

**OPINION ABOUT CULTURE AND TRADITION:
A STUDY WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO FESTIVALS IN
VIRUDHUNAGAR**

Captain. Dr. N. Alagumanikumar Associate Professor of Zoology VHNSN College, Virudhunagar	Dr. Mrs. M. Subasini Assistant Professor of Commerce V.V.Vanniaperumal College for Women Virudhunagar
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DOI No : [10.5281/zenodo.10514435](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.10514435)

INTRODUCTION

Human beings started their lives in forests and mountain sides. Wherever, they live, they change their places of dwelling according to their comfort and maintain it over the generations. As a result, tradition, culture and belief develops. Culture is yardstick which shapes the character of the human beings. They provide a sense of uniqueness and fitting that helps to shape the culture and the lives of the people. Respecting the traditions is an imperative part of evolving a strong sense of self and accepting the cultures that shape the character of an individual.

At the main part of traditions is a collective set of views, morals, customs and ceremonies that are delivered down from generation to generation. These civilisations can be agreed down through family, religion or even communities. They help as a reminder of who the people are and their connection to the past. By valuing traditions, the society honour the people who came before it and the struggles they faced in order to make our lives better.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The significance of traditions lies in the fact that they provide continuity in our lives. They give us a sagacity of origins and fitting, as well as providing construction and stability. They also have adoptive a sense of community, as the people join together in celebrating and honouring shared history. Traditions also provide us with important moral lessons and values, teaching us about respect for others, loyalty, responsibility and other important life skills. The culture, belief and traditions are reflected in festival celebration. In the study area, Virudhunagar is famous for festivals, following culture, adopting traditions and accepting the valuable beliefs. Hence, a study has been made to analyse the awareness of the people towards the culture and tradition of festivals in Virudhunagar.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

In the present study, the famous festivals of Virudhunagar such as Panguni Pongal and Mahar Noonbu are taken into account. In addition to that the marriage ceremony is treated as festival. So awareness of the respondents towards the tradition of marriage ceremony is taken into account.

PANGUNI PONGAL FESTIVAL

In Virudhunagar, Panguni Pongal is the important festival. The tradition of celebrating Panguni Pongal is studied here.

Chattuthal and 21 days Fasting

The Panguni Pongal festival begins with Chattuthal. The Drums man walked all over the streets of Virudhunagar and informed that Pangunipongal will be celebrated on a first week of April and people may engage with fasting for 21 days.

Kodiyetram

After 14 days of Chattuthal, Kodiyetram tool place. The Lion image is drawn in the white flag and it is kept on the top of the kodimaram. The devotess pour water in the kodimaram.

Pongal

On the first week of April (Sunday), the devotees will prepare pongal in side and around the temple premises.

AkkiniChatti (Fire Pot)

The next day of Pongal, Akkini Chatti festival is going on. The devotees carry fire pot in their hands and walked around the main roads of Virudhunagar and surrendered their fire pot inside the temple.

TherThiruvizha (Car Festival)

The next day of AkkiniChatti, Therthiruvizha is going on. Two thers are decorated – One is small size and another one is big in size. In the first ther, Vinayagar statue is placed and in the second ther, Mariyamman and Veiluvanthaamman Statue are placed. The devotees pull the ther with full devotion. The entire night, two thers are kept near Theppam. On the next day morning, thers are placed in their regular place.

In the second week of April i.e. after the eighth day of Pongal, the festival ended with kodierakam.

MAHAR NOONBU FESTIVAL

அரையாண்டு இதழ்

Mahar Noonbu festival is popularly celebrated in Virudhunagar. It is celebrated on the next day of Saraswathipooja.

PuliVesham

Each and every street, one person is allotted for doing PuliVesham. The person who was given a chance for pulivesham, engage themselves with fasting and on the day of Maharnoonbu, the pasted colour paints in his body and play like a tiger and went to KVS nandhavanam.

Silambattam

The area people who are well trained in Silambattam accompany the area people and walk towards KVS school nandhavam.

Naddavanam

The people in Virudhunagar went to KVS school Nandhavanam to worship the God by seeing the pulivesam and silambattam. The Hindu NadarDevasthanam placed the Statue of God. The spend time in the KVS school play ground in the evening.

MARRIAGE CEREMONIES

In Virudhunagar, marriage is celebrated as festival. Till now, Virudhunagar exhibition is used to meet the bride and bridegroom meeting spot. When the families of bride and bridegroom are satisfied and accepting for marriage, Poo vaithal function arranged. After that PownUrukkuthal function takes place. In this function, gold is melted by the goldsmith for making wed lock. Before one day of marriage, in the night, Engagement function takes place. In that function, the maternal uncle of bride and bride groom transferred thambulam (Vettilai and Pakku). This is known as Thai mamansasthiram. Marriages are held at temple or at marriage halls. On the next day of marriage, non-vegetarian feast is given to the relatives.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To study the socio economic profile of the respondents
2. To analyse the awareness of the respondents towards tradition of festivals in Virudhunagar

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study is based on both primary and secondary data. The primary data has been gathered from 360 respondents residing in Virudhunagar. The secondary data has been

collected from books and websites. The sample of 360 respondents are taken by using convenient sampling technique.

