MUDUVAN ORATURES: AN ETHNOPOETIC STUDY

(WITH TRANSLATION OF PRIMARY TEXTS)

Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the award of the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

IN

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By

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled **MUDUVAN ORATURES: AN ETHNOPOETIC STUDY (WITH TRANSLATION OF PRIMARY TEXTS)** submitted to Pondicherry University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY, is a record of original research work done by **Mr. JEROME K. JOSE** during the period of his study (2008– 2011) at the Department of English, Pondicherry University under my supervision and guidance and that the dissertation has not formed before the basis for the award of any Degree, Diploma, Associateship, Fellowship or any other similar titles.

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the dissertation entitled **MUDUVAN ORATURES: AN ETHNOPOETIC STUDY (WITH TRANSLATION OF PRIMARY TEXTS)** submitted to Pondicherry University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY, is a record of original research work done by me under the supervision and guidance of **Dr. SUJATHA VIJAYARAGHAVAN,** Professor, Department of English, Pondicherry University, and that the dissertation has not formed before the basis for the award of any Degree, Diploma, Associateship, Fellowship or any other similar titles.

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I thank God for his grace which helped me finish my work.

My parents and brother have been a perennial source of inspiration to me throughout my life. My heartfelt thanks to them for their love, support and encouragement.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is an ethnopoetic study of the oratures of Muduvan tribe, one of the prominent tribal communities of south India, living on the bordering regions of Kerala and Tamil Nadu. They have many rich oratures of their own as part of folklore handed down from their forefathers. The dialect they use has apparent similarities with both Malayalam and Tamil. Even though this thesis is an ethnopoetic study, it attempts to document and bring the oratures into mainstream academic field via translation. Since no such study has been done on their oratures, this thesis is an initial attempt to collect, document and study them in the academic field. The primary sources of the thesis which include songs of different genres, tales, proverbs and riddles, are collected by intense field work by staying with them in some their settlements in the Idukki district in Kerala. The different genres of oratures are put in different chapters along with their transliteration and translation. The first-hand information gathered from the field regarding their culture and tradition are incorporated in the thesis whenever necessary. The thesis is divided into five chapters.

Chapter I Presents a brief description of Muduvan's geographical location and socio-cultural background which helps one to understand the subsequent chapters. Anthropological and sociological data available so far along with first hand information gathered from the field are part of the

discussion. The field of study is described along with the primary sources selected. In this chapter the need for preserving oral literatures which are vanishing and placing them as a vital part of the literary canon is discussed. An overview of folklore in general and in India along with various theories is also described. A summary of folklore studies in South India especially in Tamil Nadu and Kerala done so far is given. This chapter also presents the concept 'ethnopoetics' and its relevance in literary criticism. This section discusses the origin and growth of ethnopoetics and the views of scholars like Jerome Rothenberg, Dell Hymes, Dennis Tedlock and others as a frame for understanding the subsequent chapters. The objective, scope and the contents of the subsequent chapters are finally outlined in this chapter.

Chapter II is devoted entirely to the analysis of Muduvan's Āśaippātu (Love-song) which are available in large numbers and sung on various occasions. The love songs are divided broadly on the basis of context and theme. The performance of songs at different contexts like marriage, puberty, and leisure time are discussed followed by a thematic analysis. The thematic analysis shows the numerous themes prevalent in their songs which are sung to express the Muduvan's emotions and feelings. The transliterated and translated versions of the songs are put in the end of the chapter.

Chapter III deals with other genres of Muduvan's songs like Tālātu (Lullaby), Kummippātu (literally 'clap-song' songs sung to rhythmic clapping and communal dancing), Songs sung at the time of work and at work places,

Festival songs and Oppāri (Mourning song at the occasion of death). The lengthy renderings of these songs are notable for their rhythm and rhyme. This is erased both in print and in translation even though one could show it by printing the sound syllables.

Chapter IV analyses the different tales, proverbs and riddles that were made available. Muduvans have tales that deal with their migration, history, beliefs and legends. It is difficult to differentiate their tales from their socio-cultural background. The proverbs and riddles show the amount of knowledge that they have got either from their forefathers or from their daily-life and experiences.

Chapter V is the conclusion. This chapter sums up the findings of previous chapters. The chapter also discusses the problems in translation. This is followed by the bibliography. Followed by the bibliography the appendix consists of two parts:(i) A descriptive glossary is given here, followed by a table of primary informants. (ii) Maps and illustrations which document the physical locale of the Muduvan tribes are given with a brief description. One can observe that Muduvans have rich oratures performed at different occasions. This thesis takes space to assert that it is high time to document and place oratures in the literary canon because these are vanishing rapidly.

NOTE ON DOCUMENTATION

The primary materials are quoted within the body of the text with respective numbers as given at the end of each chapter; e.g., Song (5), Tale (3).

References to secondary sources are given parenthetically within the body of the text. The list of works cited or consulted is placed at the end of the text.

In order to facilitate transliteration with diacritical marks the font used in the thesis is Tahoma, size 12, which is receptive to all diacritical marks of Dravidian languages.

The style sheet recommended by Nicholls, David G in MLA *Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*, Seventh Edition is followed.

A description of pronunciation for the diacritical marks is given in the following page.

A KEY TO PRONUNCIATION

rur**al** - **a** (അ)   ki**ng** - **ṅ** (ങ)   **r**ed – **r** – (ര)

f**ar** - **ā** - (ആ)   dul**c**e – **c** - (ച)   **l**ove – **l** – (ല)

b**i**l - **i** - (ഇ)   **j**et – **j** – (ജ)   i**v**y - **v** – (വ)

pol**i**ce – **ī** - (ഈ)   si**ng**e – **ñ** - (ഞ)   **s**ure – **ś** – (ശ)

b**u**ll - **u** – (ഉ)   **t**rue - **ṭ** - (S)   **sh**elf - **ṣ** - (ഷ)

r**u**de – **ū** (ഊ)   **ṇ** - ണ - no example   **s**un – **s** – (സ)

gr**ey** – **e** - (എ)   pe**t**it (Fr) – **t** – (ത)   **h**um – **h** – (ഹ)

ē - (ഏ) - elongated   **n**ut - **n** - (ന)   p**ly** - **ḷ** - (ള)

sh**o**w – **o** - (ഒ)   **p**et – **p** – (പ)   **ḻ** - (ഴ) - no example

ō - (ഓ) - elongated   cu**b** - **b** - ബ   me**rr**y - **ṟ** (റ)

bea**k** – **k** – (ക)   **m**at – **m** - മ

guts – **g** - (ഗ)   lo**y**al - **y** - യ

CHAPTER- I

INTRODUCTION

At present in India there are many tribal dialects in oral form which are on the verge of becoming extinct. These dialects are spoken by ancient tribes which have a distinct multi-faceted, ancient culture. A large portion of these cultures is reflected in and expressed through their oral literatures. While the tribal communities of India, particularly the Muduvan, are fast shifting towards urban centres, the primary loss is the gradual erasure of their oral literature. Their rich and varied literatures are transferred and sustained orally from one generation to another. In postcolonial agenda, these literatures have to be included to expand the literary canon. The Muduvans are one of the prominent tribal communities of South India. They have several literatures of their own which are related to their life, personal experiences and reminiscences, human imagination and perception and cultural lore and are part of their folklore in unscripted oral form. These are performed appropriately in various situations and contexts of their daily life. The word 'performed' can be most appropriately used here in lieu of the word 'narrated' or 'told' etc., because every expression of an oral form of literature is verily a performance co-opting the performer and the audience and the text stretches wide to include a large semiotic realm that consists of linguistic/ spoken signs, body language, the reaction of and participation of the listener/ audience, all of which are located in the pre-text of the group's

shared cultural memory. The difficulty of translating this total semiosis into words in a language and then again into English is addressed later in this thesis more elaborately. Suffice it here to say that the oral text is much more complex than the written text when placed before the translator and offers several challenges. Muduvans converse in a language which has a palpable similarity to both Tamil and Malayalam. But many unique and subtle words need to be clarified from the Muduvans themselves. While the imperial epistemological interests designated unscribed literature as inferior to literatures that were written and had a documented history, the postcolonial perspective critiques the former stand and includes these numerous and heterogeneous oratures as worthy of serious attention. However it has to be stated that European/ Colonial interest via anthropological studies first brought oratures into the fold of academic concern either because in dialect form they have shifted greatly from narrative forms or are unique at the dialect and does not relate to any of the neighbouring languages. The Muduvan dialect comes from the Proto-South Dravidian language which is the hypothetical origin of all South Dravidian languages and dialects. It is rich, pleasing to ear, and enunciated with a consistent musicality.

So far anthropological studies on tribes and tribal settlements demonstrate a study of the physical features and genealogies, social customs, marriages, food habits, methods of cultivation, hunting and other activities, migratory patterns, clothing, family hierarchy, birth, puberty and

death rituals and domestic and social kinship. In other words, anthropologists concentrate their studies on social, ethnic and racial categories and include oral literatures as one of the aspects of study, especially as providing information on the above. Of these, the pioneers in India were James H. Hutton, Verrier Elwin, Sarat Chandra Roy, Dhirendra Nath and other scholars. On the other end of the same period, studies were undertaken by eminent scholars like Thomas Burrow, M.B. Emeneau, and M.N. Srinivasan on South Indian tribes. These later studies resulted in the production of a series of etymological dictionaries of which Emeneau's *Dravidian Etymological Dictionary* is till date the most widely renowned. Here the attempt is to approach a dialect locating it in a linguistic map and to study it from that angle in which incidental importance may be given to anthropological details as aiding the main focus of study. In between these two ends, a third perspective has since emerged. Folklore scholars such as Jawaharlal Handoo, A.K Ramanjuan, S. Sakthivel, and Chitrasen Pasayat were among the earliest to collect oral literatures and take the initiative to put them in print. These collections were appreciated outside the proper area of what is studied as literature. Many such scholars have emerged in India since the 1950's. Printing the oral literature with dialect variations in the last decade via translations have also emerged. So far, these are the predominant approaches or interests in studying the life and culture of tribes. Down the ages, print literature has been acknowledged as a part of

the literary canon and has alone been considered as proper literature. This thesis takes a tentative step towards considering oral literatures as part of what is academically understood as literature. Such an effort begins with innumerable handicaps.

1. The multiple availability of oral texts or its fluidity.

2. The absence of prior critical approaches which could have established a sense of literary criticism about oral literatures.

3. The absence of set parameters that define what is properly the oral literature of a tribe from the speech that permeates their life from morning to night.

This besides, the exercise in accommodating research in oral literature within the academic boundaries where studies in oral literature and language are yet to become a wide spread phenomenon. The viability of this thesis rests on a three-fold claim: (i) incorporating the oral literature of the Muduvan tribe expands the interests of literary studies; (ii) In inscribing them (first in Malayalam script during field work) and transliterating it in the Roman script, a modest attempt is made to preserve it and (iii) This thesis translates them into English while at the same time highlighting the problematic areas. The texts of oral literature collected from the Muduvans are classified genre-wise and the division of the various chapters are based on this classification. Oral texts of Muduvans in their original form are the primary source of study in this thesis. They are collected by intense field

works which include various levels of interaction by staying with them in their settlements and participating in their community life.

The research scholar stayed with them in one of their settlements named Susanikudi in Idukki District in Kerala in the month of February in 2007 and visited adjacent settlements named Theerthamalakudi and Sembatti. Later in the month of February in 2010, the research scholar stayed with them for fifteen days in the same settlement and visited a few other settlements named Periyakudi, Kaavakkudi, Kulthu Kallu Kudi and Nellippatti. In between from 2007 to 2010 many visits were conducted to attend the festivals and ceremonies, of the Muduvans by the research scholar. Several brief visits to the Muduvan settlements were more welcome by the tribe. The research scholar was always careful not to intrude into the work routine and daily round of their life which demands hard-work up the hills. However, during festivals the Muduvans are released and in a celebratory mood and consequently receptive to the request to sing and narrate and readily and generously share their vast repertoire of oral literatures with the visitor. Hence the longer visits were made during the Karthikeri lamp-festival in November and during the post-harvest Pongal festival in January. With the consent of the Muduvans most of the texts were recorded. A large collection of photographs were also taken. The Muduvans were friendly, unselfconscious and never felt the strain of performance while being recorded. The elders and young alike

were forthcoming, while the elders had more songs and tales in their repertoire. This aspect which was noticed by the research scholar only strengthened the conviction that in spite of bringing the living form of the oral literature into the closed form of print/inscription, the effect would ensure the documentation of the same and into continued existence through to invoke a well-known yet appropriate thought from literary theory, 'thrice removed from reality', distance by scribing and/or recording, inscriptions in Roman alphabet and finally translation in that order.

