

Societal Expectations and Pressures on Women in Silappatikaram: A Psychological Analysis

Arzoo¹, Dr. Manju²

¹Research Scholar, Department of English, University Institute of Liberal Arts and Humanities (UILAH) Chandigarh University, Mohali, Punjab, India.

Email id: - arzoodhanda786@gmail.com.

²Professor, Department of English, University Institute of Liberal Arts and Humanities (UILAH), Chandigarh University, Mohali, Punjab, India.

Email id: - manju.uila@cumail.in

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Abstract:

Women's roles in politics and society have shifted in the last few years. These functions have been significantly impacted by the business and cultural climates. In certain societies nowadays, women are forbidden from working outside the home and are expected to focus solely on raising children. This study will attempt to chart the historical progression of women's increasing economic independence and political participation. Despite the globalization of enterprises, this is heavily influenced by regional customs and traditions. Such shifting winds bring with them new obligations and responsibilities. One of the best works ever written in Tamil is Silappatikaram, or The Epic of the Anklet. IlangoAdigal wrote it in the 2nd century CE, and it sheds light on the constraints and prejudices that existed against women in ancient South India at the period. This dissertation aims to examine the portrayal of women in Silappatikaram. The purpose of this dissertation is to examine the portrayal of women in Silappatikaram in order to better understand the social, cultural, and religious conventions that shaped their life. The characters of Kannagi, Madhavi, and others will be dissected in order to reveal the myriad of ways women in a patriarchal culture were required to behave.

Keywords: women, Silappatikaram, cultural climates, south india.

Introduction:

The paper will be a consideration of how patriarchal rules defining female identity have shifted through time while retaining their fundamentally oppressive core. We'll use the widely held beliefs and ideals about Kannaki from Silappatikaram as an illustration. Over the course of the 19th and 20th centuries, ideas of the perfect female altered. The same thing happened in Tamil Nadu, except with this idea. The fight against colonialism, religious reform, and attempts at social change all had an impact on how modern women see themselves. However, women were rarely consulted by men when decisions were made that affected their rights or the justice they received. It's safe to suppose that male societal leaders decided what women should be like, and that despite their best intentions, patriarchal ideals eventually crept into female self-perception.

IlangoAdikal penned the Tamil poetry Silappatikaram. Some academics place its composition between the years 500 and 800 CE (Obeyesekere, 1984, p.3), while others place it in the fifth century CE (Parthasarathy, 1993, p.6). Although the story of Silappatikaram is well-known, I'd still like to summarize it for you. The tale opens with the wedding of Kovalan and Kannaki in the Chola homeland. Kannaki waits for her husband to return after he leaves her for a courtesan shortly after they get married. Kovalan leaves Madhavi as he becomes certain that she is cheating on him with another man. When he went back to Kannaki, he found that he had run out of money, so she gave him her anklets. The trip from Kannaki and Kovalam to Madurai is covered in great depth. They finally make it to the Pandyan city of Madurai, where Kovalan pawns one of Kannaki's anklets in order to start over. But the goldsmith plans to steal the anklet and frame Kovalan for stealing the one belonging to Queen Kopuramdevi. He tells the king that Kovalan took the queen's anklet, and the king immediately orders Kovalan's execution. Upon hearing this, Kannaki takes to the streets of Madurai to vent her anger and describe the injustice she has just experienced before making her way to the royal court to defend her husband's honor. Both the king and queen are killed instantly when she reveals the anklet as proof that he was mistaken. She tears off

her breast, wanders the city, and prays to the fire god Agni to destroy the place. Some tribes see her ascension to heaven during her journey to the Chera country. After hearing this, CheranSilappatikaram follows the advice of his advisors and goes to the Ganges to worship the goddess Pattini in the form of a stone. King Gajabahu of Lanka is similarly inspired by the Kannaki narrative and converts to Buddhism.

