custom of maternal uncle ceremony or the *maaman sadangu* on the day before of marriage. This ritual is celebrated along with the *sokkaaran anantharam* i.e. the blessing rituals by agnates of groom. It is held in front of the *manamedai* of the *muhurtha pandal*²⁷. For that, marriage altar is decorated with flowers and banana tree. This will have also been decorated with pole of Palmyra wood and branches and leaves of a peepal tree. Maternal uncle ritual is conducted in the presence of family barber. Maternal uncle is honored by providing new clothes and flower garland. After receiving his token of respect, he blesses bridegroom by presentation (it could be a gold ring or chain or cash).

Before starting the marriage procession, a series of performances are done. It is called *mappilai orukkal*²⁸. As the groom is ready, another important function takes place which is called *maman kurrunkatti iruppu* or *maman kaliyanam/maman sadangu*. In this ritual, the bridegroom is sat in front of the maternal uncles to be blessed through this function maternal uncle/s proclaim that they have no objection in this marriage. The reason is that as the alliance is sought from other family *maman sandangu* is considered as a main ritual in marriage. This ritual is observed on the particular day of the marriage. In morning bride/groom mothers honors him by giving presentation. The mother of the groom very warmly welcomes her brothers. The maternal uncles are led one by one to a decorated platform or *kurunkatty*²⁹. As uncle/s are seated, the mother of the groom comes by carrying a tray containing betel nut, tobacco, bunch of banana, five full-measurements of new rice, coconuts, clothes and turbans. She presents them at the feet of her brothers and in silence pray to agree and bless the groom.

On the day of wedding, groom's maternal uncle is honored by groom's mother. As a token of respect, the maternal uncle of groom is given rice, coconut, betel leaf and betel nut in a palm fiber basket (*narpetti*) by groom's mother. Maternal uncle gives some gold ornaments or money to groom's as a *seethanam*. He also ties a yellow thread on groom's wrist as a mark of this ritual is done. This is known as maternal uncle ritual (*thaimaaman sadangu*).

Figure 4.7: Maternal Uncle Ritual



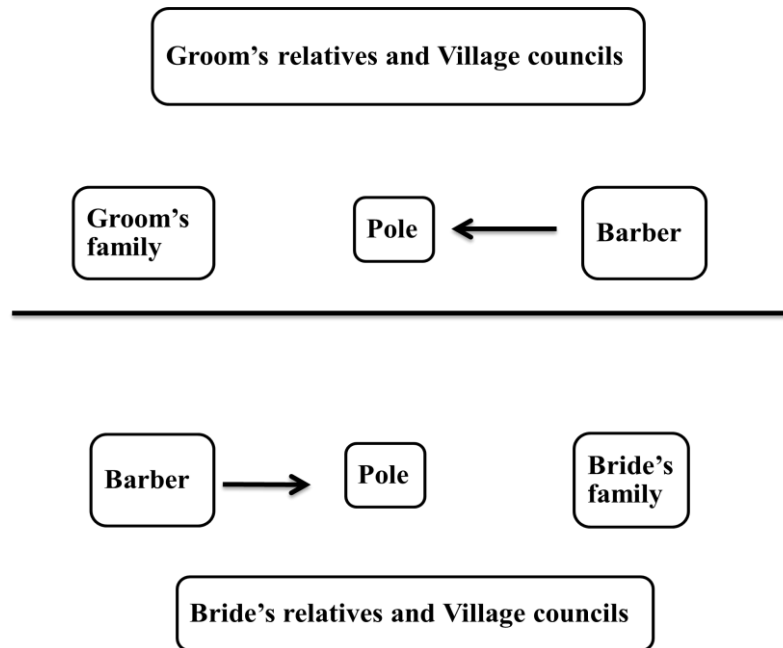
- A.** Groom's maternal uncle is honoured by groom's mother
- B.** Groom's maternal uncle ties a yellow thread in groom's wrist
- A¹.** Bride's maternal uncle is honoured by bride's mother
- B¹.** Bride's maternal uncle ties a yellow thread in bride's wrist

As seen in the figure, maternal uncle is honored by the bride's mother. In a palm fiber basket bride's mother gives dhoti, shirt and rice, coconut and betel leaf & arecanut. Then bride is brought to the dais for the maternal uncle ritual. Barber directs the maternal uncle what he is supposed to do in the ritual. Bride shows her two palms as opened to maternal uncle, now uncle puts little amount of rice in the bride's hand for three times. Then coconut is taken for waving in front of bride's forehead for three times. Once this ritual is done maternal uncle keeps the coconut in bride's hand. Then he ties one yellow thread on bride's hand. He also gives some gifts to bride. Gifts could be some gold ornaments or cash (most probably gold ornaments are given).

Panthal Kal (Marriage Hall/Shed)

Before two to three days to the marriage, shed is made by anyone of the following trunks such as mango, teak, wild olive, black wood, sandal, *Katakam* (known as tree in ethnical term), *Pathiri* (known as tree in ethnical term), Orchid, Alexandrian Laurel tree, *Marudhu* (known as tree in local term) trees.

Figure 4.8: Installing Pole for Marriage Shed

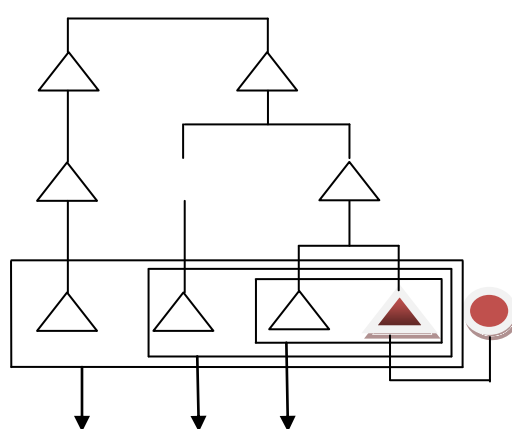


Plantain is fixed in front of the shed as a mark of marriage. The woods are such as *panchavarna* (five colors) tree, jack fruit tree, neem tree, teak, wild olive, black wood, sandal, *Pathiri*, *Kadambu* (it is known as in ethnical term), Alexandrian Laurel tree and bamboo tree. Palmyra tree stem or bamboo is decorated for fixing first pole. Nine grains / *navathaniyankal* (paddy, wheat, green gram, red gram, kidney bean, sesame, horse gram, black gram and ground nut) are covered in a cloth and the same is tied on the top of the pole. This event is organized at bride and groom respective places. Sometime a common palmyra trunk which is available in a village is brought to the marriage functions. That palmyra stem is placed in the southwest corner (ethnically known as *kanni*) of the shed. In the presence of family elders, this ritual is conducted barber³⁰. During that occasion, the village committee collects taxes and any other balance amount to be paid from the family. After that they plant one banyan³¹ stem/trunk to make marriage hall. This ritual indicates the acceptance of the village. Dobby spreads cloths for the people to conduct the ritual. A uniformly broken coconut is taken for fixing banyan stem. As a symbol of shed pole, this banyan stem is fixed in a coconut's white part. The broken coconut is known as in two names, one is male part (*aanmuri*); another one is female part (*pen muri*). The part which has three dots which symbolically considered as female organ, so that coconut part is known as female (*pen muri*). On the other side a comb in the coconut which is symbolically considered as male organ, so that coconut part is known as male (*aanmuri*). Now a small stem taken from of banyan tree is fixed in the female part of the coconut. Most probably the banyan stem is taken from the banyan tree from the temple or from the burial ground. In order to have elders blessing the stem is taken from burial ground.

Anantharam (Agnates ritual)

On the day of wedding day morning after thali tying ritual, the ritual called *anantharam* is opened to perform by the agnates. *Anantharam* means ‘endless blessing of agnates’. Broken betel leaf and flower taken from male palmyra tree are mixed with coconut water in a copper vessel the same is kept in front of the couple. Now barber (*kudimahan/thalaimahan*) calls groom’s agnates to bless the couple. Now he would tell as “*aruvakkaara appachikal³²anantharam seyyunkal*” which means ‘all agnates of groom come and do the *anantharam*’. During the time of *anantharam* as it is a customary role in the marriage, all agnates are advised to wear turban.

Figure 4.9: Anantharam



1. Ego’s immediate siblings
2. Ego’s Siblings from his father’s immediate siblings
3. Ego’s siblings from his grandfather’s immediate siblings

It is to be noted that by conducting this *anantharam*, it emphasizes that this marriage is accepted as well agnates are introduced to the bride / groom family. This ritual is conducted by the groom’s agnates (father’s elder and younger brother’s sons). All of agnates must attend in this ritual. Fresh coconut water is taken in a silver or copper dish. Sometime instead of betel vine some pieces of jack tree leaves are taken. The vessel is filled with coconut water in front of the groom. First the eldest family noble (*moopan*) comes forward. He touches the coconut water with his right hand little finger and touches the forehead of the groom for three times. Then one by one, according to age, all the uncles and all the agnates, and goes up to the last child of the family, attend in this ritual. The specialty of this function is that irrespective of age, even a child of one year, and all who do this rite must wear ahead-turban, it represents the crown³³ which worn by king. This head-turban wearing rite is still in seen among the Ayya Vazhi Nadars.

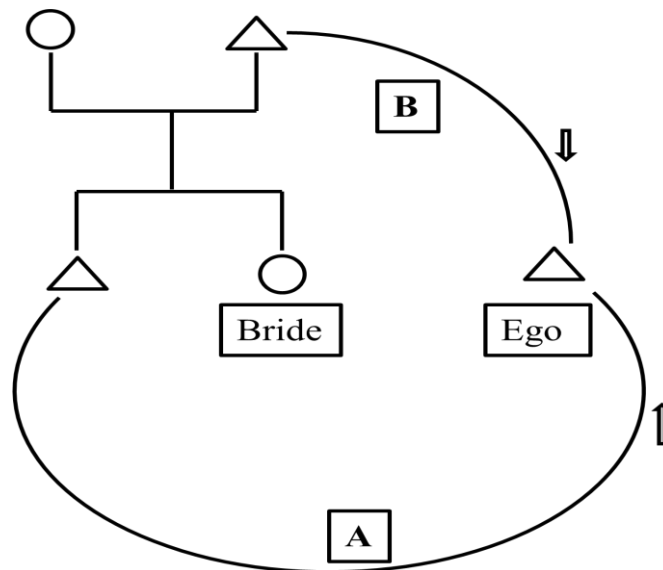
Marriage

Marriage is fixed by god held as celestial damsels³⁴, wave *aalathi* (ritual wave) and in the presence of groom's agnates groom marriage is performed.³⁵ Groom must wear the dress which was given by the mother's mother/mother's brother (during *maaman sasthanam*) prior to thali tying. Bride will also follow the same. Groom carries marriage sari (*periyapattu*), *thunaippattu* or *manthirakodi*, thali, flowers, garland, fruits and betel vine, areca nut along with musical accompaniments to bride. Once groom reaches bride house, bride's brother will be ready to receive him along with relatives. On the day of marriage the following rituals are done.

Ethirmaalai (Receiving groom)

As groom reaches to bride's house, bride's brother advances to receive him. In Ayya Vazhi marriage rite, the groom reaches to bride house there he is received by bride's brother along with the relatives. Garland is exchanged between groom and bride. A gold chain is given to groom.

Figure 4.10: *Ethirmaalai*



- A. Groom is received by bride's brother. Now bride's brother puts garland to groom
- B. Bride's father will also be there while groom is received. A gold chain/bracelet is given to groom.

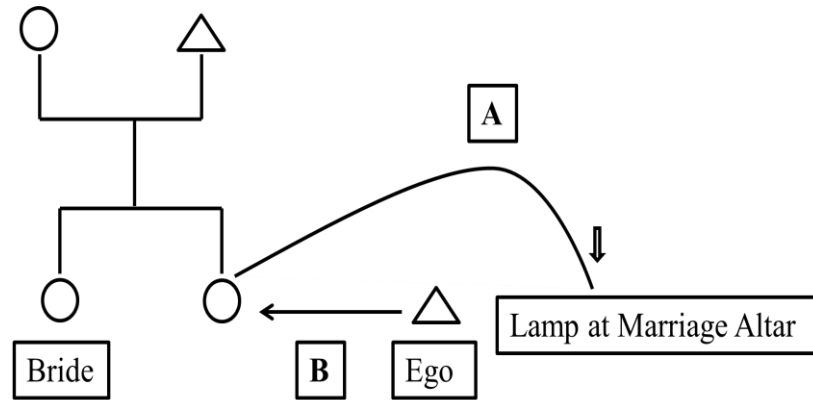
This ritual is ethnically known as *ethirmaalai santhanam*. Among the protestant Christians the same practice is followed as when bridegroom arrives at bride's house on the morning of the wedding day, he is welcome by the bride's family. The bride's brother garlands bridegroom and gifts a gold chain. Catholic Nadars of Tirunelveli, Kanniyakumari and Thoothukudi districts do practice a ritual *ethirmaalai santhanam*, which is celebrated on

wedding day. Nadars from the Nattathi sub-groups follow a practice this ritual at the entrance of bride house or marriage hall bride's brother is waiting for groom. As soon as groom reaches there, he welcomes him and all his relatives. Now bride's brother does showering with rose water on all of the groom's relatives as an acceptance of groom and his relatives to the function. Then he gives sweet water to groom for three times. Groom will be ready to have it, but he is denied for a while. As he does with water, now betel vine to groom for three times. If bride family gives any gift to groom, it is given at the time of receiving the groom.³⁶ Finally bride's brother holds groom's hand and brings him into house/marriage hall. The whole event is known as *ethiramaalai santhanam*.

Alathi Selai

Nadars follow a ritual called *aalathi selai* after the *Ethirmalai santhanam* ritual. Bride's sister (probably younger to bride) carries a oil lamp in the marriage altar, where couple is supposed to sit. There she lights up the lamp and groom's family also participate (they pour oil to the lamp) in the event. Once bride's sister lit up the lamp after that groom gives a sari to her as a gift. That sari is known as '*aalathi selai*' and the lighting lamp is called '*vaada vilakku*'. After this event groom sister will go to bride's room to make her ready for the marriage.

Figure 4.11: Alathi Selai Ceremony



- A.** Bride's sister lights up the lamp in front of the marriage altar. It is known as *Vadaavilakku*
- B.** Groom gives one sari (now it has become as gold bangle) to her. It is known as *Alanthu Selai*

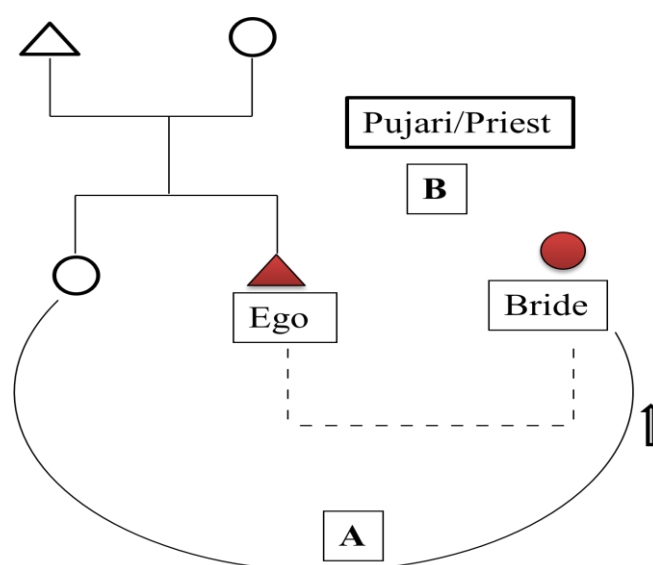
Christian Nadars of Tirunelveli and Thoothukudi follow that practice as follows, once groom reaches to bride's home, bride's sister lights up the lamp (*kuthuvilakku*). This practice

may vary because; some families do this practice once bride readies to go to marriage hall. In Ayya vazhi and Nattathi Nadars marriages groom's brother brings this lamp to the marriage altar. But Christian Nadars marriages bride's sister lights up the lamp. After that as Hindu Nadars practices the *aalathi selai*, groom gives sari to bride's sister.³⁷ Both the bride and the groom will be allowed to sit in the place known as *muhoorthakal mandapam* where the *vaada vilakku* (seven or five tongued lamp) is lit up. The family priest, who is supposed to be the elder of the family performs the rituals and has the rights to conduct marriages.

Thali

There are different kinds of position found among the marriage rites while thali tying. Among the Hindu Nadars of Kanniyakumari district while tying thali is shown in front of fire for three times then it is tied on bride's neck. It is to be noted that the opinion about thali given by Nagam Ayya that "for the word thali, which commonly used in southern India, is in ancient days the leaves of the palm tree called '*thaalavriksha*' were stung together and used in the place of a cord or thread"³⁸. The groom will pretend to tie the thali with three knots. Then groom's sister will be the person, who performs this important act. She puts third knots in thali.

Figure 4.12: Thali tying rite



- A. Groom's sister puts the third knot in the thali. Then she gives first food (milk, banana) to the couple.
- B. *Pujari*/Priest take the ritual role in the wedding

Marriage of Ayya Vazhi is practiced as in the follows; groom and bride will be allowed to place towards south for rituals to be conducted. Oil lamp is lit up in the name of god. Priest (eldest person in the family or village) chants the mantras from the *Arul Nool*³⁹. After the chanting, groom ties the thali to bride.

Protestant Christians practice of thali tying function is an important aspect of the wedding ceremony. Thali is a gold chain with an ornament usually a plain cross or a cross with some other design, sometimes the traditional design is also used. Thali is blessed by the priest and elders in the family. Then groom ties it to the bride's neck. Sometime gold rings are also exchanged. After this, the bride and the groom sign in the marriage register. Since most of the Christians prefer to wear thali with full of gold chain, now the role of *ponpootti*⁴⁰ (sister of groom) is limited with by allowing her to touch the thali.

Although the marriage is conducted by the priest or the elder of the family, groom's sister has leading role in marriage ceremony. She carries the thali to get it blessed from the relatives and gives it back to the priest. In the presence of elders of both families, groom ties thali to bride. This thali is yellow color thread, there jasmine flower is tied with thali. The image in which thali is Shiva Lingam a depiction of Lord Shiva. First two knots tied by groom then third knot is given to groom's sister. But these days gold chain is worn after this yellow color thread. Then groom's sister gives milk, banana to couple as first food after the marriage. Then the couple is allowed to take a round the marriage altar with bride's father and groom's brother. As bride's father holds groom's hand and groom will hold bride's hand, groom's brother carries oil lamp. While groom's brother holds the oil lamp, bride's father holds groom's hand. Groom's sister will also participate in this event to take round the marriage altar for three times.

Transition and Transformation

This segment of transition and transformation explores and interprets the data with the help of contextual meaning taken from the field. As it is strongly believed to be a crucial rites and practices in marriage of Nadars, these rites and practices of first food and *aarathi* (waving lighted camphor) is taken place.

***Palum Pazhamum* (First food)**

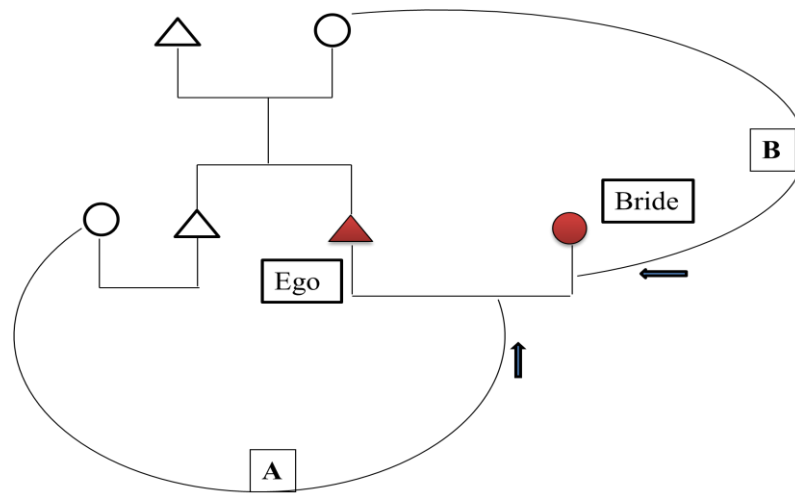
An account of folk ballad says that 'the mixed milk and rice along with plantain are kept near the couple. After the thali tying event, it is given to couple to eat by the maternal uncle'. Nowadays Hindu Nadars of Tirunelveli and Thoothukudi as soon as the *taalikkattu* is getting over, milk and fruits (mostly banana) is given to couple by bride's maternal uncle/brother. Then in another silver plate one cup of milk, banana and sugar will also be given and they will make couple share with them. After that couple will be sent to groom's home once the elder's blessings get over. In Ayya Vazhi, couple is given plantain and milk as first food. And also betel leaf and areca nut are given to the couple. It has to be given by the

bride's brother. After this ritual bride's father is giving her daughter to groom's hand as a symbol of *pennai thaaraivaarthal* which means “now on they are husband and wife”

Aarathi (Waving lighted camphor)

Among the Nadars from Thoothukudi and Tirunelveli districts once again the waving lighted camphor is taken place to couple. In addition to that milk and banana are given. Again they are sent back to bride's home in auspicious time (if the bride and groom house in the same village). Blessing ceremony is also done by the elders of the family. This time groom's mother gives banana, coconut, sweet and betel vine to bride and bride kept in the sari's end (*munthaanai*⁴¹). It is believed that bride brings wealth from her family.

Figure 4.13: Aarathi



- A.** Groom's sister-in-law waving lighted camphor to the couple
- B.** Groom's mother receives the couple and she gives milk and plantain to the couple

Thus, giving milk can be interpreted as the things that help in nourishing body of couple. Rice and banana are the symbol of health and prosperity. Waving lighted camphor is believed to relieve all the evil eyes which are believed to be brought during the time of marriage ceremony.

