



INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ADVANCE RESEARCH, IDEAS AND INNOVATIONS IN TECHNOLOGY

ISSN: 2454-132X

Impact factor: 6.078

(Volume 7, Issue 1)

Available online at: <https://www.ijariit.com>

History of Tamil food of Ancient Tamils with special reference to Sangam Literature

Dr. T. Kausalya Kumari

kausalyakumari@gmail.com

Ethiraj College for Women, Chennai, Tamil Nadu

ABSTRACT

From the very prehistoric stage of the civilization of mankind, man has realized the indispensability of food for the building up of a healthy body and a sound mind. He is able to notice that people who are well-fed live longer and are stronger and they are able to do more work than those who do not have enough to eat. Yet it is only during the last 150 years that we are able to understand objectively and scientifically the important role that food plays in our daily life. Thanks to the recent scientific investigations that we are able to know clearly, the place of food in the growth of the human body, as well as in ending the body with energy.

Keywords: Tamil food habits, Varagu Arisi, Kuuttu, Appam, Choru, Unavu, Sangam

1. INTRODUCTION

From the very prehistoric stage of the civilization of mankind man has realized the indispensability of food for the building up of healthy body and sound mind. He is able to notice that people who are well fed live longer and are stronger and they are able to do more work than those who do not have enough to eat. Yet it is only during the last 150 years that we are able to understand objectively and scientifically the important role that food plays in our daily life. Thanks to the recent scientific investigations that we are able to know clearly, the place of food in the growth of human body, as well as in ending the body with energy.

Nature has taken good care of food needs. She has given us farm land where vegetables, fruits, grains and other plants can be grown. She has filled the ocean with fish and the lands with animals that supply meat, milk and other food products. She has blessed us with the ability to find ways to cultivate and produce food products.

The world has a huge desire for food. About two thirds of the people of the world are employed to satisfy the food needs of mankind. Farmers, ranchers, fishermen, millets, bakers, milkmen, grocers, food chemists and workers in canning factories, sugar refineries, food freezing and food packaging plants, etc., form only a part of the great army who work to bring us food.

Sometimes people who get enough food do not eat the things which are need for good health. They do not know how to select a well-balanced diet from the ample food products they have. The below mentioned points may be considered as development of humankind food habits. Primitive man hunted and fished, Man turn to farming, what they eat depend on where they live and what they drink depends on where they live.

Primitive man, in course of time, turned from hunting to farming and this marked the starting point of civilized life. In a way man is endowed with sixth knowledge which has been described as "aaravthu arivu" by the Tamils. In almost all the sphere of human activities the Tamils have proved their supremacy. The agricultural development of the Tamils can be seen from the literatures of the Sangam period. Pathuppattu and Ettuthogai the two anthologies of Sangam period give various accounts of the achievements of the Tamils in agriculture.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

There are abundant source materials available for this study. Sangam literature like Pathuppattu, Ettuthogai, Pathinenkeelkanakku which are useful for my study and also throws flood of light on the Tamil food system, variety of food which were prevalent in ancient Tamilnadu.

The book "Tamizhar Unavu" was written by S.Namasivayam which help me to know about the uses of traditional food. "Pantait Tamizhar Thozhilgal" by Dr.V.C.Sasivalli gives a lot of information on the occupations along with variety of foodstuff. Apart from

these many books are available to do research on this topic. “*Tamilnattu Varalaru*” was compiled by Tamilnadu Varalattu Kuzhu which gives me an elaborate insight of food habits of tamil land divisions (*aintinai*).

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objectives of the study are as follows:

- To bring light the importance of the traditional Tamil food
- To capture the attention of the youngsters to change the food habit
- To analyze this topic from historical perspective
- To create awareness among the people about the richness of the traditional food

4. METHODOLOGY

Research refers to a search for knowledge in a particular topic. The historical method has been adopted to investigate the area taken. The presentation is simple descriptive and analytical method. It enables the reader to understand better and give crystal clear idea about the views of the researcher.

5. TOLKAPPIAM

Tolkappiam, the earliest extant grammatical treatise also gives a good amount of instances. Nature provides us with all kinds of resources to make food items. Tamils are utilizing these precious gifts of the nature in their daily life. Mankind came into existence just thirty lakh of years ago whereas the plants were in existence even before eight to nine crores of years. All the living species which we observe today were the ancient.

Though our forefather did not have a synthetic analysis of the food items, they were the pioneers in establishing a balanced diet. Tolkappiam and Sangam literatures establish clearly how the Tamils enjoyed a culturally superior life with tasty, nutritious and balanced diet. The classical literatures are the innocent mirrors which reflect the mode of life and culture of the people. On this basis the food habits find a place in the scriptures spontaneously. They were not introduced purposefully.

All the food products are necessary for human life. There is a Tamil saying that man is half without dress; we may say man is lifeless without food. If the monsoon fails for just one year or two three years, then there will be no agricultural products and consequently people will suffer by severe drought. This will spoil the morality of the society. All the high qualities like sympathy, love and philanthropy will be dislocated. The society will lose its culture and standard of life will be degraded. This whole structure of the society centered on food.