The benevolent Muduvans, who hosted the research scholar as a part of their community, enriched him with renderings of their oral forms performed in various situations and contexts. The stay with them enhanced the research scholar to know more, about their culture and tradition and how their life is interrelated with their oral literature, apart from the anthropological and sociological data available that the research scholar is aware of. Scholars like Edgar Thurston, Krishna Iyer, Nettur P. Damodaran, M.V. Vishnunamboothiri, C. K. Karunakaran, Sathyanarayan and others have studied them in the field of anthropology and sociology in a conventional way but they have not studied oral literature as literature per se nor looked at the contradiction. It is also noticed that any print form of Muduvan literature is not available as of now. Hence a sizeable portion of their oral which were inscribed, taped or recorded as and how possible from the spot and transliterated and translated wherever necessary is, it is

hoped, a continuation to the archives of oral literature. The different genres of the oral literatures of the Muduvan fall into the following genres taking the one from their context of production and their own identification of the texts by these names.

1. *Āśaippāṭṭu* (Love-song)

2. *Tālāṭṭu* (Lullaby)

3. *Kummippāṭṭu*

4. Festival Songs

5. Work Songs

6. *Oppāri* (Death-song)

7. Tales

8. Proverbs

9. Riddles

      All the above genres are studied and some of these genres are categorized under different sub-genres depending upon their theme. Each genre has its relevance on different occasions. The Muduvans sing songs mainly at the time of marriage, religious rituals and festivals, during work and occasions of death etc. Tales are narrated when the day's work is done, especially in the evenings. Other oral forms such as proverbs and riddles appear in daily life in different situations whenever appropriate.

Subsuming the oratures into various genres and sub-genres helps to understand and study their poetics. An ethnopoetics study is envisaged in this thesis by taking the oratures of Muduvans while at the same time considering them as part of their folklore.

This chapter briefly discusses the culture, tradition and geographical location of Muduvan tribe drawn mainly by personal visits. It also discusses various theories and concepts like folklore, orature and ethnopoetics. Although this thesis is an ethnopoetic study of Muduvan oral literature, considerable space has been devoted in this chapter to outline the socio-cultural aspects of Muduvan life because; firstly, this being a pioneering attempt at the study of oral literatures in the literary canon, the producers of this literature have to be introduced and secondly oral literature, being the prime focus, a great deal of attention has been paid to this aspect.

The Muduvan Tribes: Nomenclature, Location, Kinship and Social Structures

This section briefly discuses the Muduvan tribe, their geographical location, culture, daily activities and life. These are collected from field trips to the various Muduvan settlements. But anthropological and sociological data are drawn whenever necessary from secondary sources to substantiate relevant arguments. This section aims to place Muduvan oral

literature within their cultural and social life and subsequently facilitates the following chapters, in the study and the translation of the texts.

Kerala is a coastal southern state of India lying between the imposing Western Ghats and the Arabian Sea and shares its borders with other two states, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka. The majority of the prominent tribal communities of Kerala live mainly on the summits of the Western Ghats of Kerala-Tamil Nadu Border. The State has a total of thirty five Scheduled Tribes as per 2001 Census of India which comprises 1.14 percent of total population. According to Rajendran (218) and Vishnunamboothiri (776) Muduvans are found in the Idukki district of Kerala. In and around Anamalai (the word might have derived from the words 'ānai' and 'malai' which means 'elephant' and 'mountain' respectively in both Malayalam and Tamil languages) hills, the highest peak in western Ghats (2,695 meters), is the main habitat of Muduvans. "Besides Muduvans, some other tribes, such as Kadar, Malasar, Mala Pulayan, Paliyan, Eraavallan, Mannan, Mala Arayan, and Urali also inhabit different parts of the vast ranges of the Anamalai hills" (Sathyanarayanan, 174). Regarding the peculiarity of the geographical location of this region Sathyanarayanan further states that:

> The main range of the Anamalai hills has a general direction of northwest to southwest with elevation ranging from 3000 to 8000 feet above Mean Sea Level. The eastern slopes of the

Anamalai hills fall in the Madurai and Coimbatore districts of Tamil Nadu State while the western slopes descend to the Palghat, Trichur, Ernakulam and Idukki districts of Kerala State.(ibid).

An anomaly prevails in the Census of India records regarding the exact number of Muduvan population right from the beginning of 1901 onwards due to the presence of another tribal community with the name 'Mudugar' which is listed together with Muduvans as a single tribe. The term Muduvan and Muduvar are interchangeable, however.

Francis recorded the number of Muduvans as 1,754 in Volume XV of the Census of India, 1902, Madras, and they were named as 'Mudugar' and 'Muduvar'(168). Aiyar recorded the number of Muduvans as 808 in Volume XXVI of the Census of India, 1901, Travancore. He noted that they were immigrants from the kingdom of Madurai and were named as 'Mutuvan'(350). According to 2001 Census of India, in Kerala, Muthuvan, Muduvan and Mudugar were clubbed together with a number of 21,266. Many anthropologists have pointed out that Muduvan and Mudugar are two entirely different tribal communities with different geographical locations and cultural differences. Thomas states that:

Muduvars- meaning Muthuvans- are found mainly in Travancore with only insignificant dispersion into the

neighbouring districts of Coimbatore and Madurai, and Cochin State. The Mudugars, on the other hand, are found only in Malabar, and they are a different tribe altogether (51).

Later, Sathyanarayanan clarifies further that the confusion existing with regard of the nomenclature of the community put together in the lists of Census of India:

> It should be noted here that the Muduvan or Muthuvan represent one and the same communities while the Mudugar constitute altogether a different tribe. The Attappadi area in the Palghat district of Kerala is the habitat of the Mudugar, which is very much away from the Muduvan habitat. The Muduvan and Mudugar do not have any links with each other. The Census of India list, which has clubbed the Muduvan with Mudugar, therefore does not give the correct population of both these tribes. (175)

According to Conner, Muduvans who were basically cultivators from Madurai, probably came to the hill forests of Travancore accompanying some of the Madurai princes at the time of exodus when the Pandyan Rajas entered South or when the Telugu Naickers took possession of Bodinayakannur in the fourteenth century (1-3). But it is also held that Muduvans migrated from Madurai to the hills forced to do so because of

the Muhammadan invaders probably in the later part of the eighteenth

century (Aiyar 350). Regarding these arguments Thurston writes that:

> The approximate time of the exodus from Madurai cannot even
>
> be guessed by any of the tribe, but it was probably when the
>
> Pandyan Rajas entered the South, or more probably when the
>
> Telugu Naickers took possession of Bodinaickenur in the
>
> fourteenth century. It has also been suggested that the
>
> Muduvans were driven to the hills by the Muhammadan
>
> invaders in the latter part of the eighteenth century. Judging
>
> from the two distinct types of countenance, their language and
>
> their curious mixture of customs, I hazard the conjecture that
>
> when they arrived in the hills they found a small tribe in
>
> possession with whom they subsequently intermarried, this
>
> tribe having affinities with the west coast, while the new
>
> arrivals were connected with the east. (87)

Muduvans have a belief that "they belong to the Pandyan dynasty"

(Rajendran 219). According to Raman, a thirty-four year old Muduvan of

Susanikudi in Idukki district, Muduvans belonged to the royal family of

Pandyas of Madurai and royal family of Poonjar of Kerala. He further says

that since they had close kinship with Poonjar family for years, it was a

custom for them to go through Poonjar when they used to go to

Sabarimala, a famous temple in Pathanmthitta district of Kerala. The

relation between Pandyan dynasty and Poonjar royal family and the

possible relationship of Muduvans with them are noted by some scholars.

Sreedhara Menon (24-251) reports the interaction of Pandyans with Kerala

and he states that the descendants of Pandyas of Madurai ruled the

principalities of Panthalam and Poonjar in the Kerala region. In volume I

and II of *The Encyclopaedia of Dravidian Tribes*, Madhava Menon notes

that Poonjar chieftains claimed to be the descendents from the Pandyan

dynasty and due consideration is given to Muduvans by them. Thomas

examines the brief historical references of Emily Hatch and Shungoonny

Menon regarding Poonjar principality and states, "Poonjar Chieftains

originally belonged to Madurai and they are either direct or collateral

descendants of the Pandyan Kings" and "the family was displaced from

native Madurai, and sought refuge in the Travancore hills, due to internal

dissensions or foreign aggression" (65-66). By analyzing and relating the

oral history of Muduvans with historical data and facts available, Rajendran

states that it is possible to say that:

> … the descendents of the Pandyan kings of Madurai ruled
>
> Panthalam and Poonjar till the 19th century. In between 14th
>
> and 19th century owing to the political and and economical
>
> problems, internal feuds and foreign invasions, the disgruntled
>
> people of Madurai left the place and sought refuge in the
>
> sheltering forests of Kerala. Those Pandya princes who left

Madurai after the 12th century and came to Poonjar and
Panthalam became the kings of the principalities. Those who
came from Madurai after the 14th century got tribalised in the
forests near Poonjar. (220)

In Malayalam and in Tamil 'Muduvan' refers to those who carry
something on their back (Mutugu or Muthuku). Etymologically 'Muduvan'
means way old or ancient. This is more concerning semantic possibility,
though the former interpretation is widely spread and accepted by
scholars. It is common among Muduvans to carry their babies on back
while climbing up the hills, going for work or even to put them to sleep.
This may be one of the reasons why they got the name Muduvan. Many
scholars have mentioned about their peculiar way of carrying babies on
their back (Iyer 1-48; Damodaran 181). Vishnunamboothiri has the view
that "during their migration from Madurai, they carried the idol of Madurai
Meenakshi on their back" and so got the name "Muthuvan" (776).
Karunakaran reports that the custom of carrying babies on their back is
also seen among Mannan tribes who might have got it due to the
interaction with Muduvans for many years (202).

Scholars have observed that Muduvans comprise six matrilineal clans
(kūṭṭam): Mēla kūṭṭam, Kāna kūṭṭam, Pūtani kūṭṭam, Tūsani kūṭṭam,
Kānayattu kūṭṭam and Elli kūṭṭam (Nair 7; Vishnunamboothiri 777;
Sathyanarayanan 178). But Karunakaran has reported fourteen clans

among Muduvans (203). These divisions are mainly meant for marriage alliances. Among these clans "the Mela Kottam is considered superior to the other clans and it maintains it alliances only with Kana Kottam. Whereas, the other five clans exchange spouses between themselves" (Sathyanarayanan 178). Matrilineal succession is followed while considering any member to a particular clan. It is noted and said that man's property goes to his sisters' children.

The Muduvans' typical residential hut is one roomed and made up of bamboo, wood sticks, mud and grass. Two or more huts form a *kudi* or settlement. *Kudi* is also "the smallest unit of political structure and judicial authority" (Thomas 304). Each family in a particular settlement abides by the rules and regulations of its settlement. At the same time, each family has the freedom to leave the settlement and settle in a different place. This type of migration makes the settlement small or big on the basis of the number of families at a given point of time. All members of a particular settlement participate in any function whether it is a festival or any other rituals. Regarding the pattern of the settlement Sathyanarayanan says:

> Every settlement of the Muduvans, whatever be its size
> consists of a cluster of family-dwelling huts (Saappaattu
> Voodu), a boys dormitory (or bachelor-hall) called Saavadi
> Voodu or Saavadi located at the entrance of the settlement, a
> girls dormitory cum seclusion hut (for menstruating women)

known as Thinna Voodu situated away from the boys dormitory but inside the settlement and a temple hut (Koyilu or Saami Voodu) constructed a little away from the main huts-cluster of the settlement for purity reasons. The family dwelling huts are rectangular in shape and each hut is built separately leaving little space around it. A family hut generally has two compartments, the front one serving as verandah where guests re served tea and food and the inner compartment, which is relatively more spacious , is used as kitchen cum sleeping room. (175)

A notable feature of their settlement is dormitory system for both men and women. The dormitories and bachelor-halls are a unique feature of the communal life of Muduvans. Boys and girls of more than nine or ten years of age, unmarried men and old people sleep in their respective dormitories. The male dormitory is also called as *Ilandari Madam* which is bigger and rectangular in size and situated mainly at the entrance of the settlement. The eldest unmarried male member of the dormitory is termed as *Veli Ilandaari*. He wears a title ring that he can wear till he leaves the dormitory to get married. After that the title is conferred to the next eldest unmarried man. Under his leadership and direction that the youngsters do the duties like cleaning the place, bringing water and even helping in agriculture and other businesses of the settlements. In the evenings men gather together

in it around the fire pit and narrate the important incidents and experiences

of the day in the forest. It is also a place for giving accommodation for

visitors of other settlements and even for outsiders. Separating from the

parents from the ninth or tenth year and entry into the dormitory with the

peers of the same age gives these boys great freedom of expression, while

initiating them into social and communal responsibilities of man-hood. The

research scholar visited and stayed with them in the dormitories of

Theerthamala, Periyakudi and Kavakudi and heard some of their stories

and songs. The women's dormitory is called as *Kumari Madam* and usually

comprises of two compartments. Scholars have indicated on this; in the

first compartment women who are free from pollution, those who are

unmarried, widows and female guests sleep. The second compartment is

for those who are menstruating and those who delivered a baby.