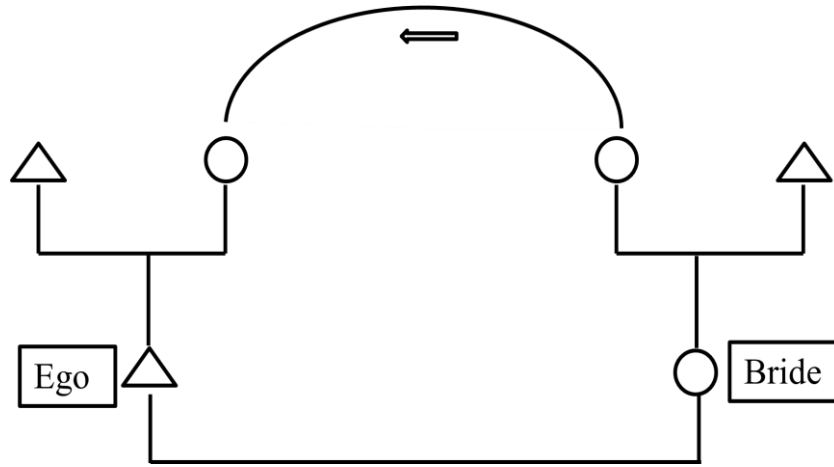
Honoring the agnates and affine

The significant element in Nadar marriage is that to honor the agnates and it's affine. Although the marriage alliance made between close relatives, this honoring ritual is followed as an obligatory feature. A piece of gift is given in the form of material or cash in the premise of entire family gathering known to have reciprocal relation. The following practices would establish it.

Madippalakaram

It is a sweet eatable item, which is made of rice flour, palm jaggery and some other ingredients. It can also be known as pastry. Among the Nadars of Kanniyakumari district as the bride and groom are allowed to leave to groom's home, that time bride's mother gives some snacks which would be made of rice flour and palm jaggery. That snacks has to be given to bride's mother-in-law (groom's mother). While bride enters into groom's house, she gives this to her mother-in-law. As it is kept in the hip of the bride, it is known as *madippalakaaram*⁴². *Madippalakaaram* is given by the bride's mother to groom's mother during the time of *Veedu kaanuthal* event which is accompanied with their relatives. Bride's mother (groom's mother-in-law) has to give this to groom's mother (bride's mother-in-law). It shows that the bride and the groom's family have to live with all prosperity in future. As an indication of that, this *madippalakaaram* is given.⁴³ In those days it was made at the bride's house by the family members. But nowadays people are getting sweets and other eatables, which are made of sugar.⁴⁴ *Madippalakaaram*, it is a sweet dish which is occupied the space as a means of showing the joyful event in the marriage.

Figure 4.14: Giving Madippalakaram



Bride's mother brings sweets to groom's home. She gives it to groom's mother (bride's mother-in-law).

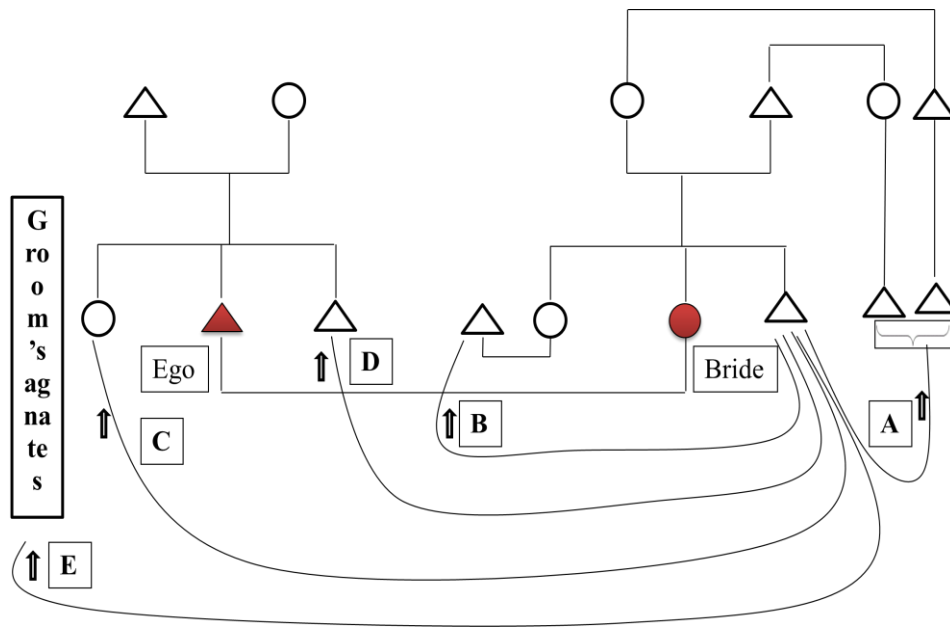
Karuppukkatti and Thanneer (Palm jaggery and Water)

As soon as bride family enter into the groom's house, there will be hospitality by the groom's family that broken palm jiggery and water are served to all relatives. Although it becomes very rare one to be seen in the marriages, but in some of the marriages it has the significant role.

Surul

Among the Hindu Nadars of Kanniyakumari district the practice of surul is followed as groom's agnates are honored by the bride's family by giving cash as token of respect at the dais. Some decades ago giving one rupee in surul was very much popular. But today hundred rupees to five hundred are given to the agnates as well as bride's maternal uncle's sons/father's sister's sons. However, groom's own brothers (*pakka surul*), sisters (*pezhapetti* and others) will also get this surul.

Figure 4.15: Surul of Nadars



- A. Bride's FZS/MBS are honoured by bride's family (bride's brother takes that role)
- B. Bride's ZH is honoured by the bride's family
- C. Groom's sister is honoured by the bride's family – it is given to her because of *Pezhapetti* practice
- D. Groom's own brothers are honoured by bride's family
- E. All groom's agnates such as FBS (FeBS/FyBs)

Surul is considered as honorary process during marriage. At the time of surul, groom's agnates and bride's affinity relative (who have customary right to marry bride) will be honored by the bride and groom's family. Some parts of Tirunelveli, Thoothukudi districts call it *saathiram* and in Kanniyakumari district it is known as surul. Probably surul is arranged in two ways; one is if the groom's family wants to give surul his agnates immediately after getting married, other one is bride's family will give this agnates surul. Otherwise generally surul is given at groom's house after the night dinner.

This surul practice is also identified in another form in the following Thoothukudi, Tirunelveli regions as *ennai saathiram*⁴⁵. Groom's agnates sit in a line. That numbers depend up on groom's agnates in a family. Bride's brothers has to give oil to groom's agnates. This oil is basically given for applying on their head as a mark of bride's family has intermingled with the groom family. Meanwhile he will have to keep one or two rupee coin in the oil vessel (nowadays the amount has hiked as Rs.100 to Rs.500) but keeping one rupee coin in the oil vessel is still followed. It is a privilege to groom's agnates to participate where in ritual. Then everybody would go for taking bath. After this event bride is sent with her husband.

Among the Nattathi Nadars, during the ritual of *Surul*, which is a function where groom and bride family are sharing/exploring their extension of relatives. Groom's agnates and bride's MBS & FZS are honored at this time by the bride's family. Bride has to carry one plate in that betel vine is spread over the plate there cash or gold is kept as a token of respect of honoring the groom's agnates and bride's MBS & FZS. After the *surul* function, bride's uncles (FeBs, FyBs and Maternal uncles) bless the couple with applying sacred ash. Sometimes they may give some amount of cash while blessing/applying sacred ash. Eventually bride is said to light the lamp at groom's house.

Strengthening new affine and existing agnates relationships

Marriage is a standard practice which converts the actual or potential opponents into allies. In order to follow the harmony in a family, practices are made to follow in ritual form at marriage. The following rite will explore the issues pertaining to the strengthening new and existing family.

***Ennei Sadangu* (Oil ritual)**

On the next day of marriage, couple is brought to bride's home. Bride's brother applies oil on brother-in-law's head. Then the new son-in-law/brother-in-law goes to take bath. Then groom is honored by providing new dresses, jewels or cash. If the first son-in-law is there, he will also be honored prior to the new son-in-law be honored. To bride, the family gives oil and soap pod for taking bath. She will also be honored by giving sari by her mother-in-law. At end of the ritual dinner is provided by the bride's side.

Second visit to bride/groom place

Nadars from Kanniyakumari district follow a practice known as *Veedu kaanuthal*. On the auspicious time of the wedding day, bride family along with relatives visits groom home to see bride, who is none other than their daughter. Goods are brought to groom's house such

as huge copper pot (in three numbers), big bronze vessels⁴⁶, small bronze vessels, bronze urn, copper pot, bronze pot, bronze lamp, basins (three sizes in large, medium, small), small water pot, bronze plate for keeping betel vine & arecanut, a small bronze box for keeping lime, arecanut cutter, a small silver box for keeping sandal paste, silver vessel for rose-water. And also salt box, grinder, mixer, palm fiber box for keeping grocery and *pallanguzhi*⁴⁷ are given. Apart from these gifts knife, sickle, vegetable cutter⁴⁸, comb mirror, broom are also given. Some families will give cattle⁴⁹ and vegetables especially rice, millets and grocery items. Thus the gift is given according to the wealthy status to the bride family. Then feast will be arranged for bride's family and groom's relatives.

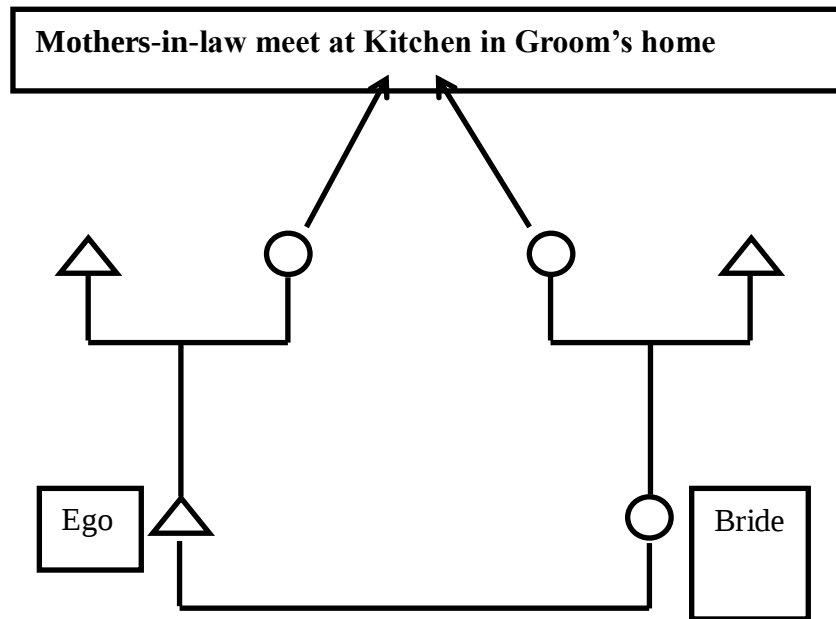
Nadars from Thoothukudi and Tirunelveli districts follow this ritual as bride and groom will be sent to groom's house from bride's family. While bride goes, she is given some vegetables, spices and whatever the materials needed for cooking at house. In those days there was a practice to make dry fish curry at night that should be prepared by bride. And it had been followed for long period.⁵⁰ Curry is supposed to make only by the bride. Then it has to be served for all close relatives and groom. On those days it had been in practice. Nowadays it is not practiced in the marriages except the *Veedu kaanuthal* as in the practice.⁵¹

Nattathi Nadars follow this ritual that after the marriage, the couple is sent to bride's mother. As soon as the thali tying gets over, they are sent to groom's house.

Adukkalai Kanuthal/Maamiyar Maruveedu (Visiting Kitchen)

Nadars of Thoothukudi and Tirunelveli invite mother-in-law to groom's house for conducting the function of *maruveedu azhaithal* (inviting home for the second time). It will be conducted by both families. The next day evening couple is invited for a feast by bride's family with new dresses, rice, grocery and vegetables. Sometimes bride's family gives the amount for the feast. After that the groom family arranges feast.

Figure 4.16: *Maamiyar maruveedu*



This ritual of *Veedu kaanuthal* function plays a significant role in the family and also the custom of taking a married couple to the groom's or bride's place soon after the wedding. At present this considerable ritual is not practiced in life cycle. In those days during *Veedu kaanuthal* celebration people used to carry more vegetables, rice and grocery items especially which are needed for cooking. After that the trend has come to give more home appliances to bridegroom such as wooden cot, wooden Berol and other home needs are given by the bride's father.⁵² This ritual is also known as *moontraam maruveedu* (third visit to bride house).

Bride and groom will be honored by the bride family. After this function, groom and bride are allowed to resume their job. Till this mappillai virunthu or moonraam maruveedu, the bride and groom are not allowed to go out of the house. Soon after this event couple will be allowed to go to village church/temple before they finish their feast at bride house. During the evening bride's family goes with her relatives and presentations/gifts for the groom to his place. There feast is arranged for the both relatives at night.

At last event on the day of wedding surul is performed. It is the function where groom and bride family sharing/exploring their relatives. At this time groom's agnates and bride's MBS & FZS are honored by the bride's family. Bride has to carry one plate (silver or copper). In that plate betel vine is spread. On the betel vine, cash or gold is kept as a token of respect or honoring to the groom's agnates and bride's MBS & FZS. After the surul function bride's uncles (FeBs, FyBs and Maternal uncles) will bless the couple with applying sacred ash. Sometime they may give some amount of cash while blessing by applying sacred ash. At last bride is said to light the lamp at groom house.

Among the Hindu Nadars from Kanniyakumari district this function is separately conducted on the day of *maamiyar maruveedu kaanuthal*. Seven kinds snacks⁵³ are brought to groom's house. Those snacks should be shared to groom's relatives. Bride's FeBW/FyBW and bride's MeZ, MyZ will visit groom's place because, they are all mother-in-law relation to groom. So, they should go to groom house to celebrate this visit to groom place.

Among Christian Nadars of Kanniyakumari, it is called *adukkalai kaanuthal*⁵⁴ that means third visit to groom's house by the bride family. During this time bride's family visits groom's house including kitchen. That time groom's mother-in-law would come to hall and there she hands bride over to groom's mother and now she would say that "*pillaiyai ungal pillaiyaka paathukidunga*" which means "now on take care of my daughter as you take care of your own daughter". Till the function of *adukkalai kanuthal* completes, bride's family may not visit the entire house of groom. To see that especially kitchen there is a function is known as *adukkalai kaanuthal*. During this time groom's mother-in-law has to bring things in which materials should be available for a family for cooking. They are such as vegetables, grocery things, rice, sweets and match box (it should also be brought) along with goods. Once bride's relatives entered into the groom's house cooking process will start. There are two practices in Kanniyakumari region among the Nadars that the expenses for this feast would be started by the both bride and groom families. Whereas Thoothukudi and Tirunelveli districts bride family provides all the things and they cook at groom's house. Then groom's family invites bride's mother to kitchen. After that food is served to all the relatives.

Couple are invited for the third visit to bride's home for the feast. Some families allow the couple at home for two or three days, some families allow them at home for week. It may vary from family to family. In these days bride and groom have to resume their job, so, most of the event of third visit is organized for one or two days. Within this time couple goes to their family god temple along with their families. After that couple is ready to leave now bride's mother sends them with rice, varieties of snacks (hot and sweets), vegetables and groceries.

There is ritual conducted called *Adukkalai Kanuthal* (visiting the kitchen). Both mothers of groom and bride (mothers-in-law) meet at kitchen of groom at that time bride's mother says to groom's mother that "now on take care my daughter as your own daughter".

Virunthu (Feast to couple)

Feast (*virunthu*) is initiated from the next day of marriage. When a couple is sent to bride's home (the next day of marriage) from that onwards till three to five months this reception is taken place at bride's place which is offered by her father. It is also known as *maappillai virunthu* (feast to bridegroom). Till feast is getting over couple has to stay at

groom's place on Tuesdays and Fridays. End of the third or fifth month of the feast, some relative of bride and groom gather at bride's home and the couple is blessed by them. Then bride's family gives some gifts to couple while the couple leaves to groom's home.

Among the Hindu Nadars of Thoothukudi and Tirunelveli apart from this feast, they are also invited for festivals such as Deepavali (*thaladeepavali*), village festivals, Pongal, Adi, Karthikai etc. during these festivals it is an obligation that the bride's family has to give some gifts to groom/bride. However, some years ago after the marriage first three months different kinds of snacks were given to groom's home at every week from bride's home.

Christians from Thoothukudi and Tirunelveli districts celebrate *moontraam maruveedu* (third visit to bride house) to honor the groom and bride. After this function, groom is allowed to do resume their job. Prior to this event of *maappillai virunthu* or *moontraam maruveedu*, bride and groom will not be allowed to go out elsewhere.

Couple as New family

After the ritual of feast to couple, they are allowed to live their regular life. As they are socially, religiously as well as politically allied together, the coalition seems to be a moral support in all their accomplishments. Thereby, a newly married couple bound to educate their upcoming generation by getting molded with rules of family which being social harmony.

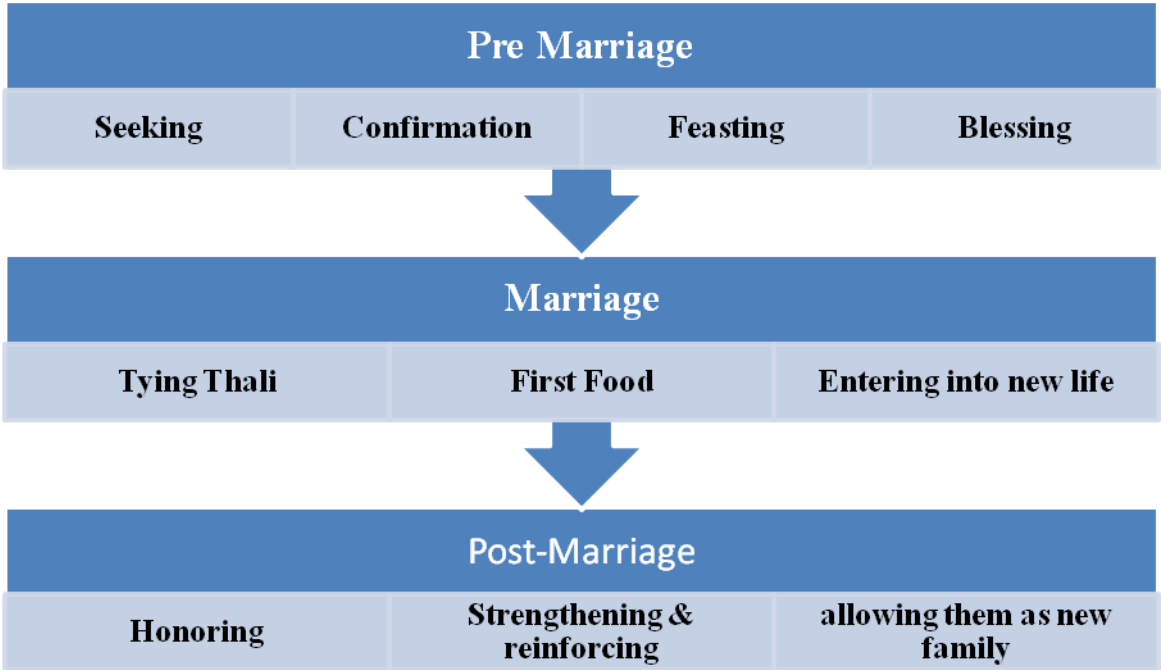
Structural Perspective

Structuralism is a method of scientific knowledge that focuses on reconstitution of the rules governing the production of meaning. Structuralism is dealt for studying art, texts, which have fundamental deep structure. As texts are organized like a language, human art and culture also has to be studied. Structuralism analysis was founded in twentieth century, and it continued until now through various disciplines. It can be viewed in two segments; first one is origin of the study at structuralist perspective, second one is application of this model to various cultures. Structuralism works based on synchronic aspects of the culture rather diachronic. It was considered as a distinct method of investigation when Levi-Strauss had influenced this methodology through anthropological investigation. The same was applied in American folklore by Alan Dundes in the late twentieth century.⁵⁵ The structural relationship of the reciprocal nature in a culture⁵⁶, especially in every culture nature of reciprocity is practiced and it is retold/enacted through rituals. The community of Nadars is also having certain things to be discussed from structural aspects of the culture especially on marriage rites. From the structural aspects the following scholars have made commendable fellowship in socio-cultural fields. They are Franz Boas, Claude Levi-Strauss, Edmund Leach, Victor Turner so on. Their academic and the fellowship of the concern empirical study on culture

from various regions in the world, made scholars to relook and also apply their views into every culture to understand the society and its cultural nuances.

From above the dealt marriage practices are analytically classified into the following major parts.

Figure 4.17: Three Parts of Marriage Practices



As given above in the figure, marriage of Nadars can be emphasized in the following manners. They are marriage practices done before the marriage, during the marriage, after the marriage respectively. The same division can also be applicable to the concept of social process of Victor Turner. They are namely the stage of induction, the stage of seclusion (separation), incorporation (rites of return). Further it is structurally organized as in the follows.

Figure 4.18: Deep Structure of Marriage Rite of Nadars



From the diagram, the whole marriage ceremony is depicted according to its role in the ritual. From the community of Nadars, if a family wants to be a member as unit of its own system, in order to maintain that possibilities of having regulation passed through each and

every family. Thus the rule is governed by certain rituals which are supposed to be monitored by the same governance of family in the society.

Among the marriage practices of all other sub-groups within the Nadars three major practices are found have connections each other. They are maternal uncle ritual (customary clearance), Surul (honoring), Visiting to Kitchen (strengthening). There are two views on this maternal uncle ritual. One is maternal uncle is customary rights to have marriage alliance with the girl as per the Dravidian Kinship. In order to not to have any misunderstanding within the family bride's mother soothing her brother by honoring him in the ritual. Another view (generally view of Christian and Hindu Nadars) on this ritual is that maternal uncle's son has the customary right having marriage alliance with the daughter his sister's daughter. So, if a mother bride goes for the alliance other than her relatives such as MBS, FZS then she also needs to have soothing her brother from misunderstanding.