Man is ready to give anything for the sake of food. So our Tamils described hunger as a disease. The food, dress and shelter are the basic requirements for man. Society can exist even without dress and shelter but never without food. Tamils utilized various vegetables, roots, mutton and flesh of the animals first at raw and then in course of time they understood how to process the food in a synthetic way. Many of the struggles of the primitive man were centered on food.

6. THANIPADAL THIRATTU

Celebrated Poetess Avvaiyar described the lunch on a summer day in her *Thanipadal Thirattu* in 32nd song

*'Varagu arisi chorum, vazhuthunangai vaatum,
moramoravena pulitha morum...'*

The translation of the above song is steamed *varagu* rice, smoked and mashed aubergine and tangy frothy buttermilk. The poet mentions her host's name as Boothan of Pulvelur village and expresses gratitude for the tasty meal.

Ancient Tamils well-versed in cooking tasty food. Their foods are differed from region to region. There were five lands such as – Kurunji, Mullai, Marutham, Neithal and Palai.

7. FOOD HABITS IN AINTINAI

The five traditional landscapes of *Kurinji* (mountains), *Mullai* (forests), *Marutham* (agriculture fields), *Neithal* (coastal region) and *Palai* (desert) had distinct cooking methods, recipes and varied eating culture. Food in ancient Tamil country was based on the landscape and easily available resources,” points out novelist Nanjil Nadan, who's currently penning a book '*Nanjil Nattu Unavu*', on the cuisine of a sub-region in Kanyakumari district. Pointing to a story in the *Thiruvilayadal Puranam*, woven around the simple recipe of *Puttu*, Su. Venkatesan, says that Tamil literature projects food as a socio-cultural element.

The Tamil literature speaks not only about the necessity of food but also the importance of sharing food with others. Thirukural exclaims how cruel it is to hoard the food products which are meant by the nature as a common gift to the whole society. The songs of the Sangam period give a clear picture of the food habits like greens, roots, fruits, seeds, grains and fleshes of animals. They also made use of toddy, coconut juice, palm products, milk products and the essence of various grains. They process the above food materials by boiling, distilling frying and storing in a scientific way.

Appam, *kuttu* and various side dishes were also prepared by them. Apart from the Literature we have proof for Tamils diet from Nikantu and inscriptions also. So food played an important role of the day today life of the ancient Tamils. Life style has been changed now especially food habits of the Tamils completely has changed because of that Tamils facing different problems in day

today life. The changing food habit has affected the Tamil people very badly. Once upon a time we had good food types that is there is an old saying

“*unave marundhu; marundhe unavu*”

(Food is(as) Medicine and Medicine is(as) Food.)

In Porunartruppadai (one of the earliest poems in *Pahtuppattu*) the poet meets a wandering minstrel and directs him to his patron Chola king Karikalan. Foods and drinks offered to the bards by the king are described in the following lines:

“In the halls bejeweled, smiling, comely maids poured out from spotless golden vessels full like cheering rain much stupefying drink repeatedly. Knowing the time to eat, he urged me to eat cooked thick thigh meat of sheep that were fed arukam grass twisted as ropes and fatty, big pieces of meat roasted on iron rods. He gave more and more even when I refused them again and again; he served many tasty pastries in many shapes”

“One day the king begged us to eat cooked rice whose grains unbroken looked like jasmine buds, all the grains of the same size with no streaks and long like fingers along with curries mixed with roasted seeds staying with me sweetly”

Like that many examples are found in Sangam literature. While doing research papers only, we are able to bring to light the significance and importance of the Tamil food.

8. CONCLUSION

Proposed outcome of the research is to attract the attention of the people to reintroduce the traditional Tamil food in the society and to strengthen the future generation in better way. This paper is an attempt to capture the attention of the people who are having interest in western food. Definitely when reading this paper people would realize the importance of traditional Tamil food. Eat healthy food, create healthy generation.

9. REFERENCES

- [1] Sangam Literatures – Pattupattu, Ettuthogai, Agananuru, Pura Nanooru, Mullai Pattu., etc.,
- [2] K.A.Nilakanta Sastri, The Cultural History of the Tamils, 1964.
- [3] History of Tamilnadu Sangam Age (Social), Expert Committee for History of Tamilnadu, Director of Tamil Development, Kuralagam, Government of Tamilnadu, Madras – 600 00, 1983.
- [4] Pazhanthamilarin Pazhakkavazhakkangal, A.Kandasami, International Institute of Tamil Studies, Tharamani, Chennai, 2013
- [5] Unavum Udalnalamum, V.Sundarraj & S. Periyasamy, Ramayya Publication, Chennai, 2012.
- [6] Pazhan Thamizhar Vazhvum Varalarum (Inbam), Semmudhai Sadhasivam, A.Amalaarularasi, A.M. Sonal, Semmudhai Publication, Chennai, 2016.
- [7] Kalanthorum Thamizhar Nagaregamum Panpadum, S. Sadhasivam, S.Kausalyadevi, Semmudhai Publication, Chennai, 2014.
- [8] Herbert, Vaidehi. *Pathuppattu*. Digital Maxim LLC. 2013.
- [9] Chellaiah, J.V. *Pattuppattu: Ten Idylls*, Translated into English Verse,
- [10] ColomboGeneralPublishers,1975
- [11] முத்தமிழ் மன்றம் - முகப்பு பக்கம் (muthamilmantram.com)