Thirteen statements representing the awareness of the respondents towards two festival and marriage ceremony have been framed with the help of Likert's five point scaling technique. The responses observed for each statement have been scored. To secure the total satisfaction score of the respondent, five points are given for 'Highly Aware', four points for 'Aware', three points are given for 'Somewhat aware', two points for 'Not aware' and one point for 'Not at all aware' responses. Thus, the total score of a respondent is obtained by adding up scores of all the thirteen statements. Mean and standard deviation are calculated from the score values of 360 respondents. The calculated values of \bar{X} and S.D. are 38.14 and 2.33 respectively.

The score values greater than $\bar{X} + S.D.$ and the score values less than $\bar{X} - S.D.$ have been classified as high level understanding and low level awareness, respectively. The score values between $(\bar{X} + S.D.)$ and $(\bar{X} - S.D.)$ have been classified as medium level awareness.

Therefore,

- $\bar{X} + S.D.$ (38.14 + 2.33) = 40.47 = 40 and above – High level awareness
 $\bar{X} - S.D.$ (38.14 – 2.33) = 35.81 = 36 and below - Low level awareness
 $(\bar{X} - S.D.)$ and $(\bar{X} + S.D.)$ = 37 to 39 - Medium level awareness

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this section, socio-economic profile of the respondents and aware of the respondents towards the tradition of festivals are taken into account.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE OF THE RESPONDENTS

Table 1 points out the socio-economic profile of the respondents.

Table 1

Socio-Economic Profile of the Respondents

Socio-Economic Profile of the Respondents		No. of Respondents	Percentage
Age (In years)	Below 30	71	19.72
	30-60	265	73.61
	Above 60	24	6.67
Gender	Male	227	63.06
	Female	133	36.94

Educational Qualification	School level	80	22.22
	College level	236	65.56
	Others	44	12.22
Marital Status	Married	256	71.11
	Unmarried	104	28.89
Size of the Family	Below 4	56	15.56
	4-8	288	80.00
	Above 8	16	4.44
Type of the Family	Joint	89	24.72
	Nuclear	271	75.28
Occupation	Business	164	45.56
	Employed	80	22.22
	Professional	70	19.44
	Retired	46	12.78
Monthly Income (in Rs.)	Below 20,000	72	20.00
	20,000-40,000	198	55.00
	Above 40,000	90	25.00
Native place	In Virudhunagar	275	76.39
	Outside Virudhunagar	85	23.61

Source: Primary data

Out of 360 respondents,

- 265 (73.61%) are in the age group of 30-60 years
- 227 (63.06%) are male
- 236 (65.56%) have completed their education upto college level
- 256 (71.11%) are married
- 288 (80%) have 4-8 members in their family

- 271 (75.28) belong to nuclear family
- 164 (45.56%) are engaged in business.
- 198 (55.00%) have earned a monthly income of Rs. 20,000 – Rs. 40,000.
- 275 (76.39%) have the native place of Virudhunagar.

AWARENESS ABOUT TRADITION OF FESTIVALS IN VIRUDHUNAGAR

Table 2 spells out the awareness of the respondents about tradition of festivals in Virudhunagar.

Table 2
Awareness about Tradition of Festivals in Virudhunagar

Awareness about Tradition of Festivals in Virudhunagar		H ighly aware	A ware	S ome what aware	N ot aware	N ot at all aware
Panguni Pongal Festival	Chattuthal and 21 days Fasting	117	191	17	16	19
	Kodiyetram	150	121	74	6	9
	Pongal	133	107	73	40	7
	AkkiniChatti	139	180	28	10	3
	TherThiruvizha	185	109	55	6	5
MaharNoonbu Festival	PuliVesham	161	67	96	18	18
	Silambattam	144	118	92	2	4
	Visiting to Nandhavanam	125	163	15	17	40
Marriage ceremonies	Poovaital	160	88	71	18	23
	PownUrukkuthal	153	101	15	33	58
	Nichayadhartham	139	115	81	17	8
	Marriage ceremoney	137	123	72	18	10
	Non vegetarian feast	122	106	93	19	20

Source: Primary data

The mean and standard deviation are computed by using the responses given by the respondents for the above thirteen statements. The level of awareness is measured by using the mean and standard deviation values. The results are given in Table 3.

Table 3

Level of Awareness about Tradition of Festivals in Virudhunagar

Level of Awareness	No. of Respondents	Percentage
High	88	24.44
Medium	255	70.83
Low	17	4.72
Total	360	100.00

Source: Primary data

Out of 360 respondents, 255 (70.83%) have medium level awareness, 88 (24.44%) have high level awareness and 17 (4.72%) have low level awareness about tradition of festivals in Virudhunagar.

Table 4

Source of Awareness about Tradition of Festivals in Virudhunagar

Source of Awareness	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Parents	205	56.94
Relatives	132	36.67
Friends	23	6.39
Total	360	100

Source: Primary data

Out of 360 respondents, 205 (56.94%) have gathered the information about tradition of festivals from parents, 132 (36.67%) have collected the source of information about festivals from relatives and 23 (6.39%) have acquired information from friends.

SUGGESTIONS

On the basis of findings of the study, some suggestions are offered.

1. It is duty of the parents to spread the value of culture and tradition to the upcoming generation.
2. It is the duty of younger generation to follow the foot steps of their fore fathers.
3. As they move from native place, they have to follow the values kept by the family

4. The younger generation have to accept the words of their parents in the choosing their life partners

CONCLUSION

In the nutshell, traditions are an important part of life that allow us to connect with our past, build strong communities, teach valuable life skills, and help preserve our culture for future generations. It is important to value the positive aspects of our traditions while recognizing when it is time to let go of outdated ones. By doing this, we ensure that our traditions remain alive and relevant for many years to come.

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