The same manner of practice is found in Surul, where agnates of groom, in-law of bride are honored. It can be viewed in two ways. One is as they (agnates) are the part of groom; groom has to maintain his solidarity towards his agnates in the family where all the relatives gathered. Another view on this Surul is disclaiming the customary right towards bride. As FZS, MBS are having customary rights of marrying a girl; they are given up their right by accepting their honoring at the family where groom and bride relatives are gathered.

As like maternal uncle ritual; Surul, *adukkalai kanuthal* is also having certain incorporation and strengthening new and existing relatives in the family system. Through marriage it is reinforced that group of female is allowed to show their solidarity to groom. They are all showing motherly relation to the bride. So, they are all mother-in-law relations to groom. From senior to junior most will be allowed to do perform this ritual. They all give a gift to groom. Then they all gather at kitchen of groom's house there they hand over the bride to groom's mother by saying "take care of our daughter as you take care of your daughter". Without these three rituals in the marriage, marriage function will not get fulfilled.

After analyzing kinship and marriage, it has been found that marriage is an institution in which Nadars follow Dravidian Kinship as a whole at the same time religion plays an influential phenomenon within the Nadars (Hindu Nadars, Catholic, CSI and Ayya Vazhi). Though the notion of region is likely to be increased in the modern day (Thoothukudi, Tirunelveli and Kanniyakumari), recent economy and religion mediate with the same level status holders meet in the alliance. Profession of groom has much influence in vindicating the dowry and other gifts which groom would be given by bride family. Although the tradition way of having alliance still followed here and there in the community, education, emerging

new profession in the globalized world is gradually getting them away from the existing practices. It is to be noted that the major sub-group within the Nadars is known as Nattathi Nadars. They are controlled by their family. There are 63 group of family names found among the Nattathi Nadars. Each family is considered as a unit and it follows exogamous practice as well. As family is being exogamous, so, marrying within the family/group is prohibited. Despite it is prohibited/not entertained by the families, there are several examples could find from the field who have married from the same families. The reason behind that are recent emerging phenomena of economy, education and profession in abroad, migration etc. For Christians (Catholic and CSI) their associations take responsible in marriages. So, there will be no family/clan division rather religion as identity. Among the Christians (though it is Catholic or Protestants) marriage is not controlled by the family. But among the Nattathi Nadars despite they are Christians they still seek with family names before going any alliance except as above said recent emerging phenomena of economy, education and profession in abroad, migration. Even today many marriages are arranged after analyzing their family names.

Apart from these, the following things have been found as recently emerging issues within the community. They are some new issues such as ritual changes or ritual not in practice; inter-caste marriage which results as caste no bar in all the new alliances. It is also a good outcome from this to discuss by taking these phenomena as present crisis at society and culture. Thus, among the Nadars religion has a crucial role when the marriage alliance is being made. Taking this religion and other said issues in above will be dealt in detail in the next chapter on religion and ritual dynamics.

References and Notes

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- ¹ Durkheim E. 1984 (New York: The Free Press), 1997; *The Division of Labor in Society*, Macmillan Education Ltd. in Great Britain
 - ² Among Nattathi Nadars
 - ³ son of Bhadrakali
 - ⁴ blessed by the sage
 - ⁵ merchants
 - ⁶ who had dual conch
 - ⁷ who climbed on the shoulder of the Chettiyar
 - ⁸ who got reputation
 - ⁹ who had seen two banana in a plantain
 - ¹⁰ *Nallappan* this word is indicated to maternal uncle. It is used for saying as equaling to father of his sister child.
 - ¹¹ It is a Shrub, which cannot be used for furniture.
 - ¹² Also known as dumb man/woman
 - ¹³ It is also told as tale-bearer
 - ¹⁴ It is a folk measurement used for measuring grains. That Measurement is known as the eight part of a *maracal*.
 - ¹⁵ jack fruit
 - ¹⁶ basket
 - ¹⁷ Rajagobalan Rajeshwari (49), Nattathi of Tuticorin
 - ¹⁸ Valangai Vazhthu (Marriage Songs of Nadars).
 - ¹⁹ The literal meaning of *pen panam* is known as bride wealth.

- ²⁰Immanuel, M. 2002.*The Dravidian Lineages: A Socio-Historical Study: The Nadars through the age*.Nagercoil: Historical Research & Publication Trust. Pg.225.
- ²¹Locally known as Sutha or Kavithy.
- ²²S. Nalini (59), Perumalpuram of Kanniyakumari district
- ²³There is a practice among the Nattathi Nadars that first invitation is given to family goddess before issuing in to relatives, invitation is given to family goddess known as *Ammaiyaramman* temple (it is also known as *Adhi Adaikkalam Katha Amman*) located in Nattathi a village in Thoothukudi district of Tamilnadu. Nattathi village is believed to be the home town of all Nattathi Nadars. Once that invitation is offered to family goddess then only invitation will be issued to all the relatives and friends.
- ²⁴Koilmani (49), Muthalur of Tuthookudi district
- ²⁵A large broad-mouthed vessel similarly to the style of cauldron.
- ²⁶Marriage altar.
- ²⁷The whole premises of marriage shed including marriage altar.
- ²⁸Immanuel, M. 2002.*The Dravidian Lineages: A Socio-Historical Study: The Nadars through the age*.Nagercoil: Historical Research & Publication Trust. Pg.226-227.
- ²⁹*Peedom* or platform of wooden made.
- ³⁰According to elders from Nadars community as well as origin myths of Nadars, barbers are considered to be the eldest son of their family
- ³¹As banyan tree has milk contend, it is considered as an auspicious in all rituals especially marriage.
- ³²It is known as sokkaran (agnates) in another term.
- ³³Mr. M. Benny (Thuckaley of Kanniyakumari District).
- ³⁴In the local term it is known as *arambaiyar*.
- ³⁵Valangai Vazhthu
- ³⁶M.V. Ananthakumar, Nattathi of Thoothukudi district
- ³⁷Ms. Sasikumari (47).(Perumalpuram in Kanniyakumari District).
- ³⁸Sukumar.2005. *Political and Social History of Cheranadu*.Nagercoil: Shantini Publications. Pg.216.
- ³⁹Holy book for AyyaVazhi.
- ⁴⁰The word *ponmootti* is known as pon pootti. Pon means gold; pootti means who ties it. This word might have changed into poimootti and it is also known as golden tie.
- ⁴¹Sari's end.
- ⁴²*Madi* (hip/lap) + *palakaram* (various sweets)
- ⁴³Ms. C. Salet Mary (50) (Devashahayam Mount of Kanniyakumari District).
- ⁴⁴Ms. C. Salet Mary (50) (Devashahayam Mount of Kanniyakumari District).
- ⁴⁵Oil ritual.
- ⁴⁶It is also known as *uruli*.
- ⁴⁷a tablet with fourteen holes for playing.
- ⁴⁸The term for this locally known as *aruvaamanai*.
- ⁴⁹cow and goat.
- ⁵⁰Mr.M. Ramachandran (62) (Udangudi of Thoothukudi District).
- ⁵¹Mr. M.V. Ananthakumar (79)(Nattathi of Thoothukudi District).
- ⁵²Mr. S. Adithan (63) (Perumalpuram of Kanniyakumari District).
- ⁵³*munthirikothu*, *seedai*, *paniyaaram*, *urundai* and three types of *murukku* such as *suthumurukku*, *mullumurukku*, *achumurukku*.
- ⁵⁴Visiting Kitchen.
- ⁵⁵Claude Levi-Strauss.
- ⁵⁶Marcel Mauss.

CHAPTER - V
RELIGION AND RITUAL DYNAMICS

Among the Nadars they are categorized into two major groups on the basis of kinship and marriage. Nadars follow two major kinship and marriage practices. Nadars are the followers of village/family deity worship (especially among the Nattathi Nadars); they all become the part and parcel of *koottam*, which means clan. As they were converted into Christianity and other sects of Amma Vazhi, Ayya Vazhi they are tend to follow the sacraments prescribed by the Christianity. Thus they are the followers of sacraments guidelines of the Christianity each denomination of Christianity has separate social practice. These denominations are advising its followers to strictly follow its guidelines. Thus the practice followed by them is gradually getting away from its members. So, they all tend to be within the lineage, which considers as a lowest exogamous unit within their social structure. Lineage mates call one another a *pangali*, which means 'sharer'.

Introduction

Prior to the conversion, Nadars worshiped folk goddess (*amma vazhi*), Vaikunda Samy (*ayya vazhi*) way, ancestor worship (folk god and folk goddess), *Kanni*¹ and person who had been worshipping². The aforesaid deities were clubbed together as Hindu by the people as well as by every region.

After the conversion, Nadars started following two kinds of religious practices such as Catholicism and Protestants. It is to be noted that from the landscape point of view of Nadars, *Ayyanar* worship is found in the region of *theri*³ land of southern Tamilnadu. This land is found in Tiruchendur, Srivaikundam, Sathankulam, Nanguneri and Rathapuram regions of southern Tamilnadu. The word 'ayya' in Ayya Vazhi might have taken from the deity of *Ayyanar* which is predominant in the origin home land of Nadars, the affection as well as worship pattern of the tradition made a group of Nadars call Muthukutti or Vaikunda Samy principles as Ayya Vazhi. Thus Ayya Vazhi became as one of the new denominations among the Nadars.

Then the family worship/deity is observed as ancestors worship among the Nadars. As a result of migration, Nadars started founding new settlement and naming the new settlement including the naming of their deity after the ancestor name. It is interesting to note down the fact that one of the informants from Kanniyakumari district

expresses that our ancestors have migrated from east to west of this place, since they brought all their properties especially animals towards the new place/region agnates have settled down at various places. Another informant states that as a result of wrong decision towards some other agnates, and it was against to the agnates, obviously the agnates moved to some other places. That is how some of the villages of eastern part of Kanniyakumari and southern parts of Tirunelveli, Thoothukudi districts having migration stories about their origin.

From the observation found at the field that Nadars are to a very small extent of Hindus. They are of course not Hindus in caste; since they are not by birth and origin, members of the Hindu community: though in respect to their social position they occupy a backward community. But they do pay some honour to several of the Hindu gods, of whom two or three resemble their own deities; and especially attend the great annual festivals at major classical deities located in Kanniyakumari, Tirunelveli and Thoothukudi districts. Their own indigenous religion as aforementioned is of an entirely different kind.

Religious Denominations among the Nadars

Denomination means a religious group which has slightly differs from the beliefs of other groups which share the same religion. In the context of Christianity, “denomination” may be defined as ‘an organized Christian Church or tradition or religious group or Community of believers or aggregates of worship centres or congregations usually within a country, whose component congregations and members are called by the same name in different areas’, regarding themselves as an autonomous Christian church distinct from the other denominations, Churches and traditions. At the same time in Hinduism, “denomination” may be defined as ‘under the organized structure of temple in a village or believe tradition or any group of believers of community’, it is identified by its different kinds of worship patterns the same is termed as various religious sects under one common dogma.

Nadars follow Catholicism, Protestants such as church of south India, Assembly of God; Ayya Vazhi, Amma Vazhi and other ancestor worship. It can be classified as the followers of Christianity and Hinduism. The Christian Nadars of southern

Tamilnadu are the part and parcel of the following church and organization namely Kanniyakumari diocese⁴, Thoothukudi-Nazareth diocese⁵, Tirunelveli Diocese⁶, Kottar⁷, Kuzhithurai⁸, Palayamkottai⁹, and Thoothukudi¹⁰. The follower of Hindu organized institution is known as Ayya Vazhi, which is headed by the place known as *Samithoppu* where the founder of this religious sect was born. Numerable groups follow this religious practice in the following regions of Kanniyakumari, southern parts of Tirunelveli and Thoothukudi regions.¹¹ Apart from this Amma Vazhi and ancestors worship also found among Nadars of south Tamilnadu.

Another Christian denomination is known as Sattampillai Vedham. Arumai Nayakam Sattampillai (1823 – 1918), who is popularly known as Arumainayagam Sattampillai, was a native of Mukuperi village of Thoothukudi district. He was a Tamilian, got converted to Anglican Church, a catechist and the founder of first indigenous and independent Hindu Church of Lord Jesus. By rejecting Western missionaries' domination for the first time in the history of Indian subcontinent he introduced this subversion. This paved a way for developing a fusion model of Hindu-Christian religion while remaining will free from the interference of European missionaries. It was established to fight against the leading Western dominated institutionalized churches and also to express and interpret Christianity and Biblical text in Indian context socially, culturally, and religiously. In the year of 1857 he founded Hindu Christian Church of Lord Jesus. People of Ayangudi, Kulatthukkudi, Saalaiputhur, Vazhaiyadi, Pattaikkarai, Pantrimadal and Vavutthaan Kuppam embraced this new form of religion.

Life Cycle Ceremonies of Nadars

The major practices, which are celebrated among all sects of Nadars, are given as in the following:

Initiation Ceremony

Among the Nadars, there is a practice that delivery should be held at girl's birth place. So, after the pregnancy on particular month (it could be between seventh month and ninth month) pregnant woman is sent to her mother's house after conducting a small gathering at husband's house. On the day of gathering¹² bride's (now the pregnant

woman) mother-in-law will tell her that “*madi niraiya pora, madi niraiya vaa*” which means “you are going with full of your lap, as like that come home with full of your lap”. Here the word ‘*niraiya*’ means ‘full’ emphasizes the pregnancy and child birth. After the pregnancy a woman may be having her stomach as like full, after the delivery the baby should be kept in the arm of mother by holding the baby over the stomach. In order to emphasize that symbolically it is told in the gathering where the woman is sent to her mother’s place for the delivery.

After the delivery, the process of selecting names takes place in a family (both Hindu and Christians). It is considered as auspicious and prosperous for the family that if a child is born as normal birth. If it is not then both sides of the father and mother of child feels that maternal uncle of the child and its grandfather (especially father’s lineage), may get affected by any bad health or sometimes death also. In order to save from uncertainty in the family, family plans for holy feast in the family deity premises, where all the people are invited for the grand dinner. Now the child is ready to have ‘*senai*’ an ethnic liquid food which is made of Palmyra sugar, black dry grapes, and water. It is given by maternal uncle of the baby. This is the first fed to the child. But nowadays, as delivery held at hospital the first food of ‘*senai*’ is given at home once new born baby and mother reach home.

Apart from the sub-groups of the Nadars, there are two major divisions in terms of religious practices: Christian Nadars and Hindu Nadars. They have different naming ceremonies as per their religious customs. Christians prefer to do the naming ceremony at their respective churches such as Catholic, and Protestant churches. The ceremony is conducted by the church priests. Catholics and CSI’s naming ceremony is done after the first month to the child at their churches. Persons who belong to Pentecostal such as Assembly of God, Salvation Army prefer to celebrate at the age of eighteenth or nineteenth of the child.¹³ *Amma Vazhi* practitioners celebrate their ritual at their family god/goddess temples. *Ayya Vazhi* practitioners do this naming ceremony at their home. It is conducted by the priest who is none other than the family elder.

Nattathi Nadars children’s naming ceremony is celebrated at their family god/goddess temples. Some families celebrate in the temples of Lord Murugan of

Tiruchendur from the places of Tirunelveli, Thoothukudi, Kanniyakumari districts. And also goddess *Meenakshi* located in Madurai from the places near around the Madurai districts. Name selection depends upon child's parents' wishes; no one will interfere in it.¹⁴ Probably the name selection may be related to husband's parent's name. If the baby is male, then the name may start with husband's father's name. If it is a girl, the name may start with husband's mother's name. After the naming ceremony, name is written down to see horoscope for the child. The date of birth is very important for numerology. Nattathi Nadars believe strongly in numerology.¹⁵

Nevertheless religion makes some changes in the society (within the Nadars), life cycle practices seemed to be unique. From delivery, naming, *kathu kuthu*, *mudi eduthal* most of them are associated with the day to day life styles. So, it has certain uniqueness. There is some changes may be seen based on the religious role in the life cycle practices such as naming at church, temple; maintenance of name register in the village is more appreciated in church organizations rather than other Ayya Vazhi, Amma Vazhi denominations. The reason behind this is might be the institution of religion is more politically organized rather other denominations.

Fifteenth day after the child born (post-delivery), a small function is held at the place of child's mother's mother.¹⁶ It is a function which is celebrated for making that house ambience as new one as early it had before the delivery. As the delivery used to happen at home in those days, it was considered as impure one as far as the people concerned. The same dogma still continues though the delivery is done at hospital. For making the house as normal situation family celebrates this function by calling close relatives to the function. Rice, eggs, sesame oil are gifted by the relatives. After this ceremony the mother who gave birth to the child can move around the house also go to temple, church etc. this function is generally known as '*pathinainchu*' which means locally fifteenth day.

As fifteenth day is opened to a mother to go around the places she wants, this **forty first day** post to the delivery allows a new born baby to be carried away by culture. On the day of forty first the family is planning for a special prayer at temple (most probably at village god), for Christians it is at church, after completing prayer and

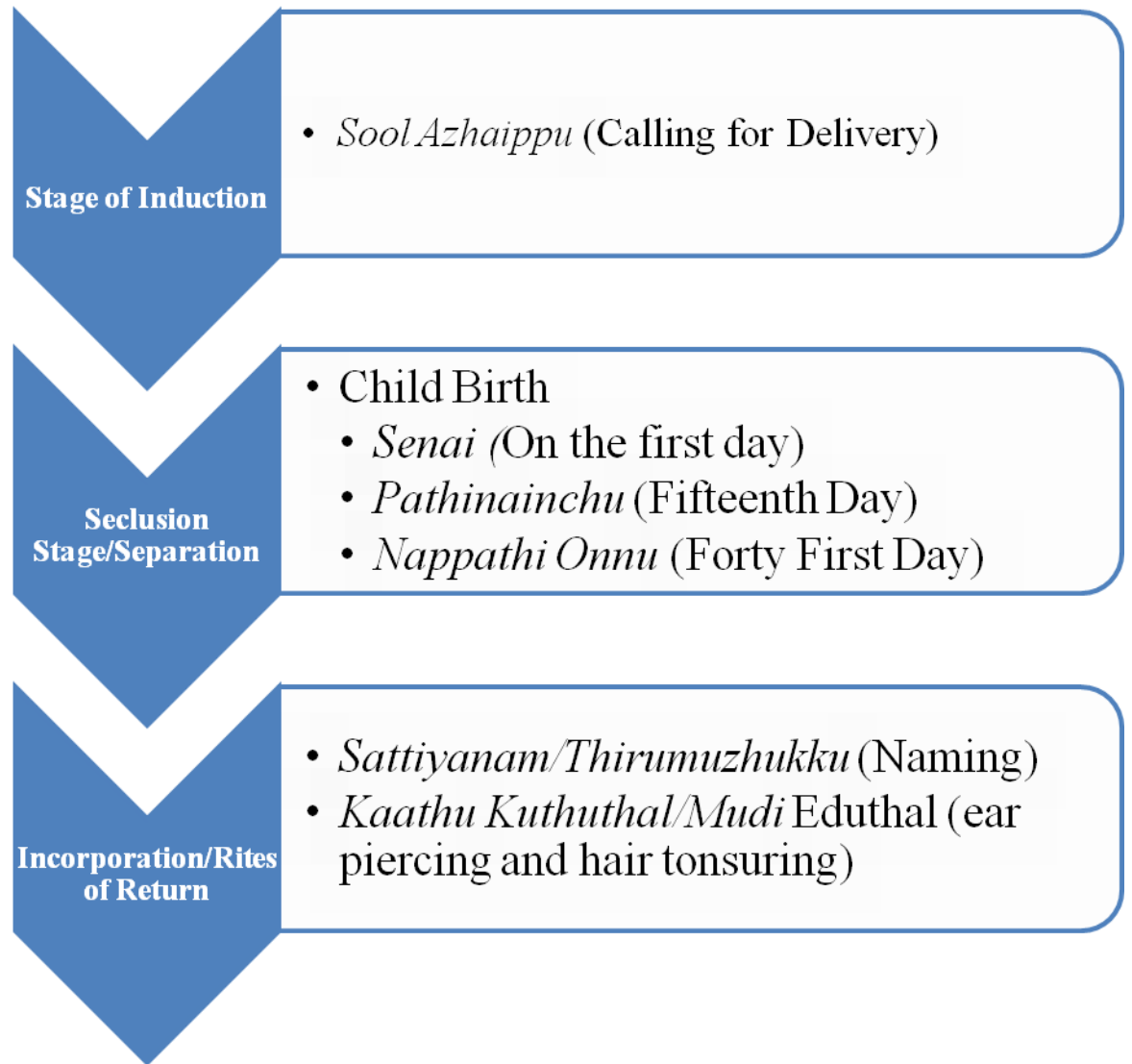
food offering to close relations now the baby is allowed to go anywhere along with mother.

Kathu Kuthu and Mudi Eduthal (Ear Piercing and Head Tonsuring)

A peculiar custom associated with most of the families in this community is ear piercing. This practice is done for both boys and girls. The goldsmith is invited to the premise where the ceremony is observed. If it is a girl, ear ring is preferred and if it is a boy ear stud (*kadukkan*¹⁷) is preferred. *Kadukkan* is a kind of stud inlaid with stone which is worn purely by men. This ear stud is given by the maternal uncle. If there two or more maternal uncles, the right to present ear stud goes to the eldest person among the maternal uncles. Others may choose different responsibilities in the ceremony. One may take the responsibility for giving ear stud, another one may take care of the feast expenses, and someone may take the responsibility of buying cloths for the child. So, the responsibilities are distributed by the family among the kinship.

Another similar ceremony is ‘putting the ring or stud on the nose’. This is done for boys in a family. If anyone is deceased or get affected by ghost, then the family will decide to offer a ritual (known as *Asanam*) to their family deity or village deity. Most of the Hindu Nadars, who are the residence of Tirunelveli, southern part of Thoothukudi, some eastern part of Kanniyakumari district prefer their rituals to be done at Suyambulinga Swamy of Uvari, which is located in Tirunelveli district. Second preference is given to their family god. Most of the Christian Nadars prefer St. Antony Church, St. Michael Church and St. Francis Xavier Church for this function. According to the folks, this ceremony is followed only because satisfying of sometime gratifying the folk god/folk goddess. In those days there were many frequent deaths. As they were not having effective medicines and other health facilities as they are available now, so most of the people depended upon beliefs in their family god/goddess.¹⁸ If a child was born in a family, then parents may give a name of family god/goddess to the child. On the first birth day, a feast is organized at the premises of family god/goddess temple which will be attended by all the relatives.”¹⁹

Figure 5.1: The depiction and the Process of Initiation Ceremony of Nadars



Generally, a notion is found among the Nadars is that naming great grandfather's name to grandson is observed as increasing the wealth of family. It has been found from the proverb which is told among the Nadars.