Women's roles have shifted in modern society. How, though, has it evolved? There's the plainly visible: Families are shifting. There are fewer mothers remaining at home, fewer babies being born, and more women in higher education. Reproductive rights, sexual harassment, and domestic violence are just some of the concerns that have been the focus of new legislation and stricter enforcement in recent years. In 1950, only 34% of women held outside jobs; today, that number has risen to 60%. Those numbers compare to 75% of men, and there have been shifts in "where you see female faces." Women are increasingly present in male-dominated fields such as law, medicine, science, politics, the military, space exploration, the ministry, Congress, the Supreme Court, the academy, and the presidency of universities. When you boil it all down, I think you'll agree that opportunities and alternatives have shifted the most. Women's unique perspectives improve the quality of problem-solving processes. When women participate in decision making, they provide a unique perspective that improves the outcome. In the same way, I may argue for all forms of variety. Curriculum decisions will benefit from the combined expertise of faculty members from the sciences and the humanities, rather than just one. The university's master plan can be improved upon by bringing together faculty, staff, students, and community members. And just look what a well-rounded presidential search committee can do for a decision. A new generation of women has emerged, educated and empowered to make a difference in the world and leave their mark, thanks to the rapid pace of social change and the importance placed on education, opportunities, and understanding of rights and duties.

The city of Silappatikaram, during the time of the early Chola kingdom, was a thriving seaport. The newlyweds Kannaki and Kovalan are head over heels in adoration for one another. Matavi (Madhavi), a courtesan, and Kovalan meet over time. He abandons Kannaki and moves in with Matavi because of his feelings for her. He lavishes money and gifts on her. Kannaki is devastated by her husband's infidelity, but she plays the virtuous wife role and waits it out. The event honoring Indra, the deity of rain, features a singing competition. Kovalan performs a song in which the female protagonist harms her partner. Matavi then performs a song about a lover whose lover has been unfaithful [1]. They each hear something different in the music that speaks to them. Kovalan dumps Matavi because he thinks she's being unfaithful to him. To this day, Kannaki has not seen him. She returns to him. The Silappatikaram epic revolves around Kannaki (top). Particularly prevalent in the temples of Tamil Nadu and Kerala are statues, reliefs, and iconography depicting Kannaki. After leaving the city, Kannagi and Kovalan set off for Madurai, the Pandya capital. Kovalan is completely broke and out of options. He tells Kannagi about his shortcomings [2]. She releases her resentment and opens up to him about the hurt his infidelity caused. She then tells her husband that they may start over and gives him one of her jewel-encrusted anklets to sell. Kovalan sells it to a trader, who then frames him for stealing the queen's anklet. Without following the proper legal procedures, the king has Kovalan arrested and subsequently executed. Kannagi goes looking for Kovalan after he doesn't come home [3]. She finds out what's transpired. She objects to the unfairness of the situation and later demonstrates Kovalan's innocence by presenting the other jeweled anklet to the court. The king realizes his error. Kannagi rips off her breast and throws it at the assembled crowd as she curses the king and the people of Madurai. King passes away. The city of Madurai is destroyed by fire as punishment for the society that made her suffer. The gods and goddesses finally meet Kannagi in Chera Nadu in the epic's third section, after which she ascends to heaven with Indra [4]. When the monarch of the Chera kingdom (modern-day Kerala) and his family heard about her, they decided to construct a temple in her honor. They take a stone to the Himalayas, carve her likeness onto it, name her Pattini, build a temple in her honor, mandate regular worship services, and offer a royal sacrifice. Ancient Indian literature doesn't get much better than the Silappatikaram [5]. According to R. Parthasarathy, it serves a similar role in Tamil culture as the Iliad does in Greek culture. It incorporates ideas and concepts from three different religions Jainism, Buddhism, and Hinduism into a unified whole. Like all the great epics from around the world, this one is told in Tamil [6] and deals with themes of love, loss, happiness, and sadness as well as good and evil. However, the Silappatikaram is not an epic about kings and armies [7], but rather about a normal couple caught up in philosophical issues and

an internal, emotional conflict. In Tamil tradition, the story of Silappatikaram has always been told. Palm leaf manuscripts of the original epic poem and the Sangam literature were discovered in monasteries in the second part of the nineteenth century by a pandit and Tamil scholar named UV SwaminathaAiyar [8]. Aiyar first appeared in print in 1872 (in a partial edition) and 1892 (in a complete edition), after having been kept and copied in temples and monasteries as palm-leaf manuscripts. Several languages, including English, have produced translations of the epic poem [9].