(Sathyanarayanan 178; Vishnunamboothiri 778)

One of the significant features of Muduvan's communal life is their

practice of sharing and eating of food known as *Kūṭi Tinnutu*, literally

means 'Eating Together'. Bachelors of same age form groups and visit each

household and eat by sharing from a plate. Muduvans usually cook some

extra food for bachelors who visit the household. If food is not available in

one house the bachelors, especially under the supervision of *Veli Ilandaari*

collect food from other houses and give it to the former. If guests are there

in the settlement even married members practice this custom of eating

together. The research scholar could join their group and eat food in this peculiar way that they usually never allow for an outsider. Muduvans eat mainly two times a day; morning around eight and evening around seven.

Each settlement has its own socio-judicial structure to solve problems that arise within and outside of it. The leaderships of the settlement rest on the *mūpan* or *kāni* and the *thalaivar*. In some settlements these two posts are managed by the same person only. *Kāni* is the authority to decide on the internal problems and other matters arise in a settlement. Under his leadership and consent usually rituals and festivals are conducted and celebrated. Thalaivar usually keep the rapport with forest and other government officials. "While kāni is thus a kind of 'minister of the interior', talaivar is the 'minister of exterior'" (Nair 11)

It is said that traditionally Muduvans were shifting cultivators and hunters. They cut down some trees and bushes and make the land ready for cultivating vegetables and millet and sometimes rice-grain. But at present they are not allowed to do so by the Forest Department and hence some land is allotted to them for cultivation. Nowadays they have switched over to cash-crop cultivation like lemon grass, cardamom and pepper. They collect wild fruits, roots and honey for their consumption. Women participate frequently in cultivation; but their main duties are to rear children and run the household works. Women are denied ancestral property. Women are not allowed to involve in social and political activities.

Performance of various rituals and festivals are under the control of men only. Women are confined to household works and hardly come out from their settlements. In such a way Muduvans allow only secondary status to women.

Muduvans have different rituals during different life situations. Scholars like Vishnunamboothiri (776-78) and Karunakaran (199-211) give detailed description about various rituals and customs of Muduvans. For marriage, the preferred mate for the Muduvan is the matrilineal cross cousin. Pre-puberty marriages were practiced in the past, but now-a-days it is infrequent. The mates are acquired generally through negotiation.

When a Muduvan boy attains adolescence, usually at the age of sixteen, they perform a ceremony of tying the turban called *Urumala Kettu*, an adolescent rite for the boy which also indicates that he is old enough to get married. Usually, his maternal uncle is the chief officiator for this ceremony. After the boy is bathed by him, a turban is tied with a cloth of three to four feet long, purchased by the parents or elders. The wearing of the turban symbolizes the passage from boyhood to manhood. After tying the turban he starts growing his hair. Wearing the turban also indicates that he is old enough to marry. A feast follows after the ceremony. For girls the ceremony is known as *Kondakettu* conducted immediately after she attains puberty. She is secluded in the *thennu veedu* and observes a pollution period of five days. After bath her hair is tied in a special manner

and adorned with flowers. She is presented with new dresses and a communal feast follows.

After the sixth month of pregnancy, the husband leaves the house and stays in the Bachelor's hut. When the pain begins, the woman is lodged in the *thennu veedu* where she is assisted by her elder female relatives who act as midwives. Pollution lasts for thirty days and only after that the male members of the family and community are allowed to see the child. On the thirtieth day, the mother and child are taken to the home. A feast is conducted and the ceremony is called *viṛunnu* (feast). The naming of the child usually takes place on the day of viṛunnu or on any other day within a year.

Muduvans did not have much interaction with others in the past. But nowadays modern elements have come in their settlements and they interact more with the mainstream society. Once in a week they climb down the hills with vegetables and things to sell in the adjacent market. Only the men folk come out from the settlements and women folk are confined themselves to the settlements. Many settlements have solar panel, television and radio given by governments. Most of the Muduvans are not educated. Boys usually study up to primary level and girls seldom go to school. Earlier, those who went to school were excommunicated. But at present, the situation has changed a lot and there are Tamil medium and Malayalam medium schools in the settlement itself, run by government

agencies. But they speak their own dialect which has apparent affinities with Tamil and Malayalam. There is no written script for their language. They orally transmit their songs, stories, proverbs and other oral forms from one generation to another. These oral forms are an integral part of their life. So to document Muduvan oratures, one has to actually visit the settlement, stay there and inscribe/record and thus acquire the primary sources for study and/ or translation.

Folklore: Concepts and Definitions

Intellectual outflow in western countries in the nineteenth century due to romanticism and nationalism resulted in accumulating vast knowledge about various cultures, traditions and civilizations might have resulted in a new branch of systematic and scientific study called 'folklore studies'. Each country tried to maintain that they had rich and varied literature in those fields which were unnoticed and unexplored till then. The rigorous study of folklore of different countries paved the way for many new interdisciplinary works, especially, in the field of anthropology, sociology, history, literature and linguistics. The translated quotation of Roland Barthes by James Clifford in *Writing Culture, The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography* states:

> Interdisciplinary work, so much discussed these days, is not
> about confronting already constituted disciplines (none of
> which, in fact, is willing to let it go). To do something

interdisciplinary it's not enough to choose a "subject" (theme) and gather around it two or three sciences. Interdisciplinary consists in creating a new object that belongs to no one. (1)

The word 'folklore' was first introduced to English by William John Thoms in 1846 by combining the words 'folk' and 'lore'. In his letter to the journal 'The Athenaeum' by using the name Ambrose Merton, Thoms wrote:

> Your pages have so often given evidence of the interest which you take in what we in England designate as Popular Antiquities, or Popular Literature (though by-the-by it is more a Lore than a literature, and would be most aptly described by a good Saxon compound, Folklore,—the Lore of the People)—that I am not without hopes of enlisting your aid in garnering the few ears which are remaining, scattered over that field from which our forefathers might have gathered a goodly crop.

> No one who has made the manners, customs, observances, superstitions, ballads, proverbs, etc., of the olden time his study, but must have arrived at two conclusions:—the first how much that is curious and interesting in those matters is now entirely lost—the second, how much may yet be rescued by timely exertion. (4-5)

Here his concern is more to consider folklore as Popular Antiquities. Since then many scholars have tried to define folk and folklore in different ways and have listed the facts, concepts and ideas can be attributed to it. The folk are considered the lower stratum of society in terms of class, education, civilization and progress. In the essay "The Method of Folklore" Andrew Lang states his view on folk and folklore:

> There is a form of study, Folklore, which collects and compares the similar but immaterial relics of old races, the surviving superstitions and stories, the ideas which are in our time but not of it. Properly speaking, folklore is only concerned with the legends, customs, beliefs, of the folk, of the people, of the classes which have least been altered by education, which have shared least in progress. But the student of folklore soon finds that these unprogressive classes retain many of the beliefs and ways of savages (11).

Some other older ideas of folklore by experts are mentioned in the article "Definitions of Folklore" in Journal of Folklore Research, reprinted from *Funk and Wagnalls Standard Dictionary of Folklore, Mythology, and Legend* by Maria Leach. Out of many definitions, some are mentioned below. Stith Thompson is of the view that "The common idea present in all folklore is that of tradition, something handed down from one person to another and preserved either by memory or practice rather than written

record" (263). Archer Taylor states that "Folklore consists of materials that are handed on traditionally from generation to generation without a reliable ascription to an inventor or author" (263). Richard A. Waterman states that "Folklore is that art form, comprising various types of stories, proverbs, sayings, spells, songs, incantations, and other formulas, which employs spoken language as its medium" (264). Another expert William R. Bascom's view is that "folklore can be defined as verbal art" (256). Diverse views concerning folklore are incorporated here and many of them try to define folklore in terms of using words like 'tradition', 'spoken', 'verbal', 'communal', transmission', 'oral', 'preserved' and so on (255-264).

As mentioned above there are different concepts and definitions of folklore and this may be the reason why Alan Dundes says, "Perhaps the most common criterion for definition is the means of the folklore's transmission. Specifically, folklore is said to be or to be in "oral tradition"" (*The Study of Folklore* 1). This criterion does not sustain since what all materials which are orally transferred need not be folklore as Bascom says "All folklore is orally transmitted, but not all that is orally transmitted is folklore" ("Folklore and Anthropology" 28). To solve the definitional problem, Alan Dundes uses the approach to break the term 'folklore' into 'folk' and 'lore'. In his seminal text *The Study of Folklore* (1965) he states:

> The term 'folk' can refer to any group of people whatsoever
> who share at least one common factor. It does not matter what

the linking factor is – it could be a common occupation, language, or religion – but what is important is that a group formed for whatever reason still have some traditions which it calls its own. (2)

He then tries to define 'lore' by giving a long list. He states:

Folklore includes myths, legends, folktales, jokes, proverbs, riddles, chants, charms, blessing, curses, oaths, insults, retorts, taunts, teases, toasts, tongue-twisters, and greeting and leave-taking formulas (e.g., see you later, alligator). It also includes folk costume, folk dance, folk drama (and mime), folk art, folk belief (or superstition), folk medicine, folk instrumental music (e.g., fiddle tunes), folksongs (e.g., lullabies, ballads), folk speech (e.g., slang), folk similes (e.g., blind as a bat), folk metaphors (e.g., to paint the town red), and names (e.g., nicknames and place names). Folk poetry ranges from oral epics to autograph-book verse, epiths, latrinalia (writings on the walls of public bathrooms), limericks, ball-bouncing rhymes, jump-rope rhymes, finger and toe rhymes, dandling rhymes(to bounce children on the knee), counting-out rhymes (to determine who will be 'it' in games) and nursery rhymes. The list of folklore forms also contains games; gestures; symbols; prayers (e.g., graces); practical jokes; folk etymologies… This

list provides a sampling of the forms of folklore. It does not

include all the forms. (3)

Even though a long list of customs and social activities are given, he has

not defined folklore clearly. Folklore has acquired different meaning

depending upon the usage by different people. Jan Harold Brunvand says

that "folklore may be defined as those materials in culture that circulate

traditionally among members of any group in different versions, whether in

oral form or by means of customary example" (4) and associates five

qualities with folklore. The first point is that folklore is oral; that is, it

passes by word of mouth from one person to another and from one

generation to another. The second point is that folklore is traditional; it is

passed on repeatedly in a relatively fixed or standard form and it circulates

among members of a particular group. The third point associated with

folklore is that it exists in different forms; oral transmission creates

different versions of the same text. The fourth point is that folklore is

usually anonymous; the author's names never part of texts that are orally

transmitted. The fifth point is that most folklore tends to become

formularized; it is expressed partly in clichés that may range from simple

set phrases and patterns of repetition to elaborate opening and closing

devices or whole passages of traditional verbal stereotypes (*The Study of*

American Folklore, 4-6).

The meaning of folklore has changed substantially through the ages. It has become more context and performance based and socially oriented. Dan Ben-Amos in the article "Toward a Definition of Folklore in Context" states that "folklore is artistic communication in small groups" (13). For him folklore is an organic phenomenon and it can be a body of knowledge, a mode of thought or a kind of art. As per that folklore has no existence if taken away from the social context. Richard Bauman considers folklore as action. His focus is on folklore as performance; "the real integration between people and lore on the empirical level. This is to conceptualize the social base of folklore, in terms of the actual place of the lore in social relationship and its use in communicative interaction" (33). Performance can be considered as the practical side of folklore. Folklore gets its momentum through the active interaction of individuals or groups by sharing what they have received from others and what they have experienced. Since most of the social interactions are situation oriented, the lively enactment or performance of folklore has its effect in every social group. Roger D. Abrahams states "Folklore is a collective term for those traditional items of knowledge that arise in recurring performances. The concept of folklore is unthinkable without those compositions, for they are the channels of wisdom and entertainment, but for folklore to exist it must be enacted" (195). Even though experts have tried to solve the definitional problems of folklore by giving definitions anew, any clear definition or

description of folklore that suits all aspects has not been stated so far. And

a new term like 'folklife' has dominated folklore. Richard M. Dorson in his

book *Folklore and Folklife: An Introduction* (1972) says:

> In recent years another term, Folklife, has vied with and even
>
> threatened to dominate folklore. The supporters of folklife
>
> studies claim that folklorists are too narrowly preoccupied with
>
> verbal forms and neglect the tangible products of folk artisans.
>
> They maintain that folklife embraces the whole panorama of
>
> traditional culture, including oral folklore. (2)

He is of the view that folklore and folklife may be placed under four

groupings; 'oral literature', 'material culture', 'social folk custom' and

'performing folk art'. Oral literature is sometimes called "verbal art or

expressive literature". Various traditions, songs, tales, sayings, speeches,

narratives and utterances come under this grouping. Material culture or

physical folklife "responds to techniques, skills, recipes and formulas

transmitted across the generations and subject to the same forces of

conservative tradition and individual variation as verbal art". In social folk

custom the focus is on "group interaction rather than on individual skills

and performances". Various customs related to marriage, birth, death,

religious practices, festivals etc. are put under this grouping. In the fourth

grouping, performing folk arts, the emphasis is on traditional music, dance,

drama, rendition of folksongs and folktales and other performances. (2-5).