<i>Kulam</i>	<i>vilanka</i>	<i>paattan</i>	<i>peyar</i>	<i>vida</i>	<i>vendum</i>
Clan/family	to be resplendent	great-grandfather	name	to put/give	need

Give your great grandfather's name to the grandchildren then the family will be resplendent forever

If a family wants to be blessed by an ancestor, then the family should give his great grandfather's name to his child. The importance of family lineage is thus emphasized in this proverb and it also reveals the family solidarity with bygone generation. By naming a great grandfather's name to a grandson, it is understood that the next generation accepts the tradition through that family. Thus a family's harmony gets revealed through every ceremony. In those days, among the Nadars there was a practice of giving the name of grandparent to the grandchildren especially to elder grandson/daughter. Though it is being followed by some families, its importance gradually loses in the modern family life system.²⁰

Puberty Celebration

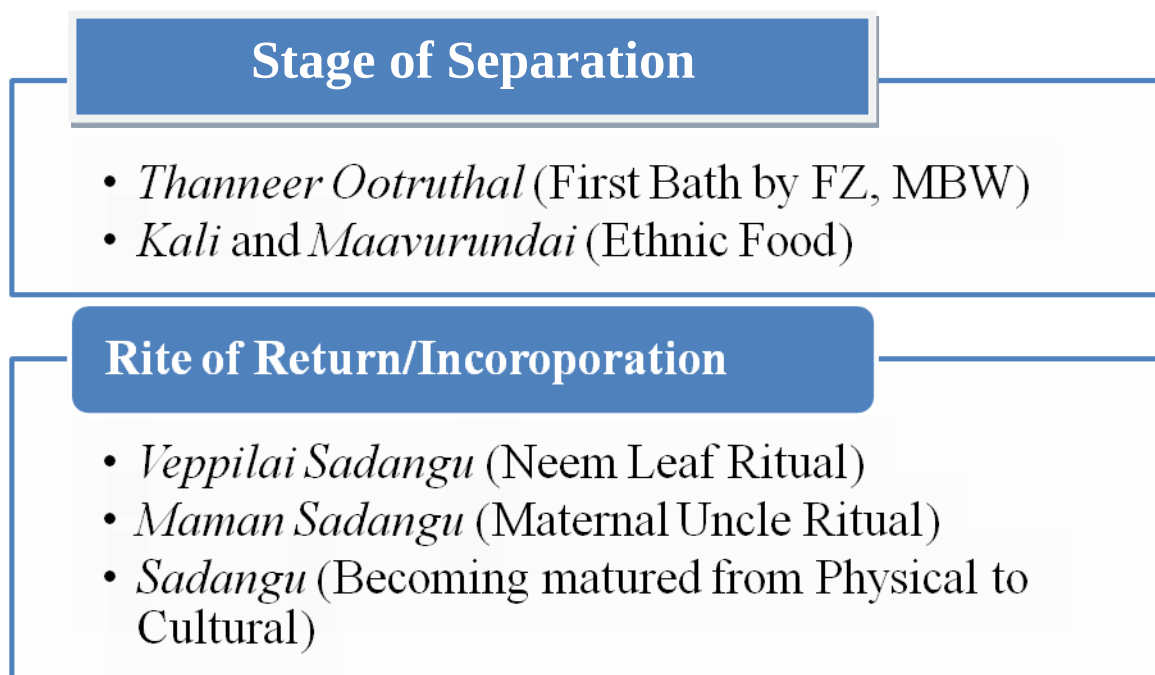
As soon as the girl attains puberty, immediately girl's mother will inform her mother (girl's grandmother (mother's mother)). This is a custom²¹ to convey the message to grandmother about the puberty.²² It is considered as an auspicious for the girl's future. On the first day the girl's aunt (FZ) comes for celebrating the ceremony. Thereafter girl will be given ethnic food for three to seven days or sometimes till the date of grand celebration is done. And also the following rituals are observed:

Neem Leaf Ritual (*Veppilai Sadangu*)

A minor ritual of medicinal bath is prepared for the girl. It may happen on the last day of the puberty celebration. All ritual practices are done by women who are immediate relatives of the girls. For example, MBW and FZ/FZD are the eligible persons for the customs in the ceremony. One group of people prepares water for bathing the girl. In the warm water they put neem leaves and turmeric which are antioxidants and it is believed to be purifying the girl. By conducting taking neem leaf bath the girl is getting purified.²³ Thereafter girl's MBW and FZ or FZD will bring the girl in front of the house. As soon as the neem leaf ritual bath is over, family allows the girl to enter the house as a new girl (as viewed by the informant and the same is taken for analyzing). At that time a piece of ember is given in the girl's hand. With that ember in the hand, she has to enter into the house. Probably it may happen in the seventh day after the girl attains puberty. Then small feast is served to the close relatives. That day

maternal uncle gives some gift/cloths to the girl.²⁴ According to maternal uncles' preference the puberty ritual may be celebrated in a grand manner. On the first day when the girl comes to know about her puberty, the initial rituals are conducted by the relatives from the father's side. The last day of the grand celebration would be conducted in the presence of maternal uncles.

Figure 5.2: The Process of Puberty Ritual among the Nadars



The presence of Maternal Uncle in Puberty ceremony (*Maman Sandangu*)

Women from the Nadars believe that it is good for their daughter to be under the protective care of the maternal uncle.²⁵ So, during the puberty ceremony if the eldest maternal uncle is absent, the family members places one coconut where maternal uncle is supposed to sit. The coconut is given to status of maternal uncle. Then family gives the due honor to the coconut. Maternal uncle/s is/are so important in puberty ceremony. It is practiced by most of the Amma Vazhi followers and Nattathi Nadars.²⁶ Among the Nattathi Nadars it is found that in the absence of maternal uncle, girl's mother places an

arecanut cutter (pincers) beside the girl. Only then the puberty ritual is conducted as usual.²⁷

Marriage

Nadars follow an endogamous practice when they are considered caste as group. Also they follow exogamous practice when they go for alliance from outside the family.²⁸ This section on marriage gives an outline of marriage practices among Nadars.

On a decided day, the groom's family goes to the house of the bride and provides the gift which is called *Parisam* (nuptial present) is supposed to be given to the bride's father. Thus it is considered as confirmation. For having an auspicious in the ritual, on the day before the marriage, a pole is fixed in the front yard of the groom's/bride's house. The pole may be a stick of some *Paal maram*²⁹, such as banyan tree, fig tree, peepal tree etc. or sometime Palmyra timber is also used, one among those trees is taken on purpose; after that *pandal* (shed) is constructed which would also be decorated with clean white cloths. A square dais of earth is made at the centre of *pandal* (shed) for conducting marriage ritual that is known as *Manavarai* (marriage hall). A bamboo stick or a branch of a fig tree is taken, and garlands are put upon it. This stick is planted in south-west corner (*kanni*) of the *pandal* (shed). A full measurement of paddy with holding a lamp on the top of it is placed. During the time of installation of the pole, a broken coconut and betel are offered to the god/goddess. The barber is sent to fetch some more fig stick and leaves. Stick is fixed at the centre of yard, which is known as "*Arasanie*"; three cups of cotton seed and a measurement of rice are kept at the bottom of the *Arasanie* along with *Pillaiyar* (Lord Vinayaka), which is made of cow-dung; three coconuts, and three baskets of betel. This total event is known as "*Ur Vethalai/Ur azhaippu*" which stands inviting village to the function.

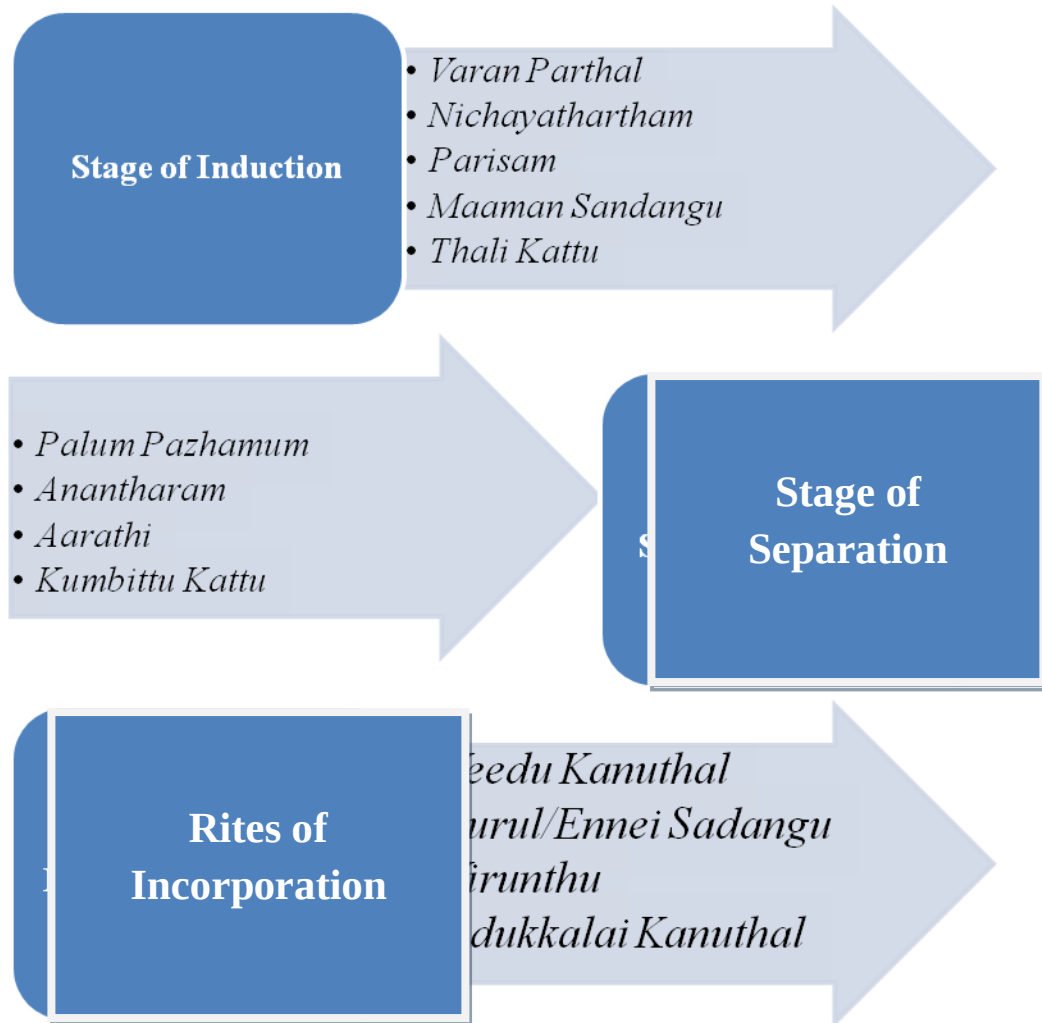
Maternal uncle is allowed to sit on the *Manavarai* facing towards east. Then the priest takes a handful of rice and a few of the leaves of peepal tree, now uncle who is sitting on stool facing northern wards and twenty-one measures of rice and five coconuts (odd number is preferred) are given to him, with pair of cloths. This time groom is seated in the *Manavarai* facing towards east, and priest takes a hand full of rice and a

few fig leaves and waves three times on groom's head. Then he throws them off towards the four directions. After that, the groom stands up and walks around the *Manavarai*, after which he kneels down in front of his uncle for seeking blessing. The whole event is known as '*maman sadangu*'.

As soon as groom reaches bride's house, bride's brother receives groom. Then groom will be waiting for bride's arrival. This event is known as *Ethirmalai Santhanam*.

Another ritual is known as *Anantharam* (agnates blessing) conducted on the day of marriage after thali tying. A pot of water is placed in front of the groom. Agnates of groom will be coming one by one for doing this ritual. Agnate picks up a few fig leaves (sometime jack fruit leaves) and dip them in the pot and with the leaves dripping wet with water and is waved to groom's head for three times. It is observed as an obligatory for all the agnates of groom to participate in the ritual.

Figure 5.3: The Process of Marriage Rites in Diagram



***Moi* (Presentation)**

Moi seithal is identified as presentation or giving money to the host in the life cycle ceremony. It has the quality of reciprocal in nature. A person may give money or any other valuable materials in kind as gift.³⁰ Given amount is noted down in a record as the *Moi* collection and it is practiced by each and every family.³¹ Based on this record *Moi* is decided for other relatives. People will also give *Moi* in other life cycle ceremonies such as house warming ceremony, puberty ceremony.³² As it is mentioned

earlier, it is observed as a reciprocal in nature. So as to say if a person receives *Moi*, he or that family is obliged to return the favor.

Food offering as Holy Feast (*Asanam*) to family god

Food offering has religious importance among the Nadars. For Hindu Nadars and Christian Nadars *asanam* is one of the ritual practices celebrated by the southern Tamil Nadu especially in Kanniyakumari, Thoothukudi and Tirunelveli districts. For Ayya Vazhi Nadars it is known as '*thuvaiyal panthi*'³³ celebrate it as one of their village events. The preferred premises are the churches and saints' temples. It is served to the largest quantity of people. Sacrificed animals (such as goat, cock etc.) will be made as curry and it is served to people along with the rice and other side dishes. Holy feast which is offered at village level given for the following reasons,

1. Before the village festival
2. Before any special day (feast of any saints or god/goddess)
3. Before the marriage
4. To obtain good health for ailing children
5. Person who got benefited from the god/goddess or saints will give *Asanam* to all relatives or to the whole villagers

Although this *asanam* is observed among the Hindu, Christian Nadars, the concept of *asanam* is entirely taken place for practicing in churches.³⁴ To have this feast event at holy places it is found some reasons for having it in the following churches and temples. They are:

1. St. Antony's Church: to get released from long day diseases and supernatural temptations.
2. St. Francis Xavier Church: for getting better from body ailments
3. St. Michael Archangel: to relief from the devil's possession; for the welfare of defense personal and travelers
4. St. Mary's churches such as 'Our Lady of Health', 'Our Lady of Lourdes', 'Our Lady of Sorrows', 'Our Lady of Betrothal for ladies'

It is also to be noted that as this *asanam* is celebrated at village level, it is also observed at family life cycle ceremonies. In this function, the family shares food with close relatives (clan/family) and whoever has been invited to this function. It is a small quantity of food offered to the destitute people. Vegetarian food is served in this function. This holy feast which is offered at family level given for the following reasons:

1. For ancestors' soul get rest in peace and his/her family welfare
2. As an act of gratitude for the release from evils, a small feast is conducted at family in the name of any notable saints
3. After harvesting (the first rice will be served for the poor)

Funeral Ceremony

After receiving the message of death from relatives' family, the relatives will bring oil, *cikakkai* (soap nut powder) and rice. The female members are not expected to go to the burial ground. Among the Nattathi Nadars, if the deceased person is an eldest one, the body will be cremated. Rest of the groups of Hindus (Ayya Vazhi, Amma Vazhi), Christians are burying the body at graveyard at their village or at their garden³⁵. If man is dead, the body will be buried in a sitting position facing the east. If it is woman, the body will be buried facing towards the north. An unmarried person is buried by placing in flattened position.³⁶ If any death occurs in Nattathi Nadar villages, the body has to be buried or cremated before 6PM.³⁷ There are many proverbs to emphasize the kinship roles and their responsibilities in the family. It is better to mention the following two proverbs as examples. First one relates the relationship of agnates of deceased (although male or female) and the second one speaks of sister's relationship to the deceased.

For Child (male and female)

If any child (male or female) dies, the body is brought to ritual bath then it is covered in a neem leaf mat. While giving bath to the body turmeric and coconut oil are

applied. Most probably the body is buried. If it is an elder boy/girl, that will be cremated at cremation ground. The reason is that if any magician comes to know about the elder boy/girl's death in a family he may take the skull of the dead person. He may be using it for his magical activities. That is why the elders are cremated. Generally, there is no ritual for death of children. It is not entertained by the family.

For Adult (for bachelors/spinsters)

There is no ritual for those who die as they are in bachelors/spinsters. Dead body is tied tightly. Shell blowing will not be there for them. Body is immediately taken to cremation ground and cremation is followed there. For the person who dies in their bachelors and spinsters period for them *Kadaathu*³⁸, dissolving the ash of dead person are not practiced. They are all considered as a virgin. So, they will be considered as one of their gods or goddesses. Whenever there is a function in the family, these persons are worshiped at that time. A cloth or *paalum pazhamum* (a mixed stuff of milk (cow milk or coconut milk), jaggery and banana) is offered to them on the day of function in the family. One more practice is also followed that dhoti or sari is given to some poor in the name of the person who died.

For Adult

If any person is in the stage of his/her out of condition of healthy level, first the family is giving milk to him/her. This event is done by all of close relatives to the person. Then salt with sesame oil is given to the person. The reason is that body should not be decayed till it gets buried or cremated. If the person dies, this is given after the death with the help of spoon.

If it is woman, women will gather there and cover the place and arrangement will be taken for bathing the body. If it is man, men will gather there and cover the place and arrangement will be taken for bathing the body. As soon as the bathing ceremony is getting over, the ritual is followed.

If the person dies when her husband is alive, flower, tali, thilak will not be removed or taken from the body till it gets buried or cremated. Although it is male or female, the person will be buried in sitting manner and the face will be towards south.

Tying the pulse (*Naadikkattu*)

The person's jaw is tied in a black or white color cloth around the head. The big toe of the legs will also be tied. Both hands are kept on the stomach (if it is normal) or body will be kept in a chair, where it is located in a car. The whole event/practice is known as *naadikkattu* (tying the pulse).

Pit is made for burial

The information of death is announced to barber for digging pit for the burial. He is taking important roles in the Nadars' funeral rituals. Then the pit is made to be ready for burial or cremation. There tamarind wooden pieces are spread in the pit for some height then coconut husk (along with the fibre based material) is spread for some height. Once the arrangement is over a cactus will be planted near to the ground.

Making Car/hearse (*ther kattuthal*)

If person had seen grand children, for him/her car is made for taking him/her to burial place. Car is made in a triangle shape and tender coconut, tender plantain are tied and snacks such as *murukku*, *adhirasam* and *vadai* are kept in front of the body. The adoration will be done to car as a car how it would be decorated. Now Kudimahan (barber) takes major role in the ritual. He brings coconut leaves and makes it as mat type of sheet to be kept in front of the house. By putting leaves in front of the house it shows that a person has died in the family. So, that it will be noticed by the whole villages. Then barber decorates the car and body to take into burial ground.

Buying new cloths (*kodi edutthal*)

When the decoration of hearse is going on, at that time all agnates will go for buying the things such as pot, sandal powder, coconut, incense sticks, *kiramachi root* (a aromatic root), rice (one kg.), white towel (it is also known as *pillayaar thundu*) which

are needed to do the funeral ceremony. At other side all brothers-in-law will go for purchasing new cloths. The cloths are given to the family by the following relationships: if male dies the cloth will be given by his sisterhood relatives. If female dies, cloth will be given by her brotherhood relatives. Apart from this, the persons who became as relatives through marriage they will also take a part in this ritual.

All relatives are bringing rice, coconut oil/sesame oil, turmeric in a palm fiber basket to the death place. In other side, a group of women (sisters-in-law, grant children and kinswomen) will be pounding paddy for putting rice in the mouth of the dead person.

Holy Water (*neermaalai edutthal*)

All agnates are going to take water from the well which is located in the shrine. Now barber is blowing the shell while the agnates are going to take water. Sometime grant children will also go along with the team. Generally three pots of water will be taken for dead body's bathing. While return back home some of them would take bathing then all apply sacred ash in their forehead. Once they reach home, water is given for bathing. Some water will be left for pouring in the pot (*kollikalayam*) which is carried in the dead body procession. In the pot a grass called *tarpaipul*, mango leaves are kept in the centre of the pot. Then turmeric and sandal are applied to dead body. The elder son should carry the pot till the cremation or burial ground.

Rice for Mouth (*Vaikkarici*)

The pounded rice is kept in a silver pot for dropping into the mouth of deceased person. Elder of the son has to carry it and take three rounds to the body. As soon as this ritual gets over, all other relatives will be ready to drop rice into the mouth of deceased person.

Glorifying the Name

All women gather separately in a place which would be very near to the body. They would sing the reputation of the person and about the loss to the family because of his death.

Procession to burial ground/cremation ground

As soon as the glorifying the death person name is done, the procession starts from the house itself. The pot is given to eldest son in family by barber he carries the pot till cremation/burial ground. The decorated car where the body is kept and snacks are offered will be carried by the agnates to the death person. If anyone dies on Saturday the body is carried along with a cock. The cock is kept underneath of the hearse. There is a believe on the person who dies on Saturday that he/she will not go to burial ground/cremation ground alone. He/she will call someone with him/her to the ground. That is the reason a killed cock is kept under the hearse.

Burial/Cremation

Once the body is brought to burial/cremation, it is kept in the direction of south (head) to northwards (legs). Before the body is brought to the cremation / burial ground, three rounds will be made (clock wise and anti-clock wise) with body then only it is kept in the ground.

Barber is doing head tonsuring for the sons of dead persons. Once this tonsuring duties is getting over, barber will call all the relatives (most of males are seen) to drop the rice into dead person's mouth. While calling the all agnates barber has to blow the shell till dropping rice into dead person's mouth. Same rice will be kept in front of the body to be dropped in the mouth of body. Agnates and other relatives have to drop the rice into mouth as well as three drops of water into mouth. The plate which is kept in front of the body in that agnates and relatives will put some amount. Once dropping the rice into mouth is getting over, those amounts will be given to barber and dooby. Finally, elder son drop three hands of rice into mouth of body. The left rice and amount will be given to barber and dooby.