SilappathikaramTamil story:

According to the Silappathikaram, the young merchant Kovalan weds the virtuous Kannaki (Kannagi), fell in love with the courtesan Matavi, and met an unhappy death in Maturai after being wrongly accused of stealing the queen's anklet and trying to sell it to a corrupt jeweller. When Kannaki, Kovalan's widow, arrives, she proves her husband's innocence by cutting off one of her breasts and throwing it into the flames of the capital city of Maturai. A determined woman may affect change on that scale. The current goddess of virginity is Kannaki, and in the third book, the king sends an expedition to the Himalayas to obtain a stone for carving her statue.

The youthful merchant Kovalan appears in the Silappathikaram as marrying the noble Kannaki (Kannagi), falling in love with the beautiful courtesan Matavi, and meeting an untimely end in Maturai after being wrongly accused of stealing the queen's anklet and trying to sell it to a corrupt jeweller. When Kannaki, Kovalan's widow, comes, she proves her husband's innocence by chopping off one of her breasts and tossing it into the flames of the capital city, effectively destroying Maturai. That kind of power belongs to a loving female. In volume three, the monarch launches an expedition to the Himalayas to gather a stone to be used in the creation of a statue of Kannaki, the modern-day goddess of chastity.

Silappadikaram: The Tale of an Anklet:

Originally from the play *The Mourning Bride* by Ben Jonson in the 17th century, the adage "Hell hath no fury like a woman scorned" has become a common saying. Justifiable female anger is a recurrent issue in literature from many time periods and styles. Two excellent examples are Sita and Draupadi, two of the most important female characters in the ancient Indian epics *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*. The protagonist of the ancient Tamil epic *Silappadikaram*, Kannagi, is a prime example of this cliché. The *Silappadikaram* is an important cultural classic and a cornerstone of Tamil literature.

The *Silappadikaram* contains 5,370 lines of akavalmeters. Common opinion attributes its authorship to IlangoAdigal, a Jaina and the brother of Chera king Senguttuvan. This, however, is disputed by certain academicians. Some scholars argue that the padikam, or prologue, is an unnecessary addition to the epic because it is the only place the name IlangoAdigal appears. The epic may have been passed down orally or through a bardic tradition before being put to paper. This theory is buttressed by references to the Kannagi story in another Sangam period text, the *Narrinai* (1st–5th century CE).

Both the ancient *Arumpaduvari* by an unidentified author and the medieval *Adiyarkunallar* provide commentary on the *Silappadikaram*. The first complete edition of the epic was released in 1892, after a manuscript was discovered in the second half of the nineteenth century by UV SwaminathaAiyar. Numerous translations of the book appeared in the twentieth century, with the English version becoming the de facto standard. In 1939, VRR Dikshitar translated it into English, and in 1965, Alain Denielou did the same. In 1993, an acclaimed English translation of R Parthasarathy appeared. This study relies heavily on Dikshitar's translation, which can be found here on this very page. Dikshitar's translation is often regarded as a faithful English version of the original. Dikshitar avoids watering down the poetry of the original verses by translating the material into prose, despite the fact that the original contains both verse and prose. True to the role of historian, he delves deeply into the social, cultural, and political climate of the day and provides solid historical evidence to support his claims.

There has been a lot of discussion on when exactly the epic took place. According to Diskhitar, the work was written in the second century CE. He notes that the poem doesn't name the Pallava dynasty of Kanci, and

speculates that this would mean it was written before the Pallavas emerged (between 200 and 350 CE). The language, style, and organization of the epic, however, resemble later works rather than the Sangam literature, according to the research of another scholar named KamilZvebil, hence it cannot be dated before the 5th century. From the third century BCE to the second century CE, the Tamil region hosted a number of sangams (academies of intellectuals and poets). Parthasarathy agrees with this assessment and proposes a date for the text of after the 6th century CE. Dikshitar's dating of the text, however, has more scholarly support and is hence more authoritative.