Folklore: Theories

Since folklore is related to diverse subjects, various arguments and theories have been formulated and propounded by scholars in course of time. Folklorists have borrowed various theories, concepts and methods to study and analyse folklore scientifically and systematically. Experts like Richard M. Dorson (7-47) and Mazharul Islam (35-150) have given a brief idea about the various current theories of folklore in their works.

1. The Historical-Geographical

It is a Finnish method used by comparative folklorists to trace the history of folktales and to study how folktales and even folksongs spread geographically. Jacob Grimm, Theoder Benfey, Max Muller, Frazer, Andrew Lang and others have contributed to this method. According to the Finnish method, a tale originates in a particular time and place. Often, quite many versions of the same tale are available in many parts of the world. Ever since the tale originated, it might have spread to different locations as a result of individual or group interactions by travel, trade or any other means, a process called diffusion.

Scholars like Stith Thomson, W.E. Roberts, Archer Taylor and Holger Olof Nygard supported Finnish method by pointing out various tales and ballads to which this method of dispossession can be applied. But there are some scholars who showed the drawbacks of this method. Among them are Albert Wesselski, Carl von Sydow, Raider Christiansen, Laurits Bodker

and Walter Anderson (Islam 66; Dorson 8-12). These critics are of the view that it is not possible practically to gather all the variants of the same tale or song and the "Finnish method reduces tale studies to statistical abstracts, summaries, symbols, tables and maps, ignoring aesthetic and stylistic elements and the human side of the narrator" (Dorson 9).

2. Historical-reconstructional

Historical application of folklore is used in the method. Scattered evidences of historical periods are brought together with the use of folklore and folklife materials. Jacob Grimm was attracted by this method. Dorson gives an example of William Lynwood Montell's book *The Saga of Coe Ridge* (1970) subtitled *A Study in Oral History* which narrates the history of the Negro community established in the foothills of southern Kentucky after the Civil War. Through the oral data, Montell tries to reconstruct folk attitudes and events of local history (15). Ideological theory of folklore tries to identify the ideological aspects and ideals which are expressed in folklore materials of a particular nation, communal group, working class and so on. There are evidences that themes like nationalism, political ideology, class conflicts, Marxist principles etc are expressed in folklore especially in countries like Germany and Russia. Dorson quotes from "folkloristics" written by Sokolov, a Russian academician, "(1) Folklore is an echo of the past, but at the same time it is also the vigorous voice of the

present. (2) Folklore has been, and continues to be, a reflection and a

weapon of class conflict" (17).

3. Functional theory

The role and function of folklore in a particular culture is the main

concern in functional theory. Sometimes folklore acts as a tool to teach the

members of a particular society and acts as a vehicle to preserve and

transfer traditional knowledge and helps the culture to flourish. William

Bascom is one of the main articulators of functional role of folklore. In his

article "Four Functions of Folklore" Bascom states four main functions of

folklore. The first is escape; escape in fancy from frustration and suffering

of individuals. The second function is validation; to justify the various

customs and rituals of the society. The third function is education; to

inculcate values in a society. The fourth function is social control. (333-49).

Regarding Bascom's functional role Dorson states:

> Expanding the viewpoint of Bronislaw Malinowski in *Myth in*
>
> *Primitive Psychology* (1926), Bascom calls attention to various
>
> functional role of folklore. Proverbs help settle legal decisions,
>
> riddles sharpen wits, myths validate conduct, satirical songs
>
> release pent-up hostilities. So the anthropologist searches for
>
> context as well as text. A tale is not a dictated text with
>
> interlinear translation, but a living recitation delivered to a
>
> responsive audience for such cultural purposes as

reinforcement of custom and taboo, release of aggressions

through fantasy, pedagogical explanations of the natural world,

and application of pressures for conventional behavior. (21)

4. Anthropological theory

Anthropological theories of folklore began by borrowing concepts

mainly from scholars like Edward B. Taylor, Andrew Lang and George

Frazer. Later this theory flourished through the contributions of scholars

like Franz Boas, Malinowski, Ruth Benedict, Bascom, Levi-Strauss and many

others in the field of anthropology. Islam talks about the contributions of

some of the above mentioned scholars in his work. He states that Boas had

the concept of transmission of tale incidents by diffusion from tribe to tribe

through cultural contact. Benedict established the concept of the releasing

of suppressed tension in the society through oral literature. Malinowski's

concept was regarding the psychological reflection of the primitive man in

their myths. Bascom's concept was regarding the functional role of folklore

(122).

5. Psychoanalytical theory

The psychoanalytical theory of folklore is greatly indebted to

psychoanalytical theories put forward and developed by scholars like

Sigmund Freud, Karl Abraham, Ernest Jones, Carl G. Jung, Joseph

Campbell, Geza Rohein and others. These scholars have analysed various

folklore genres by looking into the hidden feelings of human mind like love,

fear, desire and sexual impulses. There are chances that human mind suppresses many such feelings and the psychological outpouring of these results in various folklore genres. Dorson and Islam give a brief description of the scholars and their contribution in this field. In his exploration of the unconscious mind Freud relied on myths and fairy tales, taboos and jests and superstitions. In his *Interpretation of Dreams* (1900) he says that dreams are the results of the hidden wishes and feelings. For him the Oedipus motif is the best example of man's suppressed impulse. Karl Abraham's *Dreams and Myth* (1913) is an early work that employs Freudian method.

Three most energetic analyzers of folk traditions, according to Dorson, are Ernest Jones, Erich Fromm and Geza Rohein. Ernest Jones' seminal work *On the Nightmare* is about folk beliefs and he mentions the relation between infantile fantasies projected in dreams and folklore. Erich Fromm's *The Forgotten Language* (1951) is an important work which deals with the psychoanalytical explanations and interpretations of dreams, myths and fairy tales. In the notable work *The Gates of the Dream* (1952), Geza Roheim analyzes many myths and tales and sees that dreams are the precursors of myths and tales. Carl Jung also has contributed to the psychoanalytical theory. He was of the view that all human beings share elements of unconscious psyche. The contents of this collective unconscious are called archetypes. Different variants of myths and tales

are prevalent due to this unconscious psyche (Dorson 25-33; Islam 129-141).

6. Structuralist theory

Another theory which influenced folklore studies was structuralism. Notable figures in this field are Russian formalist Vladimir Propp and French anthropologist Claude Levi-Strauss. Propp's seminal work entitled *Morphology of the Folktale* is an English translation of the Russian one and came out in 1958. He analyzed various Russian fairy tales and put forward thirty one functions in sequential order which formed the morphology of the fairy tale. "The action slots into which variable actors fit Propp called functions, and the generic actors he called the Hero and the Villain" (Dorson 34). Levi-Strauss' structural analysis of folklore is based on the geographically different myths like Oedipus Myth and North American Indian Myth to find out the inner structure. *The Elementary Structures of Kinship* and *The Raw and the Cooked* are his famous works. "The Structural Study of Myth" is his famous article which talks about mythological interpretations. Dorson talks about the two structural analysts; Propp and Levi-Strauss:

> The system of Levi-Strauss relies on a sorting out and rearrangement of the narrative features in the myth, to reveal the inherent structure, while that of Propp follows the story line. These are the two basic kinds of structural analysis, for

which Dundes proposes the terms paradigmatic and syntagmatic, since Levi-Strauss aims at a paradigm or conceptual framework behind the myth while Propp considers the syntax, so to speak, of the tale. These and other structural expositions seek to reduce folklore genres to universal models and formulas. (36)

7. Oral-formulaic theory

Another notable theory of folklore studies is Oral-formulaic theory of folk expression. Orally narrated poems, ballads and epics have specific formulas like alliteration, rhythmic patterns, linking of lines, refrains etc. A narrator uses formulas of these kinds at the time of composition and performance. It also helps him to memorize many folk narratives. Well known proponents of oral-formulaic theory are Milman Parry, Albert Lord and David Bynum. Across cultures, human societies have specific history, customs, rituals and values. Cross-cultural theory of folklore looks at various genres of folklore available in a particular culture to look at how they mirror culture.

8. Folk-cultural theory

The Folk-cultural theory looks the folk life subjects and focuses on historical, geographical, traditional, aesthetic and economic elements which are related to the life of the folk and their culture. Dorson states that "the point of view sponsored by the advocates of folklife studies may

conveniently be labeled "folk-cultural", a favorite adjective in their

vocabulary" (40). He further talks about the scholars in this field like Don

Yoder, Henry Glassie and Michael O. Jones (40-41). In the wake of

industrialization, urbanization and technology, there are chances of

changes and deterioration of rural folk cultures. It is seen that mass media

uses such vanishing folklore themes in their production. Mass-cultural

theory of folklore focuses on consumption and production of such cultures.

9. Hemispheric theory

The Hemispheric theory put forward by Richard M. Dorson talks about

the folklore of the Old and New worlds. According to this theory, Dorson

says, "the folklore of each New World country needs to be analyzed in

terms of its ethnic-racial and historical ingredients" (44).

10. Contextual theory

Another notable theory in folklore is Contextual theory. The thrust of

contextual theory is the relevance of a text in its context. Scholars like

Roger Abrahams, Dan Ben-Amos, Alan Dundes, Robert Georges and

Kenneth Goldstein deal with contextual ideas.

The ten theories introduceded briefly here highlight one or other/

several other factors of folklore and each has valid points to make.

Folklore: Development

Even though Thoms coined the word folklore in English first, the concept of folklore had been suggested under the category 'popular antiquities' and many European scholars collected and studied large amount of oral literary genres. In the early thirteenth century Snorri Sturluson, an Icelander gathered and studied the ancient Germanic people's oral literary genre, or 'skaldic' verse. Many older folklore ideas are put forth by German philanthropist Johann Gottfried Herder (1744-1803), who used the term 'das volk' in German to refer 'the folk'. "Herder focused his musings about folk as art and aesthetics, for he saw these items as clear and untainted reflections of each country's raw national spirit" (Claus and Korom 30). It can be said that German scholars initiated folklore studies as worthy of serious attention and the credit mainly goes to the Grimm Brothers; Jacob Grimm and Wilhelm Grimm. They collected various German folktales and formulated a theory about their origin. Jacob Grimm, who postulated the theory, was of the view that European languages were related and diverged as a result of the migration of Aryan people in the different parts of the continent. In this process their mythology had disintegrated but could be reconstructed by arranging together the broken down narratives. Bascom states:

> Jacob Grimm had contributed to this discovery by his
> formulation of the regularities of phonetic change which

became known as "Grimm's Law". And he used the

etymological technique in attempting to identify words in

German narratives with reconstructed words of the proto-

European language. By this method he believed it would be

possible to determine the original nature of characters and

objects in the narratives, and thus reconcile the differences

between existing European variants, and perhaps to explain

some of the deviations in narratives from cultural norms.

(Frontiers of Folklore 3)

Jacob Grimm's one of the famous work is *Deutsche Mythologie.* (!854)
This work traces the mythology and beliefs of the ancient Germanic people
and their cultures, traditions and folktales. This particular work is praised
by Thoms and in his famous letter to the journal 'The Anthenaeum', he
writes:

The present century has scarcely produced a more remarkable

book, imperfect as its learned author confesses it to be, than

the second edition of the "Deutsche Mythologie:" and, what is

it? — a mass of minute facts, many of which, when separately

considered, appear trifling and insignificant, —but, when taken

in connection with the system into which his master-mind has

woven them, assume a value that he who first recorded them

never dreamed of attributing to them.(5)

Apart from Germany, Finland contributed much for the growth and study of folklore. In 1831 'The Finnish Literary Society' was formed. It was a turning point in Finnish language and literature and Finnish folklore. The first notable scholar of Finnish folklore, Elias Lonnrot, became the first secretary of 'The Finnish Literary Society'. He was attracted by the national epic *Kalevala* and made attempts to collect and combine the scattered pieces. Archer Taylor in his article "Characteristics of German Folklore Studies" (1961) states that "the center of Finnish literary studies and the beginning of Finnish literature is the *Kalevala*, an epic which Elias Lonnrot based on folksongs. Since the time of Lonnrot, folklore always has been regarded as the core of Finland's national literature and culture" (293). Lonnrot's student and scholar Julius Krohn also spent much time studying *Kalevala*. It was under his son Kaarle Krohn's leadership that an international folklore society named Folklore Fellow was founded.