Then five or six coconuts will be broken and kept it near to the burial ground. Along with that sandal and some other perfumes also kept near the place. There after body is kept on the altar of the cremation place. If the person (died) had worn any ornaments it will be removed and it is given to the relatives. Died person's ornament, which have got from her mother side those will be shared with her daughters only which means it goes to women only. Further it is divided as follows:

1. Ornaments of neck – shared with son/grandson
2. Ornaments from ear, nose, hand and leg – shared with daughter/granddaughter

Then the body is kept for burning. All relatives take leave once, the body is burned. The things whatever were brought to burial ground/cremation along with body will not be taken back home. If husband dies wife's wedding sari will be burned along with the husband body.

As soon as the cremation is getting over, all agnates are gathered there in the cemetery. There will be a ritual called *maathu* in which barber and doobby are paid for their duty in the funeral ceremony. Dobby has to spread a white cloth in the place where all agnates meet after the cremation of the body. The whole ritual is conducted by the barber. There barber will bring the plate which was kept near the corpse for agnates shares. It will be taken to the place where the agnates gathered. Elder of the family will give the share in the presence of village head.

Ceremony at house (after coming from cremation/burial)

Coffee will be served, along with the banana. It is done by brothers-in-law of the family. Except the sons of the death person would eat at night. At night one set of people would go to cremation ground to check the corpse whether had burned fully or not. If not, they will stay there till corpse gets burned.

Kaadaathu (The next day event of death)

The next day to death, two to four persons (most probably agnates) will go to cremation ground for the ritual called *Kaadaathu*. For that milk, curd, tender coconut,

ghee and oil are taken to cremation ground. Once they reach cremation ground, a *pillaiyar* is made in clay in front the *pillaiyar* incense is put. The team will go to cremation place along with barber. There they dig the ash, find the bones. Two or three bones are taken from the body such as head, hand, legs, and chest. Then all bones are washed in the liquid which have been brought from home such as oil, curd, milk, tender coconut, ghee. During this ritual all agnates should be present. Then all bones are put in a small pot. It is tied with a white cloth; finally it is given to eldest son of the family. The water which was used for cleaning and all other wastes will be thrown at the cremation ground itself. While they return home, a cactus is planted nearest place to the cremation. Then nine granaries will be thrown on the cactus by the agnates. Now, the barber is giving the pot which contains the bone to eldest son of the family.

In those days, pot which contains bone is tied in a rope and kept in a store room for a year. Till the pot is thrown to sea, functions are not celebrated in the family. But in those days, on the day of *Kaadaathu* pot is thrown in the sea. If any unmarried person dies, at the final stage during *Kaadaathu*, mustard seeds and basil seeds are sowed from the cremation ground to till the home. Once the team reaches home rice gruel is served (only rice), as a side dish horse gram chutney is served. It is to be noted that, the gruel is served in palm-leaf plate only.

***Vilaku Vaithal* (Lighting lamp)**

After the cremation, the first phase celebration is celebrated for eight days. On the first eight days, during evening, varieties of snacks are made at house to be given to relatives. It will be going for eight days. Before giving the snacks to relatives first, it will be offered in a plate in the name of the person who died. Then only it is served to all. When this ritual is celebrated at that time lamp will light up in front of the photo of died person or if photo is not kept lamp will light up in memory of the person. The interesting thing is that after the eighth day, rice is cooked in a family (after the death). Till that time rice gruel and the snacks which are made in the evening only is given to the family.

Adiyantharam/kizhamai (Day celebration)

Odd day is seen for the celebration of *adiyanthram*. Days are seen as follows seventh or ninth. On the day of *adiyanthram* feast is served to all relatives. Before the day of *adiyanthram* information is sent to all agnates by the family members. The yesterday to *adiyanthram* the day is known as *kizhamai*. On the evening of *kizhamai* day boiled chowli bean is given to all relatives whoever comes to the family. After that all women and grand-daughters/sons will mourn at night. While they are mourning they will tell the reputation of the person and his/her significance in the family. There will also be a team for mourning sometime they will be called for that. They are also paid for that.

The next day *adiyanthram* is celebrated. On the day of *adiyanthram* feast is made for all relatives. Feast will be there in veg and non-veg. before the feast starts there will be ritual done by barber. Barber makes a small crib in tamarind trunks. In front of that small crib Pongal is offered. Elder daughter conducts this ritual. The next ritual is called *kaappu kattuthal* is celebrated followed by the Pongal offering. This ritual is conducted by the barber. Barber ties a yellow thread on elder son's hand. In front of the house the crib is kept and Pongal is also offered to the person. This time barber makes a small garland in palm flower for adorning the small crib. Along with the Pongal, chowli bean and *thadiyankaai* (a watery vegetable shape of cylindrical type. Most probably it is used in making curry).

Then three broken pieces of bricks are taken and put it in a vessel. It is covered with a white cloth along with flower adornments. Now the barber gives this pot to eldest son to carry till cremation/burial ground. Barber blows the shell till the team reaches to cremation ground. All other agnates will also go. There is a place in between cremation ground and house where this ritual is performed. There brothers-in-law of the family give cloths to their wife's brothers which means their brothers-in-law. Once the ritual place receives three plantains, lamp of Kamatchi (in other words it is known as hand lamp), betel vine, coconut spathe, tender coconut, incense are taken for the ritual. Barber is giving the each piece of coconut spathe to all agnates having carried the spathe they

take a round to the vessel where the three broken pieces of bricks. Like that all agnates take part in this ritual. As soon as this ritual is getting over, the remaining things are thrown to the pond or some other water sources. Now the vessel is dipped in the water. Once the vessel is started sinking in water, after that the team will come back home. Till vessel gets sunk in water the team will stay there at pond.

Now barber cuts the yellow thread which was tied in the wrist of elder son. During that time a coconut is broken and this yellow thread is kept in one the broken coconuts. Then the barber and doobby are paid for their duty from the day of funeral ceremony to till the *Adiyanthram*. While giving the amount to barber and doobby amount is given in left hand. The reason is told that the family does not want to have a ceremony like this. So, the amount is given in the left hand. Simultaneously, food will be ready for all people at home. All relatives are invited for this dinner.

At night a special meals will be made for the person who died. It should be made in a new clay pot. Generally no one will eat this food but the food will be kept for him/her. But nowadays it is kept in front of the person's photo. This ritual is known as *rendaanchoru* (second rice).

Moi (gift)

Whoever is coming for the *adiyanthram*, they give some amount to the family. Nowadays the amount from rupees hundred to five hundred is given. Whereas in those days it had been one rupee to two rupee (approximately thirty to forty years back).

On the day of *kaadaathu* all relatives are bringing one *pakka* rice (a local measurement which is equal to 2 and 1/2kg amount), coconut/sesame oil for 50 ml to the family. Most of the families give their share in the form of above said things such as rice and oil. But nowadays it has become as in the form of money.

The reason for this practice could be described as follows: “in those days women were not employed as like equal to men. In family income was much depended up on men. When the earning person dies in a family, their survival will be in big trouble. So, that is the reason agnates (male line and female line) of the person who dies help the

family for temporary till the family comes out from the sorrow of the event. This gift practicing is a supportive element in the family in terms of economic”. Sometime the quantity of rice amount would be in several sacks once they count after the presentations.³⁹

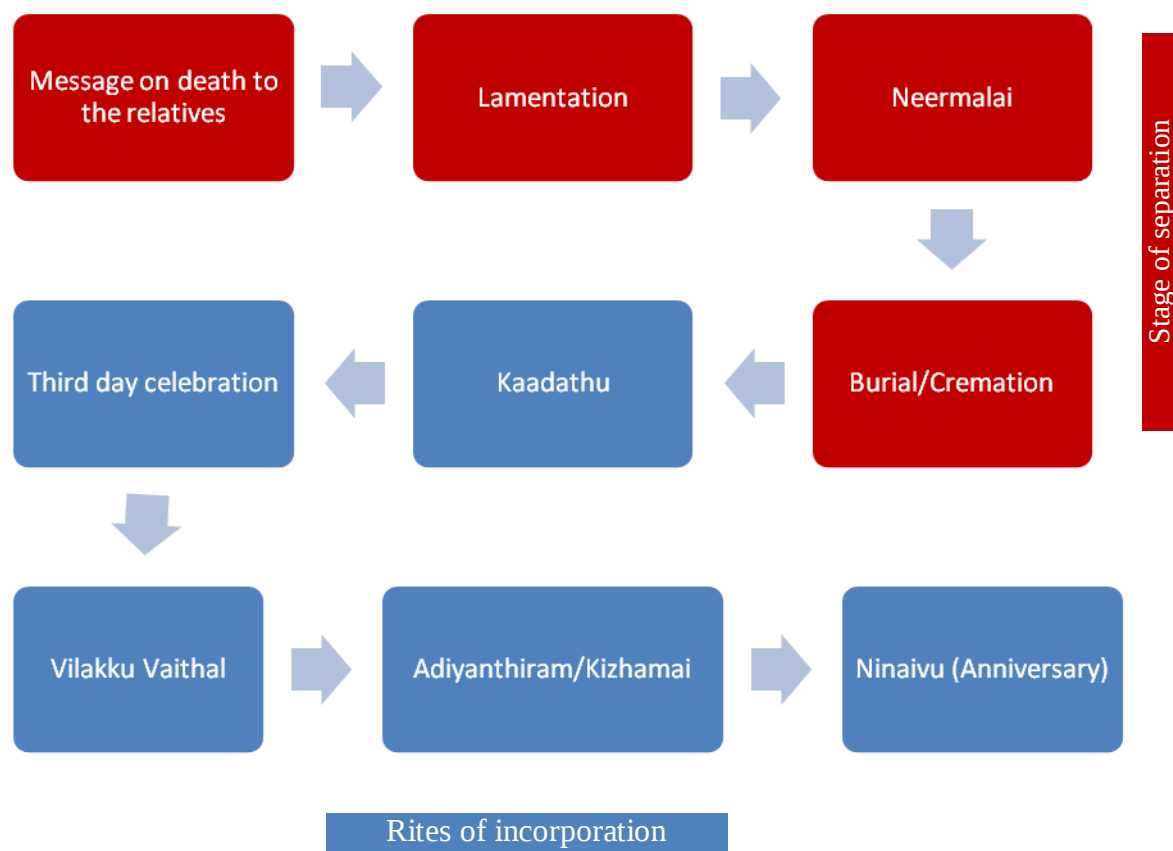
Sixteenth day

On the day of sixteenth all agnates gather. Several kinds of snacks such as *vadai* (made of pulses and black gram), sesame snacks, and other varieties are made to offer for the persons who died. Then tender palm fruit and toddy sap are also offered along with boiled eggs, puppet. All the things will be offered in quantity of five or seven. In this ritual, most probably blood relatives will only gather.

However, the same offering ritual is followed in the following days such as forty first day, then annual anniversary of death. After the completion of annual anniversary celebration only, the functions are celebrated in the family.

It would be more relevant the funeral ritual of Nadars depicting in the sequence of as it is held in the context. The following diagram explains the process of ritual of funeral of Nadars.

Figure 5.4: The sequences of the ritual of Funeral of Nadars



Folk Views on Funeral ritual

It is found in the field that for agnates it is an obligatory one in all the life cycle ceremonies in the family. Thus they are obliged to follow certain norms in the community as family views on particular ritual. In that respect, the following oral narratives express the view of folk in a culture.

<i>Sethaalum</i>	<i>sokkaran</i>	<i>kadakkaaran</i>
Though dies	agnates	debtor

Agnates are indebted to each other

Despite he is dead; his agnates are indebted to him. It can be observed in two ways. One is the agnate who is supposed to participate in the funeral ritual. Another one

is when the person is not going for his agnate's funeral, it is considered as indebted to the person who died and his family at present and for the future. At any reason the agnates should visit for his agnate's event. First one is by participating in the funeral ritual, which is a usual statement. It states "though person does not go to birth ritual, one has to go to funeral ceremony of his agnates". It is an obligatory responsibility for the person in a family. In the funeral ceremony the presence of sons and agnates is expected till the ritual gets completed. Thereafter, a ritual is conducted at agnate's house, even there the presence of agnates is expected. Second view on this proverb is that there is no participation in the funeral ritual and an agnate is far away by not from home or out of enmity has forsaken it; relatives would say the following: "at least the fellow would have come for seeing his face (deceased person) before the cremation/burying". The indebted/ responsibility has to be shown in the customs of the family. Though a person may be in enmity or far from home, he has to show his expression for his agnate death.

Father and his Sister (Brother and Sister)

<i>Appanukka</i>	<i>udanppiranthaal</i>	<i>oppukku</i>	<i>maaradippaal</i>
Father's	sister	for conformity's sake	will lament

Father's sister would lament for conformity sake

Lamenting is a ceremony whereby the family members would tell about the dead person's good attitude, his loss in the family which upsets the family. This lamentation is usually done by women in the family. It is the prerogative of the sister of the dead one. Though the person has daughters who may lament in front of the body, as soon as her arrival family allows her laments for a while then after sometime she will stop lamenting. Then the dead person's wife, daughters and other relatives assume the remaining. It is observed that FZ role is something which is instantly and also emotionally received but it gets disconnected from that time itself. This proverb says FZ will lament for conformity sake. She shows her presence to all the family members and shows her affection to his brother by lamenting.

Feast in Funeral Ritual

At the first death anniversary of a family member, each and every family celebrates a small function which is known as *saappadu kodutthal*⁴⁰. It is given to poor in memoriam of one's ancestors' name. If one gives it to poor people, it is believed that their ancestors' soul will rest in peace. Its main motivation is to appease their ancestors' spirits by giving food to someone. The objectives of *saappadu kodutthal* can purposely be varied from time to time. If one's husband died in a family, wife's family has to conduct certain ceremonies that are related to death rituals. Wife's brothers will bring some new cloths for the sister and her sons and daughters. After the sixteenth day of death, there will be an arrangement of meals for the family. Anybody can join this feast irrespective of familial relations. The whole food should be served. If it is not done that will be considered as misfortune and that left over food is seen as rejected food by the soul.

***Kallarai* to *Kurusady* (Tomb to Holy)**

If anyone dies at the ripe age of eighty or above, his daughter will go from her house to her mother's home along with musical accompaniments. It had been a prime practice among the Nadars. Now it is celebrated in the reduced form of giving new cloths to their brothers as means of support to a family. It could be observed from the proverb that is used by the people. "*Vakkatha shanan vazhi neduva kottinaan*" It means "a penniless Shanan beat the drum on the street in the procession". This proverb shows how Nadars had celebrated death ritual as well as how they had been mocked by other castes.⁴¹ Apart from these two practices, there is also another practice of offering in *Kurusady*⁴². In front of the *Kurusady* they give cow milk, bananas, *Payasam*⁴³. The following reasons are identified from the *Kurusady* practices:

1. To get released from the small diseases.
2. First harvest from the agricultural field and the first yielding from cattle or any other resources.
3. For thanks giving to the saints or their ancestors.

Region and Religion is the Marker for encouraging endogamous practices

This segment of region and religion as for encouraging endogamous practices among the Nadars has used quantitative data which have been taken from the matrimonial advertisements of the daily magazines in Tamilnadu. Twelve months data have been taken into consideration. After analysing the data, the following findings have been found. They are:

1. Region as primacy for seeking alliance
2. Religion as primacy for seeking alliance
3. New trend of caste no bar among the groom and bride in metropolitan cities

After carefully collected three hundred and fifty nine cases (including bride and groom) of matrimonial advertisement, the following categorisations were made as follows.

1. Wanted for bride/groom
2. Region specific of bride/groom
3. Religion specific of bride/groom
4. Alliance through Sub-caste
5. Nadar (Without mentioning the sub-caste)
6. Caste no bar
7. Education as criteria

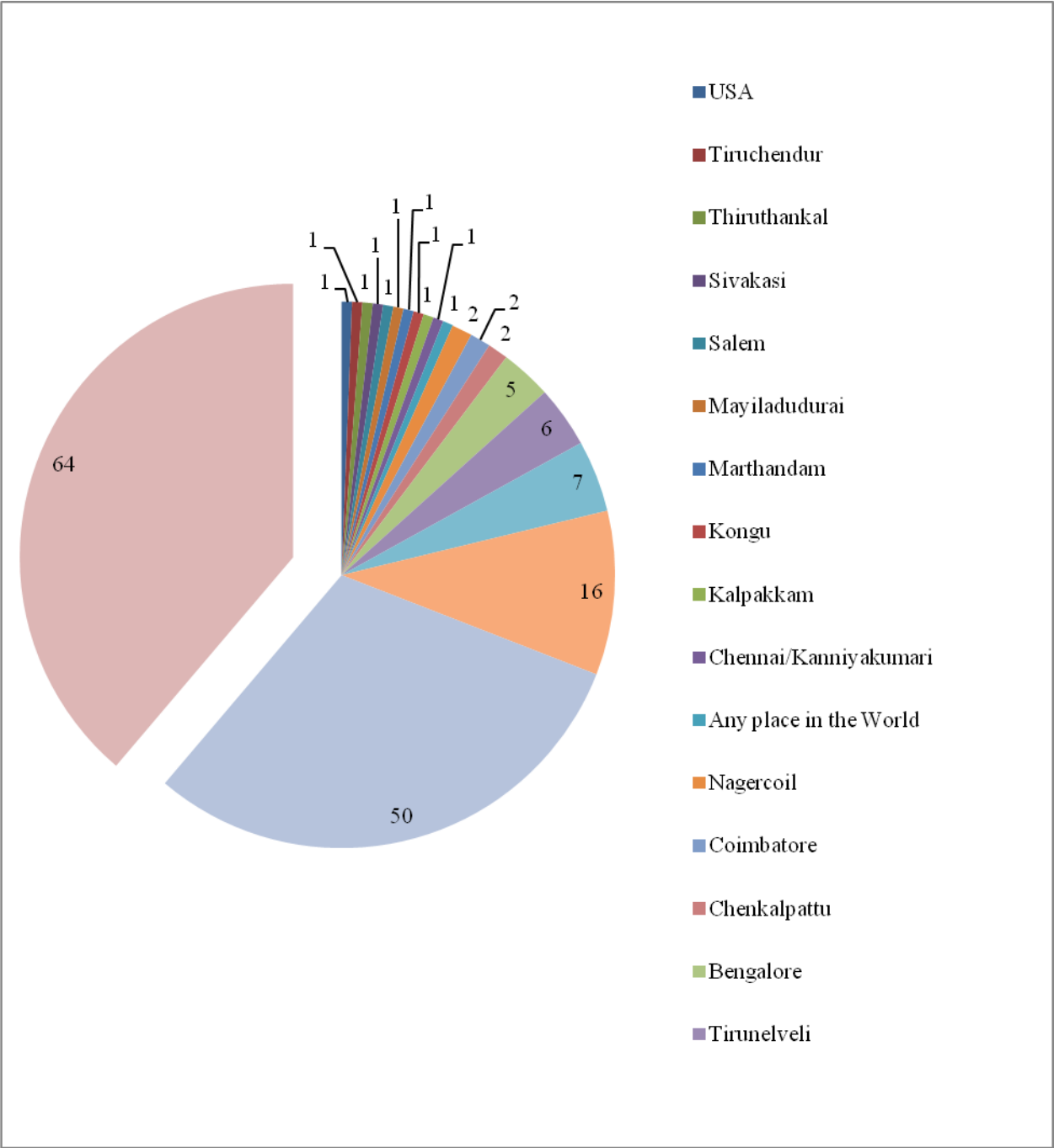
According to the aforementioned categorisation, data have been classified for the interpretation.

Region as primacy for seeking alliance

From the data there are one hundred and sixty five grooms wanted have been found. Among them one hundred and one (61.21%) families are looking the groom with their region specific. Sixty four families (38.78%) are mentioning the region as their primary for seeking the alliance. It is to be noted that 30.30% from the total (100%) grooms wanted (brides families are looking grooms) of the people are interested in giving bride within the Chennai based families. Next to that 9.69% of the people are interested in giving bride to the groom from Thoothukudi region. Afterwards grooms from Kanniyakumari (4.24%), Tirunelveli (3.63%), Bangalore (3.03%) and other

regions mentioned in the diagram are having the ratio from 0.60% to 1.2% for seeking the groom as the region specific.