Kannagi and Kovalan, the offspring of wealthy merchants, get married to kick off the events of Silappadikaram in the Chola city of Puhar. After a brief time of wedded bliss, Kovalan leaves Kannagi for Madhavi, a well-known courtesan. Kovalan neglects his wife in favor of sensuous and artistic activities. Madhavi, however, once performed a song about a woman who was betrayed in love at a celebration honoring Lord Indra. Because of this, Kovalan begins to question Madhavi's loyalty. He walks away from her, his dignity bruised, and goes back to Kannagi, who embraces him without question. After their differences were resolved, the couple decided to go to Pandya territory, specifically to the city of Madurai. Since Kovalan had already spent all of his money on Madhavi, Kannagi's sole remaining piece of jewelry was her anklet, so they sold it in order to raise money for their new venture.

They walk a very long way in order to get where they're going. Kovalan leaves for the city the following day with the intention of trading one of the anklets with a jeweller. There have been several portents of doom since he left. But the goldsmith, who is a shady character, has his own sneaky plans. He tells King Nedunchelian of Pandya that Kovalan has absconded with the queen's anklet. The goldsmith is the true robber here. After a disagreement with his queen, the monarch orders Kovalan's capture and execution without a trial. His commands are always obeyed. Hearing the horrific news of what happened to her husband, Kannagi immediately travels to the city, where she discovers him lying in a pool of blood. She loses it and storms the royal palace, where she promptly captures the king. She tosses the second anklet on the floor in a fit of rage, breaking it and exposing the precious stones within.

The pearls on the queen's anklet immediately clued the monarch in to his mistake. The king commits suicide out of shame and misery, and his wife soon after. Still seething, Kannagi rips off her left breast and hurls it at the city, setting it ablaze. When the fire starts wreaking havoc on the city, the deity responsible for protecting it appears before Kannagi in an effort to calm her down. She explains to Kannagi that in his previous life, Kovalan incarnated as Bharata, had wrongfully executed a merchant on suspicion of being a spy, and the merchant's death is the result of his own karma. She tells Kannagi that she, too, would be leaving in 14 days to be with her husband. Grieving, Kannagi ends himself in the hills of Chera region, known as Murugavel-kunram. Her death and subsequent ascent to heaven are witnessed by the Kuravas, or hill people, who live in that area. They relate the unbelievable event to King Senguttuvan. The terrible story affected the queen so much that she decided to have a temple dedicated to Kannagi constructed. The king then makes a promise to the goddess that he will get a stone from the Himalayas and use it to construct an idol. The king honors his word and launches the Pattini religion.

The epic Silappadikaram is an excellent resource for learning about the people and culture of pre-modern peninsular India. The epic takes place in what is now Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, Lakshadweep, and parts of Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh; this area was once known as Tamilakam. Puharkkandam, Maduraikkandam, and Vanjikkandam are the three volumes, or kandams, of the epic, and they correspond to the Chola, Pandya, and Chera kingdoms of early India. Periyaru or Ponnani, Vaigai, and Kaveri are just some of the lesser-known rivers listed in the book with the more popular Anporunai (Amaravati). Songs and dances from many walks of life, including those from the coast, the hills, the herdswomen, the hunters, etc. that are recounted in the book paint a picture of the region's geography and ethnic and cultural makeup. The text also provides a vivid picture of ancient city life, commerce, and trade. It appears that Jainism, Brahmanical religion, and Buddhism all coexisted in the social and theological context that Silappadikaram depicts.

As we've already established, the narrative of Silappadikaram may have originated as an oral tradition before it was put to writing. The formation of a textual form is a significant milestone in the evolution of an epic, serving as a touchstone for subsequent retellings. But even when written records are created, oral histories continue to be passed down. A Tamil Nadu hill tribe called the Mudhuvans attribute their forefathers' survival to the fact that they warned the Pandyan monarch not to hurt Kovalan. Similarly, some folktales have it that Kannagi was actually the abandoned daughter of the Pandyan ruler. There is a great deal of variety. The story's core events are essentially the same as in the original.