In England the concept of folklore was prevalent even before Thoms coined the word. In the middle of eighteenth century, Bishop Thomas Percy started collecting the ballads of England and published them as *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* (1765). This seminal work was much responsible for the revival of ballad the in English. William Hone was a writer who collected information on manners and antiquities and published as *Every-day Book* (1826), *Table-Book* (1827-28) and *Year-Book* (1829). Sir Walter Scott, the famous Scottish historical novelist, also contributed in

the field of folklore. His important works in this field were *The Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border* (1802–1803) and *Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft* (1831). "The first book that appeared with 'folklore' in its title is the one entitled: *The Dialect and Folklore of Northamptonshire* by T. Sternberg" (Sankar Sen Gupta 38). It was W.J. Thoms who took an initiative to start the Folklore Society of England in 1878. Scholars like Max Muller, Adalbert Kuhn, Andrew Lang, G.L. Gomme and others worked with this society.

Max Muller was the renowned scholar, contributed much for the evolution of folklore. He was a Sanskrit professor in Oxford University and edited ṚigVēda. The comparative study started by Jacob Grimm was elaborated by Muller. Bascom stated that Muller had the view that "original Aryan religion and mythology was based on sun worship" and he looked on European narratives as "broken down myths whose meanings were further obscured by the mangling of words as a result of what he called the "disease of language"" (*Frontiers of Folklore* 3). Muller's *Sacred Books of the East* (1879-1910) is a multi volume work on English translations on Asian religions writings. His other notable works are *Lectures on the Science of Language* (1864) and *Chips from a German Workshop* (1867–75). Theoder Benfey, another Sanskrit and vedic scholar, studied Indian stories and held the view that folktales had the origin in India. His greatest contribution was the edition of *Panchatantra* in 1859. Emmanuel Cosquin, a

follower of Benfey, was another scholar who studied folktales and myths of India and other countries.

Walter K. Kelly, a good translator and a follower of Muller, translated a good number of folklore works into English. His works were not confined only on myths. He was the first scholar who studied extensively on proverbs. His important works were *The Proverbs of All Nations; Compared, Explained and Illustrated* (1861) and *European Tradition and Folklore* (1863). Another famous follower of Muller was George W. Cox. His famous works were *The Manual of Mythology* (1867), *The Mythology of the Aryan Nations* (1870) and *An Introduction to the Science of Comparative Mythology and Folklore* (1881). Edward B. Tylor was the formulator of anthropological theory in folklore. But his theory was used fruitfully by Andrew Lang, a strong critic of Max Muller. He held the view that myths were formed from folktales. Edwin Sydney Hartland was another scholar who used anthropological method in folklore. For him folklore was part of anthropology. Sir James George Frazer, a late contemporary of Edward B. Taylor, was a scholar who contributed to the growth of folklore. For a long period he was a professor in Anthropology at Cambridge University and Liverpool University. His famous works in this field were *Golden Bough* (1890), *Totemism and Exogamy* (1910) , *Folk-lore in the Old Testament* (1918), *The Worship of Nature* (1926), and *Man, God, and Immortality* (1927).

Through the efforts of the above mentioned scholars and their works folklore studies flourished to an extent in Europe in nineteenth century. But there were some the American scholars who made it clear that folklore should be studied scientifically. The establishment of American Folklore Society in 1888 was the initial effort in folklore studies in America. Stith Thompson was the pioneer in this field. He was an English professor in Indiana University and established the First Folklore institute in America. His famous work in the field of folklore was *Motif-Index of Folk-Literature* (1932–37). After Thomson, it was Richard M. Dorson who contributed much in the study of folklore. His famous works were *American Folklore* (1959), and *Folklore and Folklife* (1972). Archer Tylor was a scholar who scientifically studied proverbs and his book, *The Proverbs* (1931), was an authentic work in this field. Maria Leech was an another famous scholar in folklore and he edited *Funk and Wagnalls Standard Dictionary of Folklore Mythology and Legend* (1959). Alan Dundes was considered as the main folklorist after Dorson and published a number of articles and books related to folklore and folklore studies. Some of his famous books were *The Morphology of North American Indian Folktales* (1964), *Interpreting Folklore* (1980), *Life is Like a Chicken Coop Ladder: A Portrait of German Culture Through Folklore*. (1984) and *Folklore Matters* (1989).

India's folklore is rich because of its heterogenous different cultures and traditions and diverse ethnic, linguistic and religious features. Folklore studies in India have got its current status from the very beginning when folklore studies got its momentum in England and in other European countries. Mazharul Islam is of the view that India attained a rich and complicated folklore due to its long and steady history and diverse ethnic and linguistic groups. These characteristics of Indian folklore attracted Western scholars and they studied and examined various myths and folktales and propounded theories like Indianist theory of folktale origin, solar theory of myth origin and linguistic theory of origin of Western, Asian and European languages. Even though these theories could not sustain for long, India's contributions in the world of folklore materials were widely accepted (118). Peter J. Claus and Frank J. Korom in their book *Folkloristics and Indian Folklore* (1991) states that India has a long history of folk performance tradition that continue to thrive and proliferate. This rich folk culture makes India a notable place for Indian and foreign folklorists to do research. "A resurgence of interest in Indian folklore among Western folklorists has drawn scholars from other disciplines into the field and has challenged them to re-examine many complacently held notions about Indian cultural history" (6).

The initial efforts to collect and analyze folklore materials in India was made by foreign travelers and scholars, British administrators and

missionaries. Evidences of such efforts can be seen in Journals of Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal (1784), Royal Asiatic Society of Bombay (est. 1804), Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland (est. 1829) and in journals like (est. 1872) Indian Antiquary established in 1874 and The Journal of the Anthropological Society of Bombay in 1886, states Indra Deva (198). Recent scholars like Mazharul Islam and S. Sakthivel, in their seminal works, give descriptions about early European scholars and their works. In his monumental work *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan* (1829), James Tod studied Indian society by using Indian folkloristic materials. Mary Frere's *Old Decan Days* (1868), Maive Stokes' *Indian Fairy Tales* (1879), George Grierson's *A Bihar Peasant Life* (1885), R.C. Temple's *Legends of the Panjab* (1884), Charles Swynnerton's *The Adventures of the Panjab Hero Raja Rasalu and Other Folk tales of the Panjab* (1884) and *Indian Night's Entertainment* (1892), William Crooke's *An Introduction to the Popular Religion and Folklore of Northern India* (1894), P.O. Bodding's *Santal Folk Tales* (1925) and *Studies in Santal Medicine and Connected Folklore* (1925), Hinton Knowles' *A Dictionary of Kashmiri Proverbs and Sayings* (1885) and *Folk Tales of Kashmir* (1888), Verrier Elwin's *Myths of Middle India* (1949) and *Tribal Myths of Orissa* (1954), Thomas Hodson's *The Primitive Culture of India* (1922), Herbert Risley's *People of India* (1915), Charles Kinkid's *Decan Nursery Tales: Or, Fairy Tales from the South* (1914), William Rivers' *Monograph of Toda* (1906), Edward Tuite

Dalton's *Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal* (1872), G. H. Dument's *Bengali Folklore from Dinajpur* (1872), Father Dehon's *The religion and Customs of the Uraons* (1905-07), S.W. Fallan's *A Dictionary of Hindustani Proverb* (1886), Campbell's *Santal Folk Tales* (1891), Georgiana Kingscote's *Tales of the Sun or Folklore of Southern India* (1890), Charles E. Gover's *The Folk Songs of South India* (1871), James Long's *Eastern Proverbs and Emblems* (1810, Anderson's *Collection of Kachari Folklore and Rhymes* (1895) and many others' contribution to Indian folklore are laudable. (Sakthivel 4-6; Islam 116-17). Crooke's *Folklore of India* deals with the beliefs, customs, rituals and superstitious practices of Hindu religion. Some selected ancient Indian beliefs and legends like The Golding of Nature, The Golding of Disease, The Worship of the Malevolent Dead, Tree and Serpent Worship, Totemism and Fetishism, Animal Worship, The Black Art etc are described in detail. The last chapter gives a brief description of some rural festivals and ceremonies.

Monumental works of Indian scholars in English and in regional languages has helped the growth of folklore studies in India. Indra Deva and Mazharul Islam give a list of scholars; Natesa Sastri, Lal Bihari Dey, Shobona Devi and Upreti Ganga Datta collected folklore materials and published them in English. Other regional scholars in this field are Ashutosh Bhattacharya, Nirmalendu Bhowmik, Subhash Banerjee, Dulal Chaudhury, Barun Chakravorty, Dinesh Chandra Sen and Shanker Sen Gupta from

Bengal; Kunjabehari Das from Orissa; Prafulladutta Goswami and B.K. Barua from Assam; Suryakaran Pareek, Thakur Ram Singh, Narottam Swami, Agar Chand Nahata, Vijaya Dan Dehta, Devilal Samar, K.L. Sahal, P.L. Maneria and Komal Kothari from Rajasthan; Sant Ram, Devendra Satyarthi, Narendra Dhir, Avtar Singh Daler, M.S. Randhawa Kulwant Singh and Amrita Pritam from Punjab; Jhavarchand Meghani, Madhukar Randaria, Ranjeet Rao Mehta and Shankar Mehta from Gujarat; Durga Bhagavat, R.C.Dhere, Pravakar Mande, Sarojini Babar and Mahadeva Shastri Joshi from Maharashtra; K.D. Upadhyaya, U.N Tewari, Satyavarat Sinha and Durga Sankar Prasad Singh from Bhojpuri-speaking area; Banarasi Das Chaturvedi, Shiv Sahaya Chaturvedi and Krishanand Gupta from Bundelkhandi area; Shyam Parmar from Malvi; Induprakash Pandey and Ramnaresh Tripathi from Avadhi region; Sivaram Karanath, G. Ramaswami Iyengar, G.V. Rangaswamy, C.M. Naik, D.L. Narasimhachar and T.N. SriKantaiya from Karnataka; Mallikarjun Rao and Rama Rajan from Andhrapradesh; and Agasthialingam Pillai and K.V. Jagannathan from Tamilnadu(Deva 206; Islam 117).

Claus and Korom talks about Rabindranath Tagore's efforts and contribution in the field of folklore of India. In 1894, Tagore along with other Bengali literary figures established Bangiya Sahitya Parishad (The Bengali Literary Society), an organization to preserve the folklore and tradition of Bengal. He tried to revive the oral forms such as rhymes,

ballads and myths by rewriting the works of English civil servants into his

own style of literary Bengali (62). Jawaharlal Handoo, Birendranath Dutta,

M.D.Muthukumaraswamy, Molly Kaushal, AK Ramanjuan, S. Sakthivel,

Vivek Rai, P.C.Pattanaik, B.Reddy, Sadhana Naithani, P Subachary, Shyam

Sundar Mahapatra, Dr Bhabagrahi Mishra, Chitrasen Pasayat and Raghavan

Payanad are some of the recent notable folklorists of India.

The collection and publication and study of the folk literature of

Tamil Nadu are indebted to scholars like N Vanamamalai, Salai Ilanthiraian,

S. Shanmugasundaram, V. M. Gnanaprakasham, and Sarasvati Venugopal

are noteworthy. The folklore of Kerala is closely associated with daily life.

The folk literature of Kerala, available mainly in oral forms, influenced

mainstream Malayalam literature too. Regarding the main features of folk

literature in Malayalam Ayyappa Panikar states:

> Its historical importance is that (1) it links present day written
> literature to the Dravidian roots of the language and literature
> of Kerala, there by providing an unbroken tradition of over one
> thousand years or more; (2) it preserves the form of the
> language in its earliest and most primitive manifestations, and
> (3) it has the broadest basis of contact with the social realities
> of the life of the people of all caste and ranks. Every group of
> people that inhabited the land of Kerala has left its indelible
> stamp on Malayalam folk literature; the tribals, the

untouchables, the upper caste Hindus, the Christians, the

Muslims and the Jews. Another distinctive feature of Malayalam

folk literarure is that it has a very strong dose of secularism in

it. While a large section of folk poems is connected with

religious rituals, there is an equally large collection of songs,

ballads, and folk-tales which deals with the secular aspects of

everyday life. (1299)

The collection, editing and publication of folk literature in Kerala is

attributed to persons like C.P Govinda Pillai, Chelanant Achyutha Menon,

Kanjiramkulam Kochu Krishna Nadar, G. Shankaran Pillai, Chirakal

Balakrishna Nair , Kilimanur Viswambaran, Vettiyar Premnath, G.

Bharghavan Pillai, Thamattat Govinda Kutty, S.K. Nayar, Chummar

Choondal and Anandakuttan Nair. Folklore studies in Kerala are done by

scholars like Vishnu Namboothiri and Raghavan Payyanad. Studies on tribal

language, literature and folklore are in the initial stages only and the main

persons in this field are Dr. Kumaran Vayaleri, Dr. P.G Pathmini and K

Velappan. Narayan is the first Tribal writer in Kerala. The short stories of

him are the fine example of tribal voice and literature of Kerala. He got

Kerala Sahithya Academy award in 2000 for his famous novel *Kocherethi*.