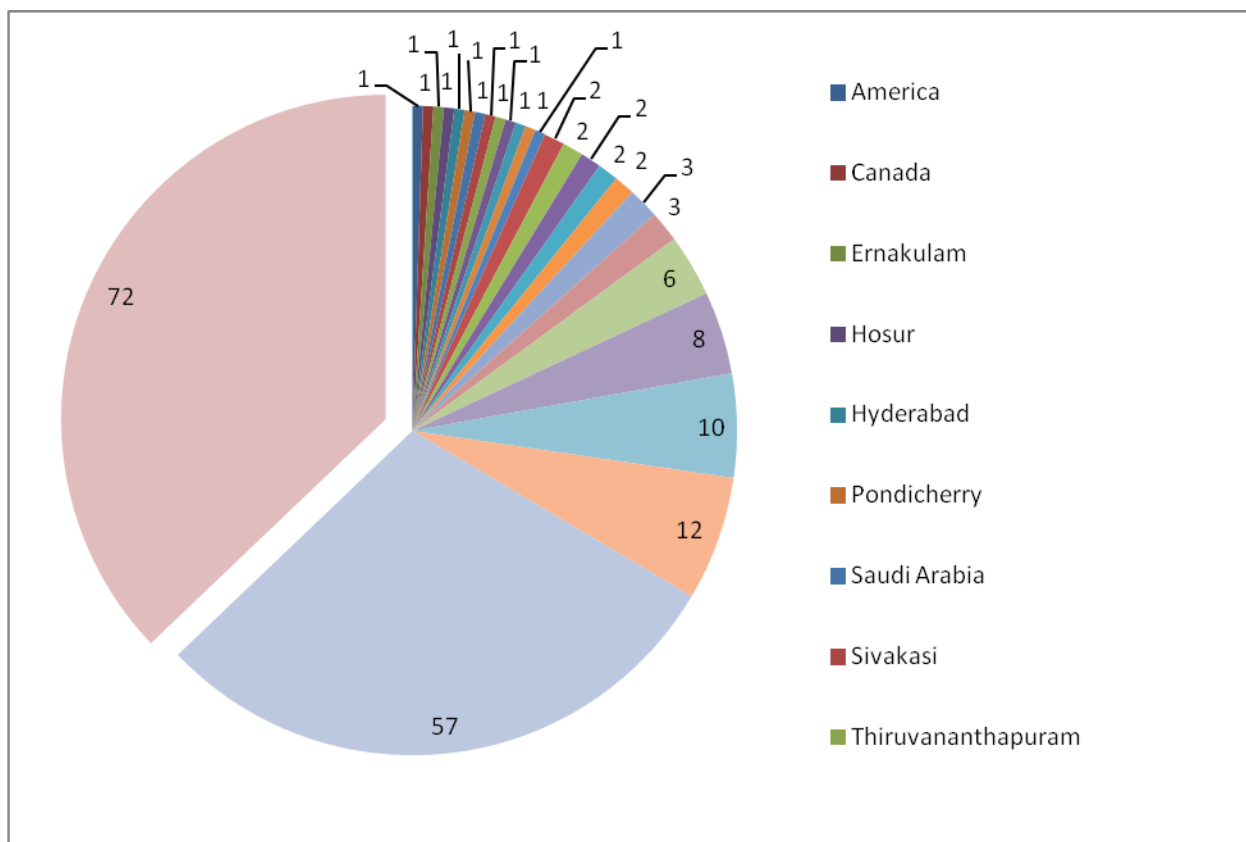
Diagram 5.1: Bride Giving (groom wanted) with region specific



The next criteria of bride taking (bride wanted – grooms families looking for bride) cases of one hundred and ninety four have been found. Among the one hundred

and ninety four, there are one hundred and twenty four (62.88%) families are interested in taking bride from with their region specific. And the seventy two families (37.11%) are not interested in taking bride with region specific. It is to be noted that there are 29.38% of families based in Chennai. Then the following findings are also observed. They are Thoothukudi (6.18%), Kanniyakumari (5.15%), Tirunelveli (4.12%), Tiruchy (3.09%) and rest of the regions of Bangalore, Madurai, United States of America, Salem, Dubai, Virudhunagar, Sivakasi etc are having the ratio from 1.54% to 0.51%.

Diagram 5.2: Bride Taking (Bride wanted) with region specific

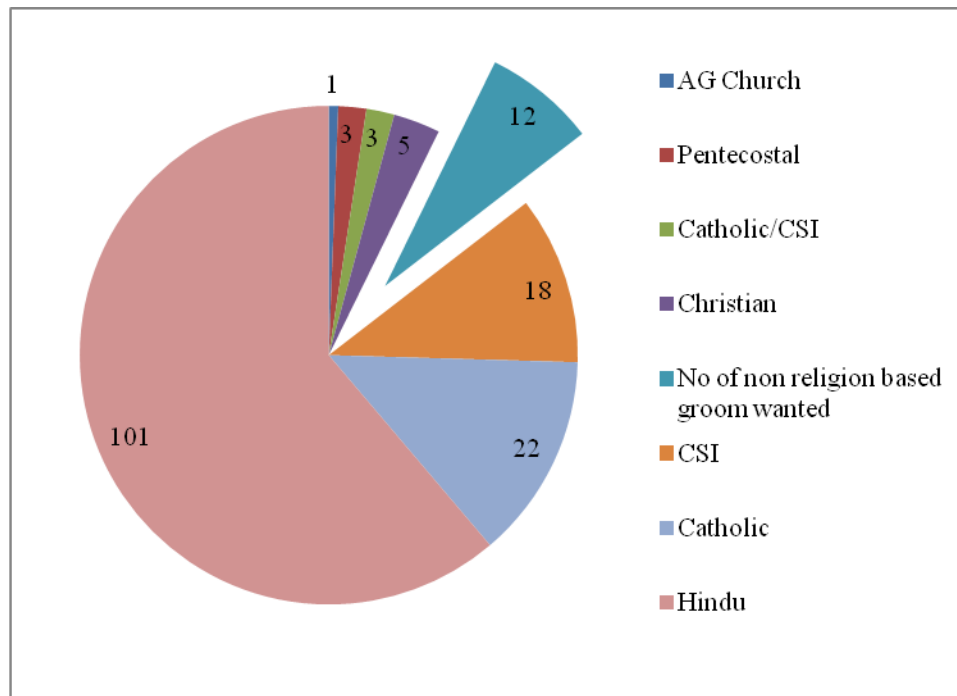


It is also to be noted that from the observation of the diagram of groom wanted and bride wanted Chennai region (probable migrated from the south and settled here) was the top priority in region specific for seeking alliance. Next to that Thoothukudi, Kanniyakumari and Tirunelveli regions are having position in seeking alliance respectively. Although the matrimonial advertisements given by the migrated people and settled in towns such as Chennai, Madurai, Coimbatore, Bangalore and other places, their priority is seen as mentioned in the diagrams.

Religion as Primacy for seeking alliance

From the data of groom wanted, there are one hundred and sixty five are found. Among them one hundred and fifty three are looking groom with religion specific. And twelve informants were not interested in religion specific.⁴⁴ Among the religion as primacy for seeking groom there are 61.21% of Hindus as their religious specific, 13.33% of Catholic as their religious specific, 10.90% of protestant Christians as their religious specific, 7.27% of families are not showing their interest in religious specific. 3.03% of the families are interested in any of the families who are from Christians and other such as Assembly of God, Pentecostal are less as it shows from 0.60% to 1.81% respectively.

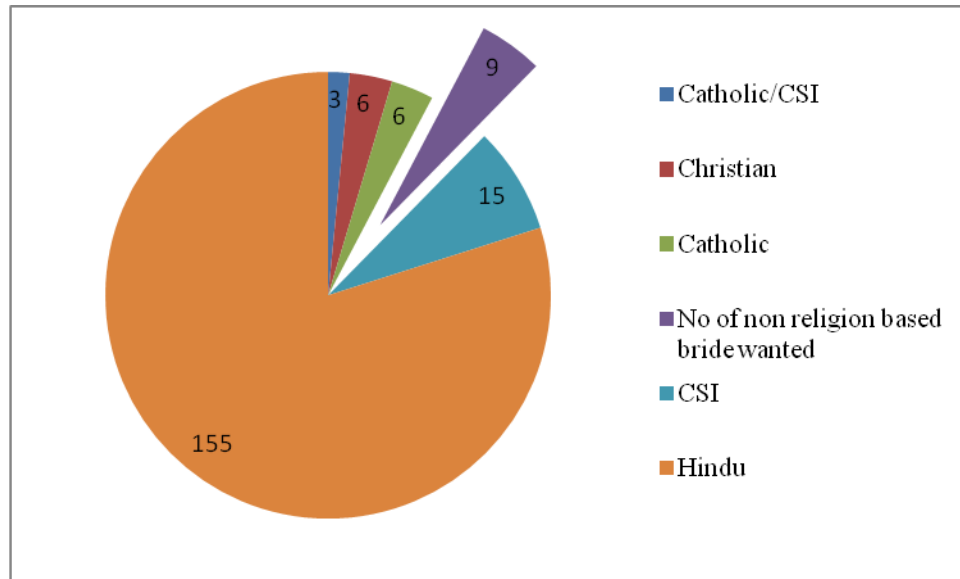
Diagram 5.3: Bride Giving (groom wanted) with religion specific



From the observation of brides wanted (bride taking – grooms families looking for bride), there are one hundred and ninety four families. Among them one hundred and eighty five (95.36%) families are expecting or interested in bride taking from the same religious group. Among them Hindus (including amma vazhi and ayya vazhi) 79.89%, protestant Christians 7.73%, families who are not interested in religion specific are

4.63%, Catholics are 3.09%, as Christians (including Catholics and protestant Christians) 4.63% are found to be religion specific.

Diagram 5.4: Bride Taking (bride wanted) with religion specific



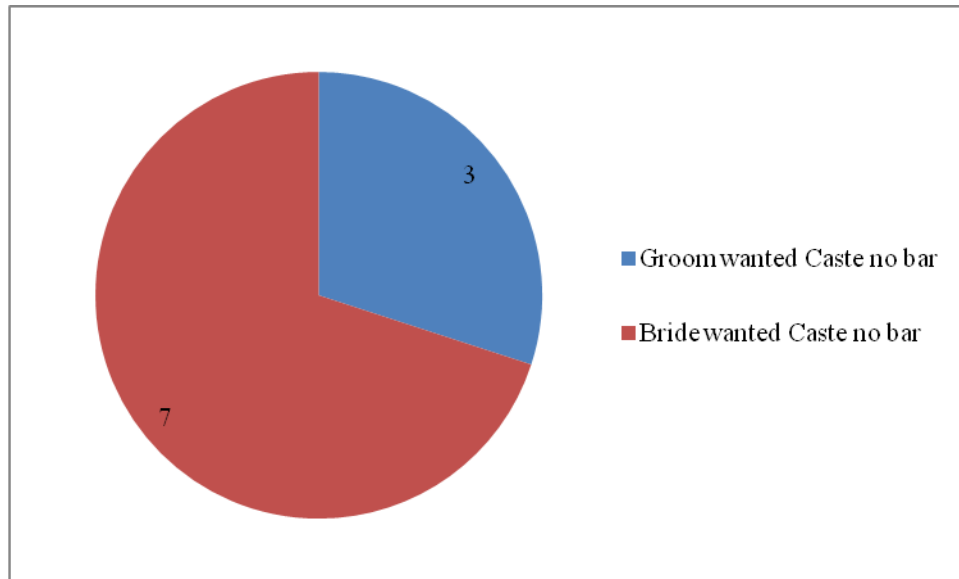
New Trend of Caste no bar

It is also observed that there some families who are interested in taking and giving bride on the ground of caste is no bar for the alliance. From the three hundred and fifty five respondents there are ten numbers (2.78% of the total respondents) of respondents have been identified as caste no bar marriage alliance. Within the caste no bar category the following categorisation is also made. They are,

1. Caste is no bar (including groom and bride)
2. Caste is no bar (region wise)
3. Caste is no bar (religion wise)

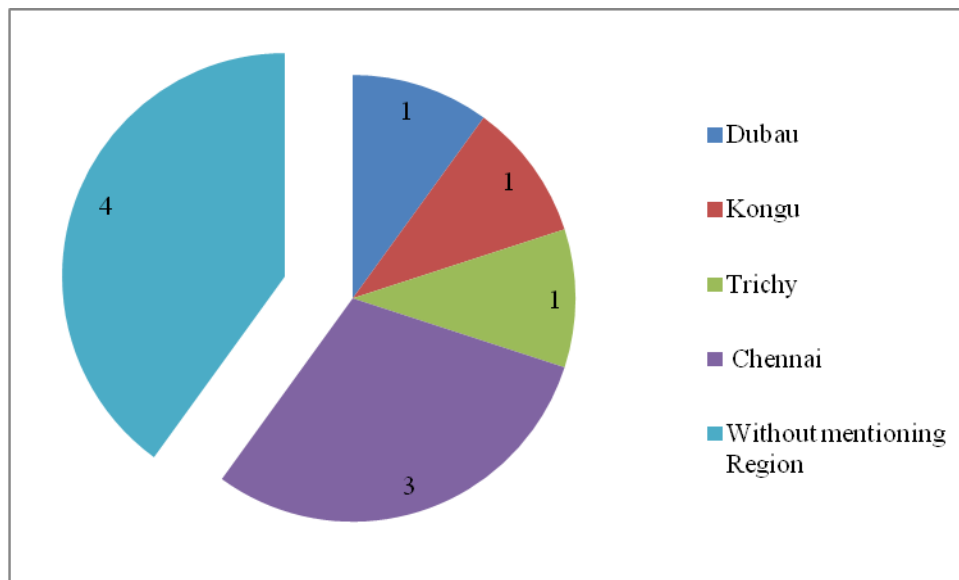
From the aforementioned categorisation, bride wanted has 70% of the total caste is no issue, groom wanted has 30% of the total caste is no issue in marriage alliance.

Diagram 5.5: The total number of Caste is no bar



It is to be noted that the ratio of the families who are interested with caste as not an issue in seeking marriage alliance Chennai region scored 30% of the total; Tiruchy, Kongu region, Dubai have scored 10% individually; without mentioning the region but showing interest in caste as not an issue are having 40% of the total. The following diagram will explain it.

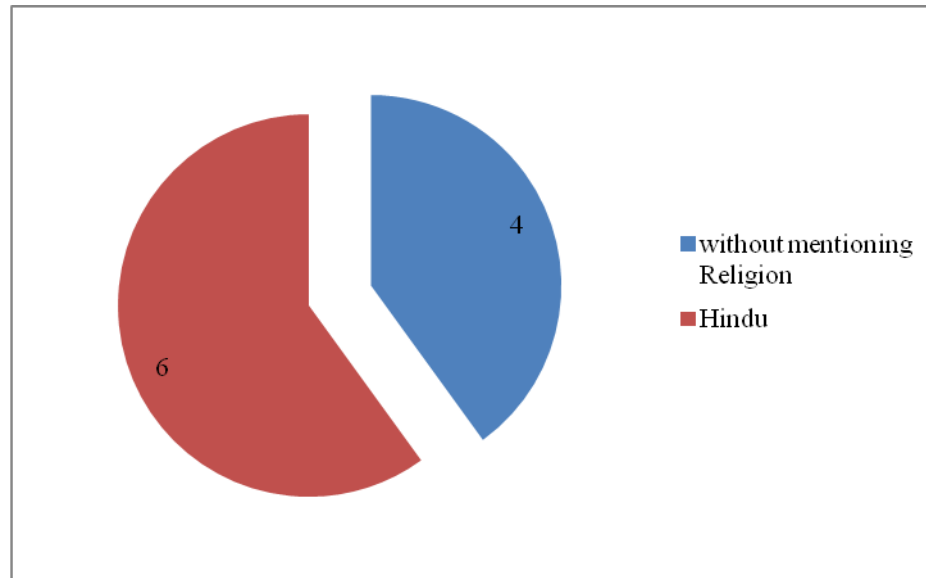
Diagram 5.6: Caste is no bar with region specific



The next criterion of religion from the families who are seeking marriage alliance is divided into two major categories. One is family from hindu background

(60%), who are looking bride/groom with caste is no bar. Another one is families without mentioning their religion but showing caste in no bar having 40% of the total.

Diagram 5.7: Caste is no bar with religion specific



Thus from the matrimonial advertisements in seeking bride/groom, it is observed that migration as one of the primary elements in deciding or looking the bride or groom from their region; the density of religious population again maintains the religious dogma through the marriage at their local or native places among the Nadars of southern Tamilnadu.

Impact of Religion and Region in Marriage

Practices are important in a life cycle ritual but after the conversion due to the religion's code some practices are not allowed or some practices are not visible in the Christian Nadars' life cycle ceremonies. They are identified namely maternal uncle ritual, agnates blessing. On the other hand, like religion's role in controlling the life cycle rituals, regionalism also makes some differentiation with its specific identity. Among the Nadars the following practice is found as a unique in Kanniyakumari district is that giving palm jaggery to bride's family. As a practice, it is known as one among the regular activities. But the socio-cultural contexts are behind the practice which should be concentrated.

Practices which are not disturbed by the conversion

Religious denominations are widely popular among the Nadars in Tamilnadu. In general, they are classified into two major categories. First one is Christianity in which the combinations of Catholic and Protestants. Second one is Hinduism which comprises with Ayya Vazhi, Amma Vazhi and ancestor worship. This segment of discussion focused on the marriage practices which are visible after the conversion among the Nadars. It is to be noted that marriage practices which are new to alive in the life cycle of Nadars are known as key role to precede the marriage successfully completed in a family. It is also found that marriage practices which are known as key role having village-family-kinship bond in nature. That is why aforementioned practices are still continuing even though conversion occurred among the Nadars

Practices which are not partially altered by the conversion

A custom known *eduppu choru*⁴⁵ was practiced in the three districts. Nowadays the custom of *eduppu choru* is gradually getting down its importance in the family. It is more related to food. Earlier food sharing was common among the Nadars in the names of *asanam*⁴⁶. As food was considered as an emergency and necessary one in a family, everyone was indeed to share it with those who have not. But nowadays after getting reached higher in economic and societal level, this practice of *eduppu choru* is considered as degraded by everyone in the society. Practice which was closely associated with humanitarian now became as low status in the family as well as community. Even though this practice lost its importance in semi urban and towns, the following observation was found in the field that in Thoothukudi and Tirunelveli district that Nadars from these regions during the time of marriage while giving gifts to groom on behalf of bride's family there is a vessel known *eduppu choru pathiram* given along with other gifts materials to groom's family. Kanniyakumari district does not have this practice anywhere its kind.

Practices which totally changed by religion

Some of marriage practices gradually became extinct in the marriage ceremony of Christians of the Nadar community. Once they were all celebrated as one of the primary functions and significant one in all the groups of Nadars. As they were all

converted into Christianity, their organization activities are managed by the church organization. Thus individual as well as family are directed by the canon law of catholic and church regulations of other Protestants Christians. It is very significant one to discuss the practice which is invisible from the regular life cycle. It is found that some practices are not active among the Christian Nadars including bangle and oven, melting gold for *thali*, rice ritual, marriage song, second visit to groom's house. The said five marriage practices are followed in most of the Nadars in southern region. But not among people who converted into Christianity. Installing oven at bride's house was an auspicious practice and giving bangle was also considered indicator of confirming the bride with the groom. But not it is replaced by the betrothal ceremony as confirming the marriage. Thus the practice is annexure with the betrothal. The function of melting gold for *thali* was considered as an auspicious event during the betrothal. But nowadays the practice due to the carrying of jewellery shops and modern life styles made people to accept the new life styles. As a result, there will be no specific function to hold with goldsmith. Earlier it was used to practice with goldsmith and family members.

Rice ritual is practiced as a blessing ceremony in Ayya Vazhi denomination. As Ayya Vazhi very young in originated among the Nadars, it has adopted Hindu view as well as Christianity's hierarchy. Thus it has the ritual practice of giving respect to ancestors. As a result of it, on the day before the marriage, rice is offered to ancestor. In order to get groom/bride and also the family blessed, this function is celebrated. But this practice is not followed by any other religious denominations of Nadars. Singing marriage song was predominantly one in all marriage. After the arrival of audio systems, cinema and its developments, those film songs replaced the marriage song. The lyrics of marriage songs are left to only in written. It is noted that recent trend in marriage ceremony is that giving greetings letter to the couple. In that letter there will be a verse writings which will be written by someone who is well versed in poem. Another important message is that a function known second visit to groom's house is not entertained among the Christians. They are interested in another function called '*maamiyaar veedu kanuthal*'. As soon as the mentioned function gets over, they call the couple for three or five days for feast. Then they allow couple to do regular work. Thus

aforementioned practices which are not alive in status among the Christians are found as all are replaced by some of modern elements adopted by religion as well as culture. To justify the replacement of function, religion guides its member to follow or abide its practices or regulations which are considerable to par with community's practice seen in prior to the conversion.

Marriage practice which are not visible in ritual

The parallel and cross cousin relationship are the basic mechanism of a family and kinship in a community. In a community or a society all the parallel cousin of male lineages is known as agnates, the same for cross cousin is known as in-laws. Agnates are the successors of the lineage; in-laws are the affine of a family. In order to celebrate and regulate those two relationships, community involves in making agenda that in the life cycle ceremonies the role of cross cousin and the role of parallel cousin are clearly defined by ensuring their participation.

As they are made into ritual, kinship of family is regulated with accepted objectives of the clan or a group within the community. Among the Nadars in terms of marriage although there are many rituals conducted by a family, maternal uncle ritual and agnates blessing are considered as one of the significant event during the marriage. Since maternal uncle is considered as first father⁴⁷ in Nadars, the mother of a child always gives importance to his brother as equivalent to her husband. Thought it is nominal level of portraying to the child, mother's intention will continue till her family's support continues toward her new family. So she has to have a harmony between her husband's family and her mother's side, where her brother lives. In order to get continuous support from mother and her brother, she has to remind in all the time of rituals in which a mother/sister does. Thus a brother of a sister or maternal uncle to child gets honoured in all the life cycle ceremonies at family.

It is also to be noted that practice is gradually decreased its importance in the ritual sphere once the family get into the new religion, which never cares about the role of kinship in a family. The role of religion⁴⁸ here is that to maintain the village as church organization. Whenever an individual needs guidance, a church organization would interfere and solve the issue. So, when a Christian family celebrate marriage function

obviously, as per the guidelines of the church organisation and canon law of Catholic Church. As per the canon law, a customary right of marriage within the relative is highly prohibited and it is against the church norms. Thus a Christian family is clearly decided to seek marriage not from the close relatives. It is highly prohibited of the marriage of eZD practice as practiced by the other groups of Nadars. Though it is less in numbers, it is rejected by the church law. Marrying maternal uncle is hardly seen among the Christian Nadars. Thus there is reflection of these norms of church; family automatically stops its customary affiliation with maternal uncle as Hindu Nadars (Ayya Vazhi, Amma Vazhi) do. That is the reason for not doing the maternal uncle ritual in a marriage ceremony at family.

Another important element observed that ‘agnates blessing’ ceremony which is practiced by the agnates of groom. As soon as *thali* tying is getting over, agnates are allowed to do this ritual by the family. In this function, an agnate comes closure to the couple and he waves his hands in circle way by telling “grow like milk” most of the Nadars’ marriage conducted at house of the bride. But for Christians the church takes that role of conducting marriage. All the marriage ritual is taken place at church. So, automatically role of kinship gets disconnected from each other. But, the important thing understood here is that the essence of this agnate’s role and maternal uncle ritual are reflected in another ritual known *surul*. *Surul* is a ritual celebration where all the agnates and FZS/MBS are honoured by the groom’s and bride’s family. So, the desire representation and the consciousness of kinship are maintained in the ‘*surul*’ ritual celebration by the Christian Nadars. Although the *surul* practice is found among all the religious sects of Nadars, Christian Nadars follow this ritual without fail in marriage ceremony. The church never controls for doing this to its members. Thus Christian Nadars are allowed to maintain the same ritual in all the marriage celebration as par with other religious sects of Nadars.