Kannagi's transformation from an obedient housewife into a divine being is the central plot point of Silappadikaram. The anklet is significant to the plot and is loaded with meaning. The very name of the epic is derived from two words: silambu and adikaram, which together mean "a story about a silambu" (also known as an anklet). The protagonist of Silappadikaram is a woman, which is unusual for Sanskrit and Greek epics. Kannagi functions in a patriarchal society where chastity (karpu) and honor are prized virtues. Kannagi, however, comes into her own when the putative authorities in charge of maintaining social and moral order fail to do their jobs. The man who was supposed to look out for Kannagi, Kovalan, wastes his money and ends up having to take her last remaining piece of jewelry just to get by.

The Tamils hold Silappadikaram up as the pinnacle of their literary achievements and cultural values. The meaning of life, the existence of a life beyond death, morality, and justice are just a few of the basic human themes it addresses. The epic, however, has been repeated many times over the centuries. Kannagi (1942) and Poompuhar (1964) are two examples of the cinematic adaptations, and Upasana (1996, Doordarshan) is an example of a television series. Various social and political movements have also adopted it as their own. Every version conveys the values and concerns of the culture that tells it. Therefore, an epic can be described as both static and dynamic. It captures the spirit of every civilization, which is to honor its heritage while looking to the future. It (Silappadikaram) depicts the essence of the cold Tamil region, where "men and gods devoted to duty and to the common practice of dharma, artha, and kama..." live, much like the reflection of towering hills in a mirror.

Physiological analysis in Silappatikaram:

A work of epic literature, Siipatikaram was penned by Ilankavadi. Saimpu and Power are obedient. Chimpanzees' milk In Tamil, papaya is called Saipatikaram. Kagawain and Kannagi Kabana are just two regular folks. Because it is sung in ravathu, it is commonly referred to as a citizen's epic. Rural citizens This hundred is what makes the residence possible. Mass as an Individual, Mass as a Family, Mass as a Community, Mass as a Community Member, Mass as a Citizen Mass preservation efforts have focused on real-world, essential activities that people perform on a daily basis. Techniques are a type of biological instrument. Aitinal considers the ascent of Papanrama and the political upheaval that followed to be the pinnacle of the experiments conducted on the Tamil people. Siipatikaram provides explanations for them. AikKakadpadukarala's use of milking vessels as a mouth is convincing. A record of this event will be kept in Siipatikaram. The Aadals are a documentary evidence of their culture. This analysis has interesting moral implications. The term "goat" is where the name "Aadal" comes from. Nadu is a slang word for dance, and "Nadu" is a common expression. Nutmeg powder Papaya got its name because it moves like a dance. Kavarcasala "Phara" is the source of the name Bharatham. What I mean by "para" is that it's spreading like wildfire. Without mincing words The inhabitants of Bharata are known for their love of dance. Wide The following is an excerpt from AdutagaiBharatam's Siipatikaram. "May Bharata's blessings of peace be upon you, Vikanath." Men of KamalumKadaturatai, carrying Bharatamakalir and Viralayatar's water They were reportedly very content. The field is called Bharata Women's Enkabar. Bharatam derives from this, and it means "Tamilian ballroom."

Conclusion:

The point to be drawn from this is that women continue to be the defining entities in society even when there is an explicit political effort to modernize the society and secure women's rights. Not taking into account the perspectives of lower castes or lower caste women meant that their ideas and tales, like their presence, were marginalized, and this was true even for the story of Kannagi and the demands placed on Tamil women. The

numerous stories and variations of Kannaki that are popular among smaller groups, especially underrepresented less privileged ones, should be incorporated into the larger narrative. The incorporation of these tales helps to promote a more positive image of Kannaki. Unless it is updated to reflect modern sensibilities, it risks being cast aside as a relic of the past used to indoctrinate traditional gender roles.

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