The book *C. K. Januvinte jeevithakadha* is a biography of C.K.Janu, the

Adivasi Leader and social activist in Kerala. It is considered as the first

biography about a tribal woman. Both in Kerala and in India there have

been many anthropological and sociological studies on tribes but not many efforts to study the literature of tribes. Earlier Varrier Elwin collected the songs and tales of Oriya Tribes. Recently one notable case in this field is the publication of the book titled *Painted Words* (2002) edited by G.N. Devy. This book is supposed to be the first anthology of tribal literature compiled in India. He was the formerly professor of English at the Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda and founder and director of the Tribal Academy at Tejgadh, Gujarath. Later he became the director of the Sahitya Akademi's Project on Literature in Tribal Languages and Oral Traditions. In the above mentioned book he says that his attempt is to "see imaginative expression in tribal languages not as 'folklore' but as literature and to hear tribal speech not as a dialect but as a language" (xv)

Orature:

Oral art forms are considered as the basis of any culture, especially cultures that don't have written script. Many cultures in the world are rich with oral art forms which form a main component of their life transferred mainly from one generation to other through oral performance at various contexts of life like marriage and other ceremonies, religious festivals, when people engaged in cultivation and other works, at the time when they spent leisure time and so on. In the course of time written forms became prevalent but still the relevance of oral art forms continues as they clear the void that comes to their daily life. The performance of such oral

art forms in various occasions has an enormous impact on the life of the members of any community. The reason is that they are not just for entertainment but serve as a tool to make unity among members and also helps them to participate in various ways while at the same time teach the members about the culture and tradition that they heard and experienced at various levels of life. Scholars and critics used many technical terminologies to explain the oral pieces of different cultures. The notable and widely used terms among them are oral tradition, oral literature, orality and orature.

Oral tradition is generally considered as a tradition transferred orally. The combination of the words tradition and oral has created many complexities. Tradition as term is used by scholars in anthropology and folklore as a general term to mention the whole of a community or of a cultural group to mention various practices, ideas and values. Finnegan says:

> Something called a 'tradition' is often taken to somehow belong
> to the whole of the 'community' rather than to specific
> individuals or interest groups; to be unwritten; to be valuable
> or (less often) out-dated; or to mark out a group's identity.
> (*Oral Tradition and the Verbal Arts*, 7)

Finnegan further says that the combination of the terms create ambiguity and makes it more complicated. It is quite clear that many

scholars and academicians consider traditional oral verbal pieces only as part of folklore and no due attention has been given or attributed to place them under the term literature. It has been considered that literature is always written. While there are many classifications to categorize 'written' literatures like American Literature, Canadian Literature, African Literature, Indian Literature and so on, there are hardly any attempt to place oral forms of many cultures, which are rich with poetic quality, under the title oral literature. Finnegan in the essay "How Oral is Oral literature" says, "Literature is inevitably oral where all literary production, performance, and consumption-indeed all communication-is fully oral and there is a total absence of literacy" (52). She has of the opinion that "oral literary forms can also exist in conditions marked by marginal or even full literacy, and that some coexistence and often interaction with written literature" (59). Later She tries to differentiate oral literature by putting forward four main criteria; mode of composition, mode of transmission, actualization in performance and sources. She says that the criterion of actualization in performance is a relatively straight forward one as one can sees a performance actually taking place (60-62). What she tries to say is that the performance part is more important than the textual part. This aspect is not the usual concern while considering the term 'oral literature'.

The term 'orality' is used nowadays especially in contract with the term 'literacy'. These terms got momentum with the publication of the

book titled *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word* (1982) by Walter J. Ong. He talks about 'primary orality' in terms of a culture entirely untouched by any knowledge of writing or print and 'secondary orality' in terms of present-day high-technology culture in which a new orality is sustained with the knowledge of writing and print. He even talks about the importance of digitalizing oral forms for preservation.

Ugandan scholar Pio Zirimu introduced the term Orature to make a positive statement and to avoid the definitional problems of oral literature and other terms. Ngũgĩ Wa Thiong'o says:

> The term orature has been used variously since the Ugandan linguist Pio Zirimu coined it in the early seventies of the last century to counter the tendency to see the arts communicated orally and received aurally as an inferior or a lower rung in the linear development of literature. He was rejecting the term oral literature. (4)

It is an umbrella term which is all inclusive in nature and delineates the different forms of languages used in different contexts. And the term orature is apt in societies or communities where written forms of languages are not prevalent but oral forms form the pulse of their life to preserve and transfer various knowledge and vehicle for communication. This thesis uses the positive term orature introduced by Pio Zirimu and hence substantiates the title.

Translation and its Significance in the Context of this Study:

The history of translation dates back to many centuries and the main attempts after printing developed is to translate Bible. The first English translation of Bible was done by John Wycliffe in between 1380 and 1384. Since then translation has emerged as a major branch and influenced various fields like literature, linguistics and cultural studies. The resurgence of interest in translation in the new globalised world has led to explore many languages and literatures which are cut off from mainstream society.

Many scholars have contributed in formulating and advocating various theories in translation. Among them the contributions of J. C. Catford, Roman Jacobson, Eugene A. Nida, Peter Newmark and Lawrence Venuti are remarkable. According to Sharma, Catford defined translation as the replacement of textual material in one language (SL) by equivalent textual material in another language (TL) (*Language and Lingustics* 148). Roman Jacobson said about three kinds of translation:

1 Intralingual translation or rewording is an interpretation of verbal signs bymeans of other signs of the same language.

2 Interlingual translation or translation proper is an interpretation of verbal signs by means of some other language.

3 Intersemiotic translation or transmutation is an interpretation of verbal signs. (114)

According to Eugene Nida "Differences in translations can generally be accounted for by three basic factors in translating: (1) the nature of the message, (2) the purpose or purposes of the author and, by proxy, of the translator, and (3) the type of audience. ("Principles of Correspondence"127) Nida's contribution is mainly in advocating two types of equivalence; formal equivalence and dynamic equivalence. (Munday 41-42). According to the principle of formal equivalence translation tries to retain the language forms of the original but fails to retain meanings. Nida says that formal equivalence translation is "basically source-oriented; that is, it is designed to reveal as much as possible of the form and content of the original message" (134). But it is not apt to retain some of the textual materials of the source language as it is. In that case what Nida says is that:

> One must therefore usually supplement such translations with marginal notes, not only to explain some of the formal features which could not be adequately represented, but also to make intelligible some of the formal equivalents employed, for such expressions may have significance only in terms of the source language or culture. (135)

But in dynamic equivalence the translation is done by keeping the meaning of the original to get the same impact on the target language. Nida says that dynamic equivalence translation is "directed primarily toward equivalence of response rather than equivalence of form." (136). According to him dynamic equivalence translation is the effective one rather than the formal equivalence translation.

Another approach in the method of translation is advocated by Peter Newmark. He suggested two types of translation approaches; communicative and semantic. Communicative translation attempts to produce what is there in the source text to reader of the target text. Semantic translation attempts to bring the meaning from the original to the semantic and syntactical structure of the target language. Another scholar in the field of translation studies is Lawrence Venuti who advocated his theories based on socio-cultural frame work. He says:

> Translation never communicates in an untroubled fashion because the translator negotiates the linguistic and cultural differences of the foreign text by reducing them and supplying another set of differences, basically domestic, drawn from the receiving language and culture to enable the foreign to be received there. The foreign text, then, is not so much communicated as inscribed with domestic intelligibilities and interests. The inscription begins with the very choice of a text

for translation, always a very selective, densely motivated

choice, and continues in the development of discursive

strategies to translate it, always a choice of certain domestic

discourses over others. Hence, the domesticating process is

totalizing, even if never total, never seamless or final. It can be

said to operate in every word of the translation long. (468)

He talks about translation with domestic significance in foreign language

text. To understand in a better way he said about two a methods in

translation; 'foreignisation' and 'domestication'. In the first method the

translator is visible and he retains some of the cultural and literary features

of the source text in target text. But in the second method the translator is

invisible and the target text is devoid of the influence of source text. For

him foreignising translation is the best method especially translating culture

oriented texts. Munday says that Venuti considers:

...the foreignizing method to be 'an ethnodevient pressure on

(target-language cultural) values to register the linguistic and

cultural difference of the foreign text, sending the reader

abroad'. It is 'highly desirable', he says, in an effort 'to restrain

the ethnocentric violence of translation'. In other words, the

foreignizing method can restrain the 'violently' domesticating

cultural values of the English-language world." (147)

In India there are many traditions which are unnoticed for quite a long time because of language constraints. Because of colonization English language had reached many countries which resulted in the birth of new strains of this language, like American English, Australian English, Caribbean English, African English, Indian English etc. Translation was successfully used in the past as a tool for colonial domination in which one culture dominated and the others were subservient. In this context translation reinforced that power hierarchy. Anuradha Dingwaney says:

> The process of translation involved in making another culture comprehensible entail varying degrees of violence, especially when the culture being translated is constituted as that of the "other". (4)

In the modern globalised world, translation is not just the transfer of texts from one language into another, it is now considered as a process of negotiation between texts and between cultures mediated by the translator. For Susan Basset, in translation, it is the translator who frees the text from the fixed signs of its original shape making it no longer subordinate to the source text but visibly makes a link between source language and eventually target language. She says, "The post-colonial approach to translation is to see linguistic exchange as essentially dialogic, as a process that happens in space that belongs to neither source nor target absolutely". (6) Translation is the tool to transfer culture with the

help of language, especially cultures which are unexplored much. But it is not possible to attain perfection in translation as there are many cultural facts which are untranslatable. Translating oratures of divergent cultures like Muduvans is more complicated as the text is available only in oral form and the translation of the performance of such oral pieces results in removing the real essence twice or thrice from the original text; first oral to print and then translation. To retain the form and content of oral performance is the most difficult part in translation. By looking at the Zuñi narratives, Dennis Tedlock in his essay "On the Translation of Style in Oral Narrative" suggests a translation of not only various linguistic features of style but many other paralinguistic and other performance features (113-33). The following section on ethnopoetics will help to tackle the issues regarding translation in a better way.

Ethnopoetics:

Jerome Rothenberg, Dell Hymes and Dennis Tedlock are the main proponents of ethnopoetics. Along with these, the contributions of other scholars like Robert Duncan, George Quasha, Gary Snyder, David Antin, Victor Turner, and Catherine S. Quick are worth considering while tracing the growth and history of ethnopoetics. In 1968, the term ethnopoetics was coined by Jerome Rothenberg who noticed that many oral collections of traditions, especially of Native American oral traditions, are not approached in their own perspective and often end up in mistranslations.

Ivan Brady quotes what Tarn said about Rothenberg as "the father of American ethnopoetics" (545). He made an attempt to give a better means of translation of poetries without losing the power and beauty of such oral performances. *Technicians of the Sacred: A Range of Poems from Africa, America, Asia, & Oceania* (1968), *Shaking the Pumpkin: Traditional Poetry of the Indian North Americas* (1972), *Symposium of the Whole: A Range of Discourse Toward An Ethnopoetics* (1983), co-edited with Diane Rothenberg are some of Jerome Rothenberg's notable works which made him a prominent figure in the field of ethnopoetics. Apart from these works he has to his credit a number other works on poetry, translation and literature and edited many anthologies which include *America A Prophecy: A New Reading of American Poetry from Pre-Columbian Times to the Present* (1973), co-edited with George Quasha, *A Big Jewish Book: Poems & Other Visions of the Jews from Tribal Times to the Present* (1978), *The Book, Spiritual Instrument*, co-edited with David Guss(1996*), Poems for the Millennium: The University of California Book of Modern and Postmodern Poetry*, Volume I and II (1995 and 1998) in collaboration with Pierre Joris, *A Book of the Book: Some Works & Projections About the Book & Writing* (2000) with Steven Clay and *Poems for the Millennium, Volume III: The University Of California Book of Romantic & Postromantic Poetry* (2009). Regarding the relevance of ethnopoetics as an integral part of poetics, language, literature and culture, Rothenberg, again in the preface of the

book *Symposium of the Whole: A Range of Discourse Toward an Ethnopoetics*, says:

> By the end of the 1960's, I first introduced the term "ethnopoetics" as a necessary part of poetics (an idea of poetry) changed by a century of such experimentation and mapping. A number of often previously involved poets, anthropologists, and critics (Antin, Awoonor, beier, Diamond, Hymes, McClure, Ortiz, Quasha, Snyder, Spanos, Tedlock, Tarn, et al.) responded immediately to the discourse around the term, while others, who remained aloof, were in their own terms implicit contributors to the issues clustered therein. What this marked wasn't so much a first invention as a recognition that the ethnopoetics, once it had entered our work, altered the nature of that work in all its aspects. And behind it was the century itself and a crisis in language and thought not of our making: an international avant-garde on the one hand, an American opening to history and myth on the other, and a de facto but rarely acknowledged collaboration between poets and scholars by whom the attack on the narrow view of literature (i.e., the "great" tradition) was simultaneously carried on....
>
> ... On the one hand, this discourse explored an ongoing "intersection between poetry and anthropology," in Nathaniel