To sum up from the above, apart from the present day marriage practices, the detailed note about the marriage ceremony is found in the marriage songs of Nadars. From the three versions and variations of the songs and origin myths of Nadars, it is observed that Bhadrakali sought an alliance for her sons with chieftain’s daughters.

Then it slowly reaches to father to decide and seeking the marriage alliance for his son. Most of the alliances become arranged through media such as print and online. The new arrival of advertisement is replaced with the involvement of relatives in seeking alliance for boy or girl in the family. Earlier for seeking alliance, relatives were involved in the process. But now the arrival of marriage brokers and matrimonial advertisements enables seeking the alliance for boy and girl which replaced the customs. Relatives are allowed only to confirm the alliance. Now the segment of traditional type of seeking alliance gradually gets away from the family at the level of ritual.

Nadars as a whole, they are segregated into religions when they go for marriage alliance; the religious division makes them to seek alliance in the same religion. Though they are same religious group region is also preferred to be the selection of bride or groom. It is to be noted that most of the Nadars who are economically sound they give their bride within their region. It is very rare to see to marriage alliance with groom who is the resident of far from the bride. Although they are same religious group, but less in economy status then obviously the family seeks a groom or giving bride to the groom who is seeking the bride when there is region does not be counting as criteria. Unless there is a political connection between bride and groom families, within the region, marriage alliance is sought by most of the Nadars who goes with religion. Thus religion also plays in assuring and follows endogamous practices among the Nadars.

Among the Nattathi Nadars the “we” feelings is in as Nattathi, not in separation of religion. The reason could be as they practice and as they are divided into various groups of clan of sixty three to one hundred and thirteen. So, clan controls the marriage alliance and religious attitudes in a clan. But it is not in the case of Karukkupattai and other sub-groups of Nadars. They do not have such clan as Nattathi Nadars do. That is the reason they confine to limit themselves in their local circle or very rarely go apart from their region. Once they adapted to another religion, now the religion makes them to be a clan group within the community. Village wise clan groups are formed. Marriage alliance and religion attitudes are arranged according the norms of the clans which they have newly formed as in the form of religion. So apart from the Nattathi religion plays a major role especially in *Karukkupattai* Nadars.

Prior to marriage a girl is belonging to her father's clan and deity. After the marriage they are all bound to follow her husband's clan. Thus deity is decided through male lineage among the Hindu Nadars. This clan/deity is given to a male by his birth and his tradition. Clan/family deity has the important role in identifying lineage as well as kinship groups. Most of the folk deity among the Nadars (ancestors' worship) is the indicators of community and its groups, kinship, clan etc. The same is also reflected in marriage and other kinship relationships. It depends upon their needs in the society and community.

In the consideration of marriage alliance, Nadars follow certain paradigms to follow the marriage rite. Before conducting the marriage, seeking alliance process is a very important one in a family. As Nadars are found different religious sects and denominations, their life cycle ceremonies have also much influenced and impacted by religious practices. For an example, Christianity tells that one shall not have the customary rights of marriage within the relatives which was predominantly found among the Nadars of Tamilnadu prior to the conversion. After the conversion, it is found that the church is not allowing its member to follow the marriage alliance within their cross-cousin relation. After analysis the data from the informant the following findings have been found.

Maternal uncle has the right to marry his eZD. It was a usual practice. Even though education and various religions' views had developed in all places, the practice of marrying eZD is being continued in some regions notably Tirunelveli and Thoothukudi districts. But among the Christians, the practice of this eZD marriage is very less in numbers when it is compared to Hindu Nadars. Within these three districts Hindu Nadars from Kanniyakumari district don't do marriage alliance eZD with maternal uncle. Among the three districts of Tirunelveli and Thoothukudi, Nadars have similarities in marriage alliances as well as marriage practice with some of the inclusion of religious practices. When it comes into Kanniyakumari region, though they are Hindu or Christian MBD/S, FZD/S marriages are accepted but not eZD marriage.

Among the aforesaid three districts, Thoothukudi and Tirunelveli district Nadars have similarities among them in business in terms of occupation. Whereas

Kanniyakumari Nadars consider, education as a yardstick to all kind of life matters. Moreover, among Kanniyakumari district Christians and Hindus though they are equal in number, they differ from religious practices in marriage; they have the unique feature in hospitality, gift giving practices, many of life cycle ceremonies and dowry systems.

When alliances made on the basis of religion, there are two types of alliance are found. One is as religious division another one is region if a Hindu goes with religion then it is religious alliance for him. If Christian goes for an alliance it is religious alliance for him. When there will be less number of chances in getting bride/groom for a religious based Nadars then it is to be noted as religion which makes Nadars to go as region specific by selecting their bride/groom selection as an endogamy.

References and Notes

¹ When a virgin dies in a family, then she is worshiped by the family as a respectful one in the family.

² Person from Nadar community, other than Nadar community and the man of non-native of the region

³ Sandy and Arid land

⁴ The story of Protestant Christianity in South Travancore is the story of the people, striving for emancipation through spiritual means. It is a socio-political and religious-cultural struggle. In short is their search for dignity and identity. The history of the Syrian and Roman Catholic faiths were brought into Travancore by foreign ecclesiastics. The Protestant religion had honor of being introduced into the state by one of its subjects.

⁵ Thoothukudi - Nazareth Diocese was bifurcated from Tirunelveli Diocese on 25.10.2003

⁶ Ever since Tirunelveli was upgraded into a Diocese in 1896, it has been casting its net wide and deep. Many pastorates in the East and South have adopted a village in the northern part of the Diocese. This scheme has been paying rich dividends. Besides, Tirunelveli Diocese has introduced outreach ministry. Committed people, clergy and laity, go to other districts for gospel work during the first week of September every year. It established the first indigenous missionary organization called Indian Missionary Society (IMS) in 1903 to take the good news to the unreached areas in other states. The Rt. Rev V. S. Azariah, the first Indian Bishop, is one of the fruits of Tirunelveli Diocese. Now, the Diocese has 185 thousand members spread over 107 Pastorates in 736 villages.

⁷ The diocese of Kottar comprises the two revenue divisions (taluks) of Thovalai, Agastheeswaram (except the parish of Azhagappapuram of Thoothukudi diocese) in the civil district of Kanniyakumari in Tamil Nadu.

⁸ The diocese of Kuzhithurai comprises the two revenue divisions (taluks) of Kalkulam and Vilavancode in the civil district of Kanniyakumari in Tamil Nadu.

⁹ Before the erection of the diocese of Palayamkottai, this area was evangelized by the Society of Jesus of Madurai Jesuit Province. The history of Christianity begins from the time of St. Francis Xavier, in 1542. The old Madurai Mission was taking care of the spiritual needs of the Catholics. Some of the renowned Jesuit missionaries like St. John de Britto (1686-1688) (Martyred in Oriyur now in the diocese of Sivagangai) Fr Constantine Beschi (1714) have spent part of their missionary lives in this area and helped the Christians to strengthen their faith. From the beginning of the 20th Century, Diocesan priests from the Diocese of Trichirapalli were caring for the spiritual needs of the Catholics.

¹⁰ The diocese of Thoothukudi is comprised of the major part of the Thoothukudi district, nearly half of the Tirunelveli district and a small portion of the Kanniyakumari district. The Catholics of this area trace their origin to the time of St. Francis Xavier who spent most of his missionary life in this area. Separated from the diocese of Tiruchirapalli, Tuticorin was created.

¹¹ Ayya Vali, originated from Kanniyakumari district of Tamilnadu by Ayya Vaikundar. Ayya Vaikundar was born on A.D. 1809 to Ponnu Nadar and Veyilal Ammaiyar in Sasthan Kuttivilai (presently it is known as Swamythoppu) in Kanniyakumari district. His parents named him Mudisoodum Perumal but it was latterly changed as Muthukutty due to urging of caste hierarchy by his teacher (Patrick G, 2003: 77). As he was suffered by the long day illness, he was sent to Tiruchendur (Shrine of Lord Muruga) for recovering by the god grace. There he went to sea but came back only after the third day. Once he returned he said that he was an avatar of Narayanan. Then he preached to the people of Kanniyakumari district especially in Agastheeswaram and Thovalai taluks. There after everybody met him and started following his new religious path.

¹² This gathering is known as *sool azhaippu* in local term

¹³ P. Packiyannathan of Vadakkankulam in Tirunelveli district

¹⁴ M.A. Rajagobal (51), Palayamkottai, Tirunelveli district

¹⁵ Ms. Sasikumari (47), Perumalpuram of Kanniyakumari district – 629301

¹⁶ As the girl is sent to her mother home for the delivery from her husband home, from that onwards she will there at her mother's home for 45 to six months.

¹⁷ Ornament used in ear for men

¹⁸ A. Kalidas (53), Nattathi, Thoothukudi District

¹⁹ M.V. Anantha Kumar, Nattathi of Thoothukkudi and M. Ponnusamy, Eachavilai of Kanniyakumari district.

²⁰ Mr. Benny, Thuckalai of Kanniyakumari district.

²¹ Mrs. Sasikumari, Aralvoimozhi of Kanniyakumari

²² *Urumal Kattu* was a ritual in which boys were honoured by family and village head at the age of sixteen. Similar to the puberty function celebrated for girls, this practice used to practice as equivalent to other family ceremonies. Thus it is called *urumal kattu*. This practice has been in practice for several decades. This ritual is celebrated by family members along with the village head. Village head presents a turban to be worn on boy's head and a knife to be carried in the style of a soldier. By conducting this celebration the boy is recognized as a youth in the society by the family. Nadars used to wear turban (head gear) on their head. It must be worn by men during wedding and village festivals. It was known as *Pancha kachcham*.

²³ Ms. S. Nalini (52), Perumalpuram of Kanniyakumari

²⁴ Mrs. Sasikumari, Aralvoimozhi of Kanniyakumari

²⁵ C. Salet Mary (43), Devashakayam Mount in Kanniyakumari district

²⁶ Mr. Jacob (56), Malayanvilai in Kanniyakumari district

²⁷ M.V. Anantha Kumar, Nattathi of Thoothukkudi

²⁸ For Nattathi Nadars

²⁹ a tree that produces a milky substance on receiving a cut

³⁰ K.M. Mariya Chandran, Rajavoor of Kanniyakumari district

³¹ Mrs. Sasikumari, Aralvoimozhi of Kanniyakumari district

³² Mr. Jacob (56), Malayanvilai of Kanniyakumari district

³³ It is known as equally sharing the food with all. It was introduced by the Ayya Vaikundar to follow his followers as means of considering everyone is treated equal.

³⁴ For Hindu Nadars during their family deity, village deity the concept of *asanam* is conducted, whereas Christians are having it in the separate occasions as mentioned above.

³⁵ For infant also garden is preferred to bury

³⁶ Velmani. K.S.K. (Ed.). *Tirunelveli District Gazetteer* Vol.I, Chennai: Commissioner of Archives and Historical Research. 2002.Pg.336

³⁷ M.V. Anantha Kumar (76), Nattathi of Thoothukkudi district.

³⁸ Kadaathu is a ritual which is followed by death.

³⁹ N.S. Selvam, Aralvoimohi, Kanniyakumari district

⁴⁰ Giving food to poor people who are destitute in nature

⁴¹ R. Chellappa (62), Neyoor in Kanniyakumari district

⁴² In Catholicism, Kurusady a place where people set any saints' statue or built any small construction as a memorial on their ancestors' tombs. They offer special prayer in these two places intermittently.

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- ⁴³ A liquid pudding prepared by boiling rice along with Sugar Jaggery/ Palm Jaggery
- ⁴⁴ Though they mentioned their religion, but not expecting the groom from the religion specific.
- ⁴⁵ Meal is given to the relative those who have not attended the feast. They will be most probably elders in a family.
- ⁴⁶ A feast festival conducted once or twice in a year in villages
- ⁴⁷ Nallappan, this local term is known as equivalent to father.
- ⁴⁸ Here the Christianity is taken for the consideration.

CHAPTER - VI
CONCLUSION

This research on Kinship, Marriage and Family system of Nadars of Tamilnadu is centred on folkloric approach which focuses the construction in folklore genres particularly on kinship and the same is expressed in life cycle ceremonies. The elements such as kinship, marriage and family system are the basic to the social organization and they are the indicators of social status and change. After Nadars embraced new religious path of Christianity, that had influenced in their occupation¹. In India Christian missionaries served among various communities, especially in the Southern Tamil Nadu. After they acquired the higher social status during nineteenth century, they emerged as one of the notable merchant communities in Tamilnadu. Having had view on this community, this research applied folkloric perspective² as a multidisciplinary field of study concerned of documenting which included the analysis of oral narratives, customs, material, and performance traditions. The following will explain the work done on each chapter in the thesis.

Summary

First chapter on **Introduction** presents information on Nadars through various records and pioneer works done on kinship and the community of Nadars. And also explores the nature of study, objective of the study and significance of the study.

Second chapter on **Life and Lore of Nadars** studies the life and lore of Nadars of everyday life with special reference to folk culture. In this chapter, the southern Nadars are discussed; it is also found that social divisions, economic organisations as their arrangements are laid based on regions and regions. As the community of Nadar has been exercising different socio-cultural practices, it is needed a study for documenting the life. As Nadars are distributed among Hinduism and Christianity, they follow the respective religious practices and concern rituals of marriage ceremonies. This community is broadly divided into two major groups: Nadan and Nattathi Nadar. Nadan comprises two sub groups: land lords (*Nilamaikkaran*) and Karukkupattai. The people of Karukkupattai a sub group are usually toddy tappers and are engaged in coconut cultivation. Also they are the labourers to the land lords (Nadan in Kanniyakumari region and Nilamaikkaran in Tirunelveli, Thoothukudi regions). Nattathi Nadar division comprises Kodikkal and Melnattan. It is to be noted that Nattathi Nadars are also called Kodikkal Nadars and their presence is found in western part of Tirunelveli district such as Ambasamudhram and Tenkasi; in certain areas of Thoothukudi district such as Atthoor, Mukkani and Eral; and in some of the places in western part of Kanniyakumari district and taluk of Neyyatrinkarai.³ The division of

Kodikkal Nadars were believed to be migrated to the Pandiyan country from the banks of the Cauvery River in Thanjavur, coming under the patronage of the Pandiyan kings as flag bearers'.⁴ In this chapter, the southern Nadars' (the region based) marriage alliance is discussed. The third factor of arranging marriage alliance is family as an exogamous group. Though it is observed majorly among the Nattathi Nadars, other sects of Nadar such as Nadan and *Karukkupattai* are divided into regions and also deity.

Nadars, due to migration from their hometown to urban areas, the cultural practice is also tend to have modified by having new social interaction with people of other communities which obviously affects their socialisation. Now they stopped coming to their native villages. Instead of going to native places, they build temples at their new towns. It is the major change which was seen among the Nadars. At the same time within the southern Nadars, Christian community made major influences in their rituals especially in their life cycle ceremonies. Although they were known as different sub-groups within the Nadars, Christianity made them as one sect after some decades of the conversion⁵. The sub-groups' kinship pattern slowly emerged out of new religious groups and social mobility of the community. As Christian Nadars embraced the Christianity for their emancipation from caste Hindus, Hindu Nadars started embracing Sanskritisation practices at their temples and family shrines, which they built in their new towns. Thus religion is seen as one of the major factors which influenced in the political and social mobility of the community. It had also made major changes in their day to day life.

The third chapter on **Kinship and Marriage: Reflections in Ethnic Genres** deals with folklore genres of Nadars. There are many collections of folklore such as folk songs (children songs, folk games, and marriage songs), folk tales, myths, proverbs, ballad and customary practices, but less of works has been dealt on kinship and marriage. Moreover, no one has dealt on kinship and marriage on Nadars from folkloric perspective. Thus it is indeed to study on Nadars which remains unexplored in terms of folklore perspective.

The lifestyles of a community is interpreted through the resources of oral traditions, which constitutes the whole knowledge system of a community, further it reveals all its lifestyles of the community through its ethnic genres. As kinship is a complex, dynamic and likely to change in practice, it is indeed to study the particular element of unit of a community which makes larger changes at societal level. The result of migration and new alliance made families to be found more closure. Thus Nadars

(sub-caste, family as exogamous, religion, and economic status) are divided into many groups their kin bond is getting connected with each and every sects of division. The reason for division is also observed as the vindicating point of getting closure according to the sects of various divisions. Thus the existence of the divisions is the reason for getting united each sectarian wise.

Fourth chapter on **Marriage practices of Nadars: Structural Perspective** discusses the marriage practices of the Nadars from stages to structure. Nadars follow patriarchal kinship pattern. In terms of marriage alliance endogamous practice as well as exogamous practice is observed on the ground of customs. As kinship systems are built up on the complementary relationship of the two sexes in marriage and parenthood⁶, it is more relevant to discuss the marriage practices of the Nadars. They follow cross cousin marriage practices as it is one of the basic elements, which is also observed as Dravidian kinship in pan south Indian level. It is also observed from the field that marriage alliances with cross-cousin such as FZS/D, MBS/D and eZD marriage. Families are identified with different clan names among the Nattathi Nadars. But other divisions of Nadars such as Karukkupattai and other than Nattathi Nadars are identified through family deity, villages, district etc. Among the Karukkupattai Nadars, alliances are made within their sub-sect namely villages, district as their outside family. So, clan/family is decided for the marriage alliance in Nattathi Nadars. The new arrival and strong bond of religion is also very important for Nadars. Although they are as a community, when a marriage alliance is made, religion also plays a key role.

Apart from these, the following things have been found as recently emerging issues within the community. They are some new issues such as women's aged marriages; inter-caste marriage; less usages of material culture (materials which were used in most of the marriages). It is also a good outcome from this to discuss by taking these phenomena as present crisis at society and culture. Thus, among the Nadars religion has a crucial role when the marriage alliance is being made.

Fifth chapter on **Religion and Ritual Dynamics** explores the ground by using quantitative data as well as qualitative data through description and interpretations. Nadars are divided into two major groups' basis of kinship and marriage. As they are the followers of village/family deity worship (especially among the Nattathi Nadars), they all become the part and parcel of *koottam*, which means family. As they are converted into Christianity and other sects such as Amma Vazhi, Ayya Vazhi are tend to follow the sacraments prescribed by the Christianity and Hindu. Thus they are the followers of

sacraments guidelines of the Christianity each denomination of Christianity has separate social practice. So, practice that had with them is gradually getting away from its members. They all tend to be within the lineage, which considers as a lowest exogamous unit within their social structure. So, there is a possibility to have more conscious on lineage one another a *pangali*, which means ‘sharer’.

Findings

Prior to the conversion, Nadars worshiped folk goddess (*Amma Vazhi*), Vaikunda Samy (*Ayya Vazhi*), ancestor worship (family elders as god and goddess), *Kanni*⁷, person from other community⁸ also worshiped by the Nadars. Aforementioned deity was clubbed together as Hindu by the people as well as in every region. The word ‘ayya’ in *Ayya Vazhi* might have taken from the deity of *Ayyanar* which is predominant in the origin home land of Nadars, the affection as well as worship pattern of the tradition of Nadars made a group of Nadars call Muthukutti or Vaikunda Samy principles as *Ayya Vazhi*. Thus *Ayya Vazhi* has become as one of the new denominations among the Nadars.

It is also observed in the thesis that Nadars practice Hinduism and also Christianity. After analysing kinship and marriage, it is found that religion seems to be influential phenomenon among the Nadars (Hindu Nadars, Catholic, CSI and *Ayya Vazhi*). The notion about the region is also getting increased in the modern day (Thoothukudi, Tirunelveli and Kanniyakumari). The next influential phenomenon is profession strongly based on economic status. Profession decides the dowry and other gifts which groom would be given by bride family. It is to be noted that the major subgroup within the Nadars is known as Nattathi Nadars. They are controlled by the system of family. There 64 families are found among the Nattathi Nadars. They have an exogamous practice, so, marrying within the group is prohibited. Despite it is prohibited/not entertained by the clans, there are several examples could find from the field who have married from the same clan. For Christians (Catholic and CSI) their associations take responsible in marriages. So, there will be no clan division rather religion. Among the Christians (though it is Catholic or Protestants) marriage is not controlled by clan. But among the Nattathi Nadars though they are Christians they still want to continue the clan practice with them. Even today many marriages are arranged based on their clans with some exceptions as mentioned earlier about them.

Practices are important in a life cycle ritual but after the conversion due to the religious code, some practices are not allowed or some practices are not visible among the converted, migrated Nadars. They are identified namely maternal uncle ritual,

agnates blessing. In another hand as like religion takes a role in controlling the life cycle rituals, regionalism also makes some differentiation with its specific identity. Among the Nadars the following practice is found as a unique in Kanniyakumari district is that giving palm jaggery to bride's family. As a practice, it is known as one among the regular activities. But the socio-cultural meaning to behind the practice should be concentrated.

Though they are same religious group concerned, region is preferred to be the selection criteria of bride or groom. It is to be noted that most of the Nadars who are economically sound give their bride within their region or to the known circle. That known circle is identified mostly through the region. It is very rare to see to go marriage alliance with groom who is the resident of far from the bride. Although they are from the same religious group, but less in economy status then obviously the family seeks a groom or giving bride to the groom who is seeking the bride when region is not considered as criteria. Unless there is a political connection between bride and groom families, within the region marriage alliance is sought by most of the Nadars who go with religion. Thus religion also plays in assuring and following endogamous practices among the Nadars.