Tarn's words, and on the other hand, between contemporary

poets as the "marginal" defenders of an endangered human

diversity and poets of other times and places who represented

that diversity itself and many of the values being uncovered

and recovered in the new poetic enterprises. The discourse

opened as well to include what Richard Schechner called the

"poetics of performance" across the spectrum of the arts, and it

also tied in with movements of self-definition and cultural

liberation among third world ethnic groups in the United States

and elsewhere. (xii-xiii)

The concept 'ethnopoetics', a non-conventional, non-western

method to look at various divergent cultures and their oratures, is the

golden rule to approach this thesis. This section briefly discusses the

relevance of ethnopoetics in literary criticism and the origin and growth of

ethnopoetics and the views of proponents like Jerome Rothenberg, Dell

Hymes, Dennis Tedlock, Gary Snyder and others as a frame for

understanding the following chapters. A number of folk/tribal cultures that

do not have a written script make use of oral narratives as an

indispensable part to establish their identity. Many times there is no

authorial attribution to such oral narratives and what matters is the

performance of such narratives which makes them alive each time they are

performed and forms a platform for others to learn. Ethnopoetics provides

a sophisticated tool to examine the divergent cultures which depend on oral narratives to exhibit their rich and abundant tradition and culture. Ethnopoetics looks at the specific cultural context in which the performance is done. The role of the individual and the community in the given context are also given emphasis in an ethnopoetic analysis. Quick says:

> Ethnopoetics must concern itself not only with the text, the words of the poem, but with the performance of the poem within its situational context. These performance elements are central to understanding not only the role of poetry in the society that created it, but also the aesthetic value of the poem. (96)

Ethnopoetics emerged in the latter part of the twentieth century as a movement to trace and explore the verbal expressions of divergent cultures which had been considered as irrelevant to study in the academic field. Ethnopoetics looks at the oral literatures which are unnoticed and unexplored by the academic field and gives emphasis to its liveliness in the oral form and suggests the ways to preserve them, as through translation. Western assumptions and pre-conceptions about what constitutes literature may go wrong while analyzing literatures from the divergent groups or cultures. Ethnopoetics questions and re-examines the traditional way of looking at literatures where oral literatures are widespread. In the postcolonial scenario ethnopoetics has its significant role in America and

elsewhere in the world through its application in different academic fields. It is stated that:

> Post-colonial aspirations are evident in Jerome Rothenberg's remark that a 'poetics without a concurrent ethnopoetics is stunned, partial, therefore faulty in a time like ours that can only save itself by learning to confront its multiple identities and definitions--- its contradictions, therefore, & its problematics'. (Tedlock and Rothenberg 452)

The Portrayal of many local cultures was, in many cases, slanted towards Euro-centric interests. The nobility and superiority of the west were depicted while an inferior status seemed to characterize other cultures. The result was that a different worldview was formed on such cultures which had been constructed as insignificant. However, attempts are being made to valorize local culture and tradition which have been formerly marginalized and sidelined. Western constructions have been dismissed and the significance of local culture and life has been retrieved. Ethnopoetic discourse has its relevance in such divergent cultures which have a rich and abundant culture and tradition to exhibit, especially through their oral literature. Each culture has its own knowledge that it acquired in the course of time and preserved generation after generation. Ironing out such vast and rich traditional knowledge just because they are not western is rejected in the postcolonial scenario and hence the

ethnopoetic analysis of folk literature helps to have a better means to learn "other" cultures. Turner speaks:

> The deep bonds between body and mentality, unconscious and conscious thinking, species and self, have been treated without respect, as though they were irrelevant for analytical purposes. Ethnopoetics is a modality of the renewed recognizance of such ignored bonds. Historically, its resurgence comes at a time when knowledge is being increased of other cultures, other worldviews, other life styles, when Westerners, endeavoring to trap non-Western philosophies and poetries in the corrals of their own cognitive constructions, find that they have caught sublime monsters, eastern dragons, lords of fructile chaos, whose wisdom makes our knowledge look somehow shrunken and inadequate. (585)

When different cultures confront and exchange cultural voices through different performative genres, there are chances that the difference between each culture reduces which may ultimately end up in the destruction of the culture itself. At this point Gary Snyder in "The Politics of Ethnopoetics" writes, "What we are witnessing in the world today is an unparalleled waterfall of destruction of a diversity of human cultures; plant species; animal species; of the richness of the biosphere and the millions of years of organic evolution that have gone into it" (2). The performative

genres of cultures like rituals, art and oratures mirror different aspects as

Turner compares culture to hall of mirrors in which some mirrors reverse,

some enlarge, some diminish, some distort and some have x-ray properties

to receive and reflect different images (Turner 587). Ethnopoetics makes

visible the different voices of the same culture and different cultures:

> Of course the central idea of ethnopoetic analysis is that every
>
> culture has its own poetics, and that it can be described. Initial
>
> particles figure in the poetries of many languages, as the
>
> Western concept of meter is part of many others. The point is
>
> that there are differences; one culture's poetry has different
>
> structural and aesthetic standards than another. Ethnopoetics
>
> encourages recognition and appreciation of such differences.
>
> Poetry from one culture cannot be judged or interpreted on the
>
> basis of another culture's poetry. It is the job of the
>
> ethnopoeticist to discover within the texts the specific
>
> standards for that particular culture. (Quick 98)

Ethnopoetics makes an "attempt to confront the problem not just of

representing or preserving the vanishing oral literary legacies of the world,

but also of connecting them with living literature" (Tedlock and Rothenberg

453). In an oral tradition, looking at poetry through western poetic

concepts may result in foregrounding only the poetic aspects in the poem

and may omit the context in which the performance occurred and the

different assumptions of the performer. But ethnopoetic discourse has its relevance in the cultural context in its original language. Quick is of the view that

> Rather than forcing such discourse into Western concepts of poetry, proponents of ethnopoetics analyze texts in their original language and context to discover how individual elements function within a cultural performance of that text. Put simply, ethnopoetics charges that Western- and print-oriented scholars have misinterpreted, and thus misjudged, the poetry of "primitive" cultures by failing to appreciate that aesthetic standards are not universal. Poetry from non-Western cultures has even been labeled "not poetry" because it failed to exhibit what scholars typically expect from poetry. (95)

In the beginning, the concept ethnopoetics had its particular emphasis and relevance in the field of anthropology but later there were many growing interests in studying and examining contemporary poetry, literature, and social sciences to make "by scholarly investigations of the contexts and linguistic properties of the traditional works, including the nature of oral poetics and the particularities of translation from oral sources". (Rothenberg, Ethnopoetics). Regarding the growing interests of ethnopoetics, Rothenberg states:

The history of such an ethnopoetics covers at least the last 200

years, during which time it has functioned as a questioning of

the culturally bounded poetics and poetry of "high European

culture." While the designation "ethnopoetics" is a much later

coinage, the interrogation has been carried forward in

sometimes separated, sometimes interlocking discourses

among philosophers, scholars, poets, and artists. It is clearly

linked with impulses toward primitivism in both romanticism

and modernism and with avant-garde tendencies to explore

new and alternative forms of poetry and to subvert normative

views of traditional values and the claims of "civilization" to

hegemony over other forms of culture. Yet for all its avant-

gardism, the principal ethnopoetic concern has been with

classical, even hieratic forms, with fully realized, often long

preserved traditions. (Ethnopoetics)

In the preface of the book *Symposium of the Whole: A Range of Discourse*

Toward an Ethnopoetics, ethnopoetics appeared, says Rothenberg, in "the

form of what Stanley Diamond, in a recently renewed "critique of

civilization," calls "the search for the primitive" or, more precisely, the

"attempt to define a primary human potential" (ix). When ethnopoetics as

a movement emerged after World War II, western ideologies and concepts

were dislocated and various discourses got momentum to explore various

cultures that the west had not discovered. Such discourses acted as a countermovement in the western thought. Rothenberg says:

> When the industrial West began to discover --- and plunder--- "new" and "old" worlds beyond its boundaries, an extraordinary countermovement came into being in the West itself. Alongside the official ideologies that shoved European man to the apex of the human pyramid, there were some thinkers and artists who found ways of doing and knowing among other people as complex as any in Europe and often virtually erased from European consciousness. Culture described as "primitive" and "savage"--- a stage below "barbarian"--- were simultaneously the models for political and social experiments, religious and visionary revivals, and forms of art and poetry so different from European norms as to seem revolutionary from a later Western perspective. It was almost, looking back at it, as if every radical innovation in the West were revealing a counterpart---or series of counterparts--- somewhere in the traditional worlds the West was savaging. (*Symposium of the Whole* ix)

Here Rothenberg stresses the importance of ethnopoetics in the postmodern period and states that tells the "relationship between modernity and plebeianism in slightly different terms" and make "indigenous people so powerful as cultural entities" (Inchausti 137). The

concept of ethnopoetics is also seminal to discussions in the postcolonial agenda, because it shifts the parameters of understanding to the several non-European literatures of the world in all their cultural and social specifications. Ethnopoetics thus co-opts the revised understanding of the cultures of the world and consequently is partially political in purpose. Its fundamental tenets critique the earlier post-Enlightenment Modernist notions of European superiority. The 'other' is now not approached as inferior, but rather as another. The hierarchisation of the peoples of the world, with the colonial European being of self and other is replaced here, but the centeredness of every people, their culture and literature - in the oral form also – is standing in its own right. It is not compared unfavourably with a Western norm.

Rothenberg in his "Pre-Face To A Symposium on Ethnopoetics" looks at 'ethnos' as the 'other' and ethnopoetics as a performative tool of such 'other' cultures in which many are engaged. He says:

> ...*ethnos* wasn't always what we would now take it to be, not an expression of what we are as groups in isolation, centering, orbiting around ourselves, but an expression instead of otherness, a sign that points from what we are or may become to what we aren't, haven't thought ourselves to be, may fear or scorn (as in that older "hierarchy of higher forms"), or in the present instance, freed from the myth of our divine election, is

what we long for, need, toward the completion of our being human. At that earlier time then, *ethnos* meant nation, people, group, or race, not as *this nation* ("us") but as *those nations* ("them" or "others"). It was the Greek equivalent for gentiles, goyim, pagan, heathen - that last work (not ethnos itself but a word mistaken for it) meaning people of the heath, the countryside, the wilderness, the unclaimed land, the ones in nature, natural, the lower foreign orders set apart from us, apart from cities, blocks to human progress, ancients, primitives, the fathers or the mothers me must kill, the poets (Plato said) whom we must drive out of our cities, out of our bodies & minds in point of fact, those who scorn the new god, the abstraction, unity, the unconflicted single truth we worship. Ethnopoetics is not a new construction, then, but the reminder of an older truth or linkage: that poetry itself is this, the very langauge of the *ethnoi*, in the equation Plato makes. As poets we are *them*. (60-61)

Regarding the second key term 'poetics' he says:

Poetics is the second key term here, the clincher, which makes of this a far different meeting than it would be with the other term alone. Poetics. Poetry, the process of. To take that as a

process of cognition, of creation in that sense: knowing,

coming into knowing where we are. (61)

Ethnopoetics deals with different cultures and their languages in order to understand their poetics outside the realm of western concepts and it reminds one of what "Robert Duncan called a "Symposium of the Whole." A symposium, that is to say, of all cultures and all members of any culture, including the members which any culture keeps on the margins of what it defines as "normal" and acceptable" (Tarn 91). In his "Pre-Face To A Symposium on Ethnopoetics" Rothenberg duly acknowledges Robert Duncan and quotes his words in the beginning itself (60). The phrase 'symposium of the whole' by Robert Duncan is used by Rothenberg in his anthology of essays he edited with Diane Rothenberg; *Symposium of the Whole: A Range of Discourse Toward an Ethnopoetics (1993).* In the essay "Rites of Participation" Robert Duncan "imagines the "symposium" to be a new collocation that joins human beings in consanguinity not only with animals but with all earthly cells- a coming together in "one fate" brought about by the ecological imperatives of our time" (Fredman 167-68). Regarding the inclusive nature of the symposium that fits very well for the term and concept ethnopoetics, Duncan says:

The Symposium of Plato was restricted to a community of

Athenians, gathered in the common creation of an arete, an

aristocracy of spirit, inspired by the homoEros, taking its stand

against lower or foreign orders, not only of men but of nature

itself. The intense yearning, the desire for something else, of

which we too have only a dark and doubtful presentiment,

remains, but our arete, or ideal of vital being, rises not in our

identification in a hierarchy of higher forms but in our

identification with the universe. To compose such a symposium

of the whole, such a totality, all the old excluded order must be

included. The female, the proletariat, the foreign; the animal

and vegetative; the unconscious and the unknown; the criminal

and the failure-all that has been outcast and vagabond must

return to be admitted in the creation of what we consider we

are. (98)

Dennis Tedlock is a later proponent in the field of ethnopoetics. His main

research work was on the narrative poetry of the Zuni people of Mexico.