Thoothukudi and Tirunelveli district Nadars do similar businesses in terms of occupation. Whereas Kanniyakumari Nadars consider education as an important yardstick to all kind of life matters. Moreover in Kanniyakumari district, Christians and Hindus follow different religious practices in marriage. They have unique feature in hospitality, kinship, gift giving practices, many of life cycle ceremonies and dowry systems. If alliance is made on the basis of religion, there are two types of alliances found. One is as religious division another one is region. If a Hindu goes with religion, then it is obviously religious alliance for him. If Christian goes for an alliance it is also a religious alliance for him. But, there will be less number of chances in getting bride/groom for a religious based Nadars then it is to be noted that it might be the religion which makes Nadars to go as region specific by selecting their bride/groom selection as an endogamy.

It is also found from folklore data, the Nadars are on one side highly concerned with roles within kin groups and expect such roles to honour by bride and bride groom parties. In the event of violation, the tension prevails even beyond marriage event. On the other side, Nadars are overtly outgoing in selection of bride and bride groom irrespective of sectarian differences. However, this is mostly found in urban centres in which case status is much regarded than the familiar tradition. This adaptation to new

socio-economic milieus making the community of Nadars as dynamic and powerful groups within Tamilnadu.

It is also found that Nadars have teasing relationships between the bride and groom parties extended even after the marriage. Especially when it is coming to son-in-law with the wife's relatives this teasing relationship is glaringly persists and even it is being treated as a disgusting element in some families.

Suggestions for the study of Kinship from Folkloric Perspective

This research on kinship and marriage has been dealt with community of Nadars in Tamilnadu. It is quite different from the research is being done in other social sciences disciplines that applying folklore methodology, which people centred approach in research. Despite this study has explored the recent socio-cultural change and continuity by using kinship and marriage on Nadars, it is also expected in social sciences that the same model can also be applied to the neighbouring communities to study the recent changes in society and their culture. It will be more valuable epistemological contribution, if the same model is applied by using the following factors of region, religion, community in kinship studies. In order to strengthen kinship studies in folklore research, more attention may be given in kinship studies in folkloristics as one the thrust and desire fields.

References and Notes

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⁵ Post 19th century

⁶Durkheim E. 1984 (New York: The Free Press), 1997;*The Division of Labor in Society*, Macmillan Education Ltd. in Great Britain.

⁷ When a virgin dies in a family, then she is worshiped by the family as a respectful one in the family.

⁸ Person from Nadar community, other than Nadar community and the man of non-native of the region.

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Palm leaf manuscript/Folk Ballad

Kumaraswamy Nadan story in a folk Ballad form it was compiled by P. Thankaswamy of Nattathi in Thoothukudi district.

Valangai Nooli (Origin story of Nadars – Bhadrakaliamman Story) in a folk ballad form it was compiled by *Villupattu Singers* (Bow Song Singer) from Kanniyakumari and Tirunelveli Districts.

SL. NO	NAME	AGE	VILLAGE /TOWN	EDUCATION	OCCUPATION	RELIGION	CASTE &Sub Divisions	STATUS
1	A.V.Muthu Rajagopal	52	Tiruchendur	M.B.A	Business	Hindu	Nattathi	Married
2	I. Simon	51	Devashahayam Mount	9 th Std	Carpenter	R.C Christian	Karukkumattai	Married
3	K. Subbaiya	99	Aralvoimozhi	2 nd Std.	Agricultural Labour	Hindu	Nattathi Nadars	Married
4	K. Thanumalayan	46	Agastheeswaram	S.S.L.C	Gold Smith	Hindu	Gold Smith	Married
5	M. Antoniyammal	82	Meenakshinathapuram	----	Home Maker	R.C Christian	Karukkumattai	Married
6	M. Cyril	76	Rajavoor	7 th Std	Carpenter	Catholic Christian	Karukkumattai	Married
7	M. Jacob	67	Malayanvilai	7 th Std.	Marriage	CSI Christian	Karukkumattai	Married

					Broker	n		
8	M. Kovil Pitchai	95	Mudhalur(Thoothuku di)	S.S.L.C	Folk Artiste*	CSI Christia n	Karukkumattai	Married
9	M. Kumaresan	59	Kanniyakumari	S.S.L.C	Shells Business	Ayya Vazhi	Karukkumattai	Married
10	M. Mariya Chandran	62	Rajavoor	3 rd Std	Agriculture	Catholi c Christia n	Karukkumattai	Single
11	M.V.Anatha Kumar	76	Nattathi	B.A, B.L	Advocate	Hindu	Nattathi	Married
12	Mr. A.Chellapa	70	Athivilai	M.Litt.	Rtd. School Teacher	CSI Christia n	Karukkumattai	Married
13	Mr. Arul	45	Marungoor	B.A.	Building Contractor	Hindu(Amma Vazhi)	Karukkumattai	Married
14	Mr. John Rose	68	Neyoor	DME	Rtd. JE in	CSI Christia	Karukkumattai	Married

					TNSTC	n		
15	Mr. Kalidas Nadar	54	Nattathi	B.A.	Agriculture	Hindu	Nattathi Nadar	Married
16	Mr. Ramachandran	65	Udangudi (Thoothukudi DT.)	M.Phil	Rtd. College Professor	Hindu	Karukkumattai	Married
17	Mr. T. Andiyappan	97	Arumaganeri	5 th Std	Indian Freedom Fighter	Hindu	Karukkumattai	Married
18	Mr. T.T. Thavasimuthu	61	Arumuganeri	M.A, M.Ed	School Teacher	Hindu	Karrukupattai	Married
19	Mr.Albne Nathaniel	76	Vertturnimadam (K.K. Dt.)	M.A	Rtd. College Professor	CSI Christia n	Karukkumattai	Married
20	Mr.N.S.Selvam	56	Perumalpuram	B.A.	Self- Employment	Hindu	Nattathi Nadar	Married
21	Ms. Annammal	88	Kazhukumalai	2 nd std	Home maker (formerly Match box making)	R.C Christia n	Shathriya kula Nadar	Married

22	Ms. C. Amutha Theraslin	40	Meenakshinathapuram (Tirunelveli Dt.)	8 th Std	Home Maker	Catholic Christian	Karukkumattai	Married
23	Ms. Sasikumari	47	Perumalpuram	+2	Home Maker	Hindu	Nattathi Nadars	Married
24	P. Dharmaseelan	44	Ambalpathi	S.S.L.C	Pujari of Ayya Vazhi Temple	Ayya Vazhi	Karukkumattai	Married
25	R. Arulappan	93	Thumbali	5 th Std	Toddy Tapping	Catholic Christian	Karukkumattai	Married
26	R. Madhavi	52	Perumalpuram	5 th Std.	Home Maker	Hindu	Nattathi Nadars	Married
27	S. Durai samy	66	Poojaipuraivilai(K.K. Dt)	S.S.L.C	Landlord	Hindu(Amma Vazhi)	Nadan	Married
28	S. Murugesan	77	Perumalpuram	DME	Rtd. JE in	Hindu	Nattathi Nadars	Married

					TNSTC			
29	S. Selvaraj	73	Muthulapuram	7 th Std	Agriculture	Catholic Christian	Karukkumattai	Married
30	V. Suwamiyadiyan	92	Naduvur Kannakurichi	8 th Std	Agriculture	Hindu	Nadan	Married
31	Y. Antoniyammal	84	Muthulapuram	3 rd	Home maker	R.C Christian	Kaukkupattai	Married

Notes:

*Kaliyalattam is one of the folk performing art forms of the Tamilnadu. There are three types of Kaliyalattam one is Kanniyakumari Kaliyal, Thoothukudi Kaliyal, Uvari Kaliyal. This genre of art very much placed in southern Tamilnadu districts which are Kanniyakumari, Tirunelveli, and Thoothukudi. This art form found among the Nadars and Fisher folk communities.

Photographs

Marriage Practices



Ritual for Making Marriage Shed



Maternal Uncle Ritual

Maternal Uncle Ritual



Maternal Uncle Ritual Conducted by Barber



Anantharam (agnates) Ritual



Anantharam (agnates) Ritual



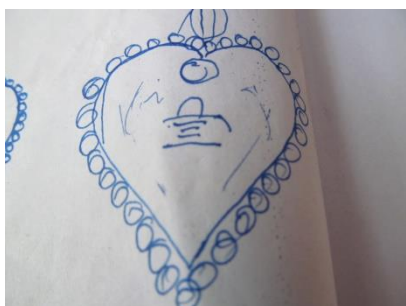
Naazhi Vedu (Bride Wealth giving Ceremony)



Maternal Uncle Ritual



Maternal Uncle Ritual



Thali Symbol for Hindus



Thali Symbol for Ayya Vazhi



Thali Symbol for Christians



Groom is received by Bride's Brother



Thali Tying



First food of Milk and Banana



Lighting Lamp by Bride at Groom's house



Family Members gathered for the ritual of Surul



An agnate receives his Surul at the function



Bride's sister takes the role of brother in Surul ritual



Surul session ends with serving palm-jaggery water

Religious Festivals



Nattathi Nadars Traditional Shrine



Palipeeda Samy of Nattathiyars



Sumaithangi Kal (Stone of Load bearing)



Record taken from the Conversion



Villuppattu Performance



Offering Palmyra Juice to Goddess Bhadrakali



Making Ritual Food



Holy Feast Offering

Key Informants



Annammal



V. Suwamiyadiyan

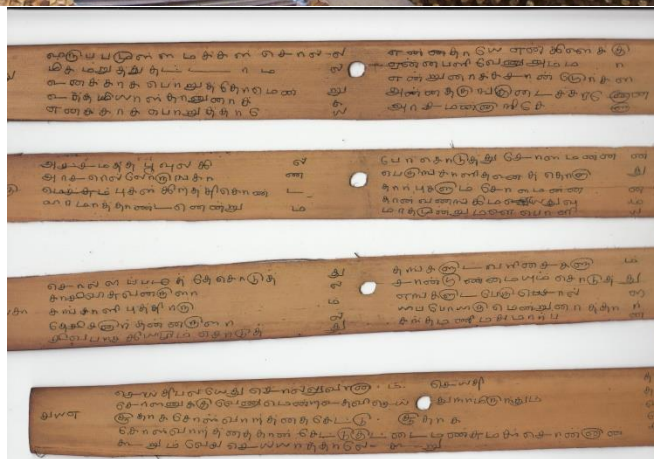


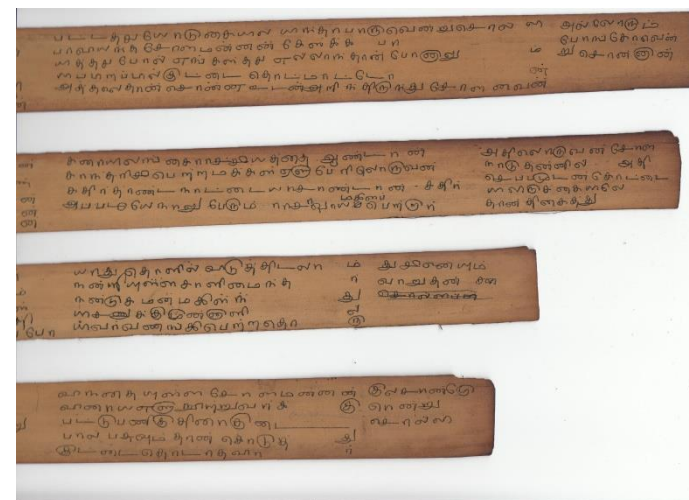
R. Arulappan

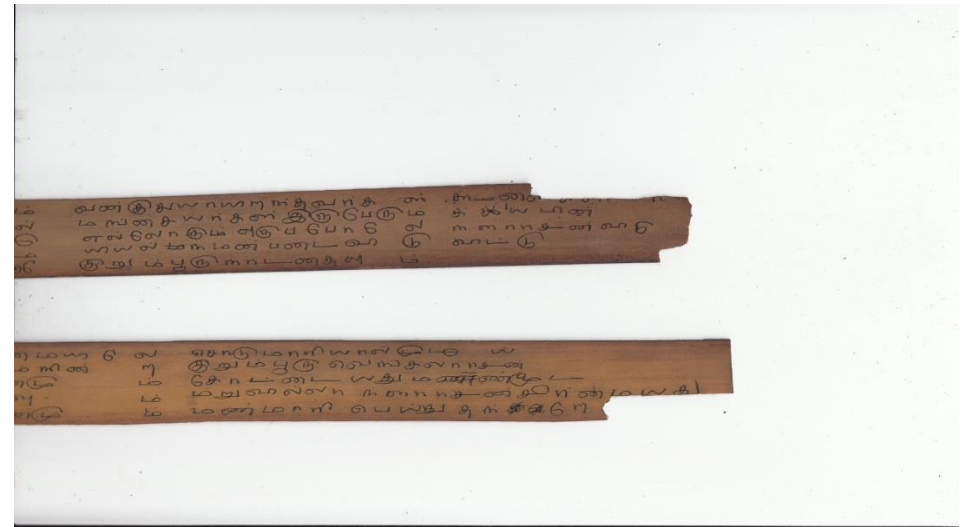
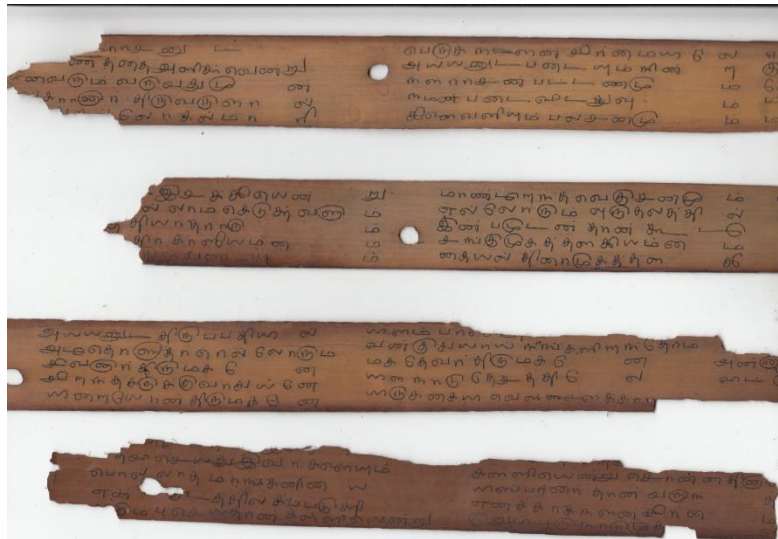


K. Subbaiya

A Specimen of *Bhadrakaliamman Kathai*¹ in Palm leaf Manuscript (Origin Myth of Nadars)







¹ The story of Bhadrakaliyamman contains 6780 lines of verses.

Ethnic Terminology of Kinship of Nadars

Referents	Karukkuppattai	Nilamaikkaran	Nattathi	Sirukudi Nadar ¹	Northern Nadars
FFFF	<i>Ottan/Muppattan</i>	<i>Ottan/Kolluthatha</i>	<i>Ottan/Kolluthatha</i>	***	<i>Poottan/Paattaiya</i>
FFF	<i>Poottan</i>	<i>Poottan/Kolluthatha</i>	<i>Poottan/Kolluthatha</i>	<i>Pootta</i>	<i>Paattan/Kolluthatha/Muppattan</i>
FF	<i>Thatha</i>	<i>Thatha/Ayya</i>	<i>Thatha/Appappa</i>	<i>Thatha</i>	<i>Thatha/Appaar u</i>
FM	<i>Appamma/Valathamma</i>	<i>Patti/Appamma</i>	<i>Patti/Appamma</i>	<i>Pappamma</i>	<i>Aayaa/Ayyamma/Appathaa</i>
F	<i>Appa/Ayya</i> <i>(Thoothukudi and Tirunelveli)</i>	<i>Ayya</i>	<i>Appa/Ayya</i>	<i>Appa</i>	<i>Appa/Naina</i> <i>(Gramini)</i>
FeB	<i>Periyappa/Mootha</i>	<i>Periyappa/Moot</i>	<i>Periyappa</i>	<i>Periyappa</i>	<i>Periyappa</i>

¹ This term is also known as Pulukkai Shanar.

	<i>ppa (K.K)</i>	<i>happa</i>			
FyB	<i>Sithapa/Sinnaiyya</i>	<i>Sithappa/Ialaiya ppa</i>	<i>Sithappa</i>	<i>Sithappa</i>	<i>Sithappa</i>
M	<i>Amma</i>	<i>Amma</i>	<i>Amma</i>	<i>Amma</i>	<i>Amma</i>
MeZ	<i>Periyamma/Mootha mmai</i>	<i>Periyamma/Moo thamma</i>	<i>Periyamma</i>	<i>Periyamma</i>	<i>Periyamma</i>
MyZ	<i>Sithi/Sinnammai</i>	<i>Sithi/Ialaiyamm a</i>	<i>Sithi</i>	<i>Sithi</i>	<i>Sithi/Thotha (Gramini)</i>
MB	<i>Mama</i>	<i>Maman</i>	<i>Mama</i>	<i>Mama</i>	<i>Mama</i>
FZ	<i>Atthai/Mami</i>	<i>Atthai</i>	<i>Atthai</i>	<i>Atthai</i>	<i>Atthai</i>
HM/WM	<i>Mamiyar</i>	<i>Atthai</i>	<i>Mamiyar</i>	<i>Atthai</i>	<i>Atthai/Mamiya r</i>
eB	<i>Annan</i>	<i>Annan</i>	<i>Annan</i>	<i>Annan</i>	<i>Annan</i>
eZ	<i>Akka</i>	<i>Akka</i>	<i>Akka</i>	<i>Akka</i>	<i>Akka</i>
yB	<i>Thambi</i>	<i>Thambi</i>	<i>Thambi</i>	<i>Thambi</i>	<i>Thambi</i>
yZ	<i>Thankachi</i>	<i>Thankachi</i>	<i>Thankachi</i>	<i>Thankachi</i>	<i>Thankachi</i>

MBeS	<i>Atthan</i>	<i>Atthan/Machan</i>	<i>Machan</i>	<i>Atthan</i>	<i>Machan</i>
MBeD	<i>Maini/Mathani</i>	<i>Maini</i>	<i>Mathini</i>	<i>Anni</i>	<i>Mathani</i>
MByS	<i>Machan/Mappillai</i>	<i>Machinan</i>	<i>Machinan/Mappil lai</i>	<i>Machinan</i>	<i>Machan</i>
MByD	<i>Kozhunthiyal</i>	<i>Kozhunthiya</i>	<i>Kozhunthiyal/Sam banthi</i>	<i>Maini</i>	<i>Kozhinthiyal</i>
eZH/ yZH, WeB/ WyB, Atthan/Machinan/M appillai (ms)	<i>Atthan/Machinan</i>	<i>Atthan/Machina n</i>	<i>Atthan/Machinan</i>	<i>Atthan / Machinan</i>	<i>Machinan/Map pillai</i>
yZH, HyB, MByS, FZyS Kolunthan (ws)	<i>Kozhunthan</i>	<i>Kozhunthan</i>	<i>Kozhunthan</i>	<i>Kozhunthan</i>	<i>Kozhunthan</i>
WeZ/WyZ, eBW/yBW Anni/ Maini/ Mathani/ Nangaiah, Kolunthyal (ms)	<i>Kozhunthiyal/Anni</i>	<i>Kozhunthiyal</i>	<i>Kozhunthiyal</i>	<i>Kozhinthiyal</i>	<i>Kozhunthiyal</i>
HeZ, HyZ, HeBW/HyBW Sammanthi/Nathana r/Orpadiyal (ws)	<i>Maini/Sambanthi (Catholic of TKD)/Nathanar (Catholic of TVL)</i>	<i>Maini</i>	<i>Mathani/Sambant hi</i>	<i>Maini</i>	<i>Nathanar/Nan gai (Coimbatore)</i>

Sambanthi (SWF/SWM, DHF/DHM)	Sambanthakudiyar/ Kolaudaiyar	Sambanthi	Sambanthi/Samba nthakudiyar	Sambanthakudiyar	Sambanthiyam mal
S	<i>Makan</i>	<i>Makan</i>	<i>Makan</i>	<i>Makan</i>	<i>Makan</i>
D	<i>Makal</i>	<i>Makal</i>	<i>Makal</i>	<i>Makal</i>	<i>Makal</i>
DH/ZS ms,BSws	<i>Marumakan</i>	<i>Marumakan</i>	<i>Marumakan</i>	<i>Marumakan</i>	<i>Marumakan</i>
SW/ZDms, BDws, BSWms, ZSWws	<i>Marumakal</i>	<i>Marumakal</i>	<i>Marumakal</i>	<i>Marumakal</i>	<i>Marumakal</i>
SS, DS	<i>Peran</i>	<i>Peran</i>	<i>Peran</i>	<i>Peran</i>	<i>Peran</i>
SD, DD	<i>Pethi</i>	<i>Pethi</i>	<i>Pethi</i>	<i>Pethi</i>	<i>Pethi</i>
SSS	<i>Kolluperan</i>				
SSD					
SSSS					
SSSD					

Great – Great grandfather

Ottan – Great – Great grandfather

Muppattanar = Mup + Pattanar —→ three (third) & elder + great grandfather which means here it is known as father of great grandfather in another words it says that the elder to great grandfather

Kolluthatha = Kollu + thatha —→ kollu (horse gram) + thatha (grandfather). Through this meaning it indirectly indicates that the relationship between descendants and the great – great grandfather will be level size of horse gram.

Paattanar/Poottan = Paattan —→ great grandfather. Though it is used as the reference term for the great grandfather by the other sects of in southern Nadars, northern Nadars such as from Coimbatore, Namakkal and Chennai its surrounding regions are using this Pattan term for referring their great grandfather.

Great grandfather

Poottanar/Paattan = Paattan/Poottan —→ Great grandfather

Kolluthatha = Kollu + thatha —→ though this term is used for referring great – great grandfather, among the Nilamaikkaran, Nattathi and Northern Nadars of Tamil Nadu this term is also used for great grandfather. Kollu (horse gram) + thatha (grandfather). Through this meaning it indirectly indicates that the relationship between descendants and the great – great grandfather will be level size of horse gram.