The Spoken Word and the Work of Interpretation (1983), *Finding the*

Center: Narrative Poetry of the Zuni Indians (1972), *Popul Vuh: The*

Definitive Edition of the Mayan Book of the Dawn of Life and the Glories of

Gods and Kings (1985) and *The Dialogic Emergence of Culture* (1995) are

some of his notable works. He was the cofounder of the magazine

Alcheringa/Ethnopoetics, the first magazine of this kind which deals with

world's tribal poetries with Rothenberg, started in 1970. This magazine

looked at translations and transcripts of verbal performances of divergent

cultures from Africa, Asia and America. "It was keenly focused on developing ethnopoetics, on freeing poetries of all kinds from the "monolithic great tradition" of Western literature, and on exploring new techniques of translating the poetry of tribal societies" (Ivan Brady 546). Regarding the statement of intention of the magazine, Tedlock and Rothenberg say in the first issue:

> As the first magazine of the world's tribal poetries, ALCHERINGA will not be a scholarly "journal of ethnopoetics" so much as a place where tribal poetry can appear in English translation & can act (in the oldest & newest of poetic traditions) to change men's minds & lives. While its sources will be different from other poetry magazines, it will be aiming at the startling & revelatory presentation that has been common to our avant gardes. Along the way we hope
>
> —by exploring the full range of man's poetries, to enlarge our understanding of what a poem may be
>
> —to provide a ground for experiments in the translation of tribal/oral poetry & a forum to discuss the possibilities & problems of translation from widely divergent cultures
>
> —to encourage poets to participate actively in the translation of tribal/oral poetry

–to encourage ethnologists & linguists to do work increasingly

ignored by academic publications in their fields, namely to

present the tribal poetries as values in themselves rather than

as ethnographic data

–to be a vanguard for the initiation of cooperative projects

along these lines between poets, wthnologists, songmen, &

others

–to return to complex / "primitive" systems of poetry as

(intermedia) performance, etc., & to explore ways of

presenting these in translation

–to emphasize by example & commentary the relevance of

tribal poetry to where we are today: thus, in Gary Snyder's

words, "to master the archaic & the primitive as models of

basic nature-related cultures...knowing that we are the first

human beings in history to have all of man's cultures available

to our study, & being free enough of the weight of traditional

cultures to seek out a larger identity"

–to assist the free development of ethnic self-awareness

among young Indians & others so concerned, by encouraging a

knowledgeable, loving respect among them & all people for the

world's tribal past & present –to combat cultural genocide in all

its manifestations. (Alcheringa 5)

In the words of Dennis Tedlock, "ethnopoetics is a decentered

study, an attempt to hear and read the poetries of distant others, outside

the Western tradition as we know it now" (Tedlock and Rothenberg 453).

The poetries which have been isolated from the mainstream language and

culture are given special interest and he emphasized the importance of

performance in different occasions to understand the peculiar poetic

features. In another way Ivan Brady quotes what Tedlock said about

ethnopoetics. As per that ethnopoetics is a study of the verbal arts of

different languages and cultures in the world and looks at different oral

forms like proverbs, riddles, laments and other narratives that are shaped

in speech, chant, and song and the vocal-auditory channel of

communication involved in such places. Ethnopoetics studies like this has

its relevance in preserving oral performances through translation and

transcription for further analysis and interpretation (545). Tedlock looks for

the performative side of oral narratives and considers these as poetic. He

seeks to "demonstrate the artistic significance of various elements in oral

performance, including changes in a speaker's pitch, volume, speed, and

oral ordering of pauses in delivery" (Kroeber 24). His attempt is to make a

performable text and a proper translation of oral narratives. For Tedlock,

features like gestures, facial expressions, pauses, silence and loudness are

all significant for a holistic understanding of anybody of oral poetry in a particular situation when it is performed. But for linguist Dell Hymes such poetic measures and paralinguistic patterns are not so important as such facts cannot be preserved fully in dictated and translated texts. He looks at why such features are used and how these features govern the oral performance in a particular cultural context. He also looks for poetic and structural patterns of oral narratives of a particular culture as each culture has its own poetic features which are different from other culture. While studying and interpreting oral texts of a culture one should need to be closer to the language and languages uses in a sophisticated manner to preserve the aesthetic charm. In his book *In vain I tried to tell you": Essays in Native American ethnopoetics,* Hymes says:

> If we refuse to consider and interpret the surprising facts of device, design, and performance inherent in the words of the texts, the Indians who made the texts, and those who preserved what they made, will have worked in vain. We will be telling the texts not to speak. We will mistake, perhaps to our cost, the nature of the power of which they speak. (5-6)

Further, in the same book, he says "Mostly what is required is to "listen" to the text in all its details" (7). Regarding the approach Hymes uses to disclose a text, in the same book, Keith H. Basso in his review says:

Hymes's approach is grounded in three sets of assumptions, which can be briefly summarized as follows. First and most obviously, one must work with native texts as they are (the days of abridging and "editing out" are over), and one must acquire a reliable grasp of the grammar of the language(s) in which the texts are fashioned. Second, narratives must be viewed as forms of speech, highly sensitive to social context, whose linguistic elements are chosen to serve both stylistic and referential functions; the former, which often go undetected in Native American narratives, must be understood as thoroughly and exactly as the latter. Third, one must attempt to discover consistent structure at all levels of a text, and the surest way to proceed is through a systematic search for covariation in form and meaning. (374)

Apart from the book mentioned above, he has to his credit a number of other works such as *Foundations in Sociolinguistics: An Ethnographic Approach* (1974), *Essays in the History of Linguistic Anthropology* (1983*). Ethnography, Linguistics, Narrative Inequality: Toward an Understanding of Voice* (1996) and *Now I Know Only So Far: Essays in Ethnopoetics* (2003).

Ethnopoetics has its main application in folklore, translation and literature. Performative context is the prime aspect to be taken for consideration in such application. Folklorists usually face difficulties in representing oral art forms into print form. Elizabeth C. Fine in her book *The Folklore Text: From Performance to Print* talks about some of the difficulties in putting verbal folklore in written form and how ethnopoetics can solve some of the difficulties in such places (57-112). John William Johnson's *West African Epic of Son-Jara* (1992) and Susan Slyomovics's *The Merchant of Art: An Egyptian Hilali Oral Epic Poet in Performance* (1988) are some examples that deal with the concepts of ethnopoetics in translation. In another case Shirley Lim makes use of ethnopoetics in the reading of Asian-American poetry. Lim in the essay "Reconstructing Asian-American Poetry: A Case for Ethnopoetics" says that ethnopoetics functions at least three levels in Asian-American poetry; the first is the level of surface features of style that include figures of speech, imagery etc, The second level is linguistic, particularly in the incorporation of phrases or whole lines of the original language into the English text and the third level where an ethnopoetics is called for lies in the contextual realm, what some theoreticians might call the area of intertextuality (53-55). Lim's study is focused more on written poetry. Such an application of ethnopoetics clearly shows the connections between folklore and literature. Quick says of this:

Such an application recognizes that writers, especially those who have connections to groups with strong oral traditional elements, may integrate oral traditional elements into their literary works. Understanding such literary works requires that readers appreciate the cultural elements, whether in content, sound, or structure; otherwise, interpretation of the work is skewed "westward as much as were earlier translations of the Native American oral poetries. One must place the literary works in their appropriate contexts, which may include heavy influence from oral traditional elements. This goes not only for written poetries, but for prose writings as well. Folkloric analysis has proved helpful in understanding the folkloric content of numerous novels; ethnopoetic analysis could attune a reader to structural and auditory elements that contribute to a richer reading of such works. (99)

Quick further points out some criticism leveled against the practice and application of ethnopoetics (100). Unless one is good in the original language and fully familiar with the culture in which the performance takes place, the total analysis may go wrong. One should apply the ethnopoetic analysis in original language and not in translated texts as there are chances of mistranslations and perfection cannot be sought in any translation. To a certain extent, there are chances of altered and

stereotyped assumptions regarding certain cultures in some ethnopoetics

analysis. Also there are possibilities of misrepresentations of cultures when

researchers look at them with certain preconceived notions and

assumptions. Such misrepresentations may lead to further future problems

when others researchers look into the data for analysis. Looking into one

culture based on the knowledge of another culture is against ethnopoetics

analysis. There are distinctions in each culture and the researchers should

be well aware of such nuances to represent a fair picture of a culture

exclusively confined in the original language of a particular culture. In

another way ethnopoetics analysis looks for an observational study in

original language, situation and culture. Quick's point of view that

ethnopoetics holds good only for the original text needs to be

reconsidered. Even when reading a translated text the ethnopoetic

perspective cannot be given up because the transfer from one

language/culture to another language/culture is effected in the first place,

respecting the specificities of the source language culture. Venuti's concept

of translations discussed in the previous section has its relevance here.

Translation of ancient literatures into English or any other European

languages or even into a normative regional language, that begins in the

first place with the ethnopoetic approach to the oral text does not

'demonstrate' the text and rename its language/culture specificities. It

retains those factors resulting in what Venuti calls foreignisation. The

ethnopoetic frame has to sustain both the original and the translated text and if removed in the later case would go against the fundamental principles of ethnopoetics.

In an ethnopoetic discourse, oral literature of communities like Muduvans can be examined from their socio-cultural background in their original language, situation and context by foregrounding textual aspects of style. Ethnopoetics does not encourage a comparative study of oral literature with normative regional or European literature. Ethnopoetics insists that a body of oral literature has to be seen as being complete in itself within its socio-cultural production. Such studies are largely descriptive, classificatory and highlight the poetic features of a community's oral literatures. Although the term 'poetics' has been suggested, till date no single theory of poetics has been given by any folklorist for all oral literatures, although all bodies of oral literature are considered to be poetic in their own right. Also many genres of oral literature is included under the description of 'poetry' though they may vary for example, as tale-song narrative or riddles, because they are essentially poetic and are memorized and kept alive by singing and repetition. Concluding this brief discussion on ethnopoetics, would be apt to point out the broadened and growing assumptions of ethnopoetics made by Rothenberg:

While the initial focus of ethnopoetics was on orality and performance, the discourse turned as well to the visible aspects of language — writing & inscription — both as a persistent contemporary concern & as an often unacknowledged kingpin of a revitalized & expanded *ethno*poetics. In an age of cybernetic breakthroughs, the experimental tradition of modernist poetry & art has expanded our sense of language in all its forms, the written along with the oral. In doing this, it should also have sensitized us to the existence of a range of visual/verbal traditions and practices, not only in literate cultures but in those also that we have named "non"- or "pre"-literate — extending the meaning of literacy beyond a system of (phonetic) letters to the fact of writing itself. But to grasp the actual possibilities of writing (as with any other form of language or of culture), it is necessary to know it in all its manifestations — new & old. It is our growing belief (more apparent now than at the start of the ethnopoetics project) that the cultural dichotomies between writing and speech — the "written" & the "oral" — disappear the closer we get to the source. To say again what seems so hard to get across: there is a primal book as there is a primal voice, & it is the task of our poetry & art to recover it — in our minds & in the world at

large. [J.R., adapted from *The Book, Spiritual Instrument*,

Granary Books, 1996] (Ethnopoetics)

The closing line of this quotation not only synopsises the burden of

the discussion on ethnopoetics but also ramifies the point made earlier in

this thesis regarding the need to widen the parameters of what constitute

literature.

Structure of this Thesis:

The introduction is followed by the second chapter that is devoted

entirely to the study of Muduvan's *Āśaippāṭṭu* (Love-song) which are

available in large numbers compared to other genres of their literature. In

order to understand them more clearly they are classified into different

groups depending upon the context and theme.

The third chapter is devoted to the studyof the other genres of

Muduvan oral literature songs like *Tālāṭṭu* (Lullaby), *Kummippāṭṭu* (literally

'clap-song' songs sung to rhythmic clapping and communal dancing),

Songs sung at the time of work and at work places, Festival songs and

Oppāri (Mourning song at the occasion of death). These songs are more

context-oriented than *Āśaippāṭṭu* and are long. These songs are marked

by rhythm and rhyme which helps one to memorize and render them

easily. The fourth chapter examines the genres of Muduvan tales and other

forms like proverbs and riddles available in Muduvan's daily life. The fifth

chapter is the conclusion. It draws together the findings of the previous

chapters and points to areas of further research. Each chapter documents

the Muduvan text of the respective genre and translates it as and when the

discussion of the text is presented. This researcher used the Malayalam

script for inscribing for his research purposes, the following texts.Therefore

with transliteration and translation are given for each and every text.

CHAPTER-II

LOVE-SONG

Among the folk songs of the Muduvans, *Āśaippāṭṭu* (Love-songs) plays
a vital role in their life and culture. It is to be noted that the written love
poetry of the ages, taught in traditional literature syllabi, are more self-
contained in expressing love than the *Asaipāttu* of the Muduvans. In order
to appreciate or comprehend the *Asaipāttu* of Muduvans, much information
needed to be collected and analysed outside the songs and herein lays the
importance of ethnopoetic study. So the information available is drawn
directly from the Muduvans for each song apart from the meanings inside
the text. The classifications of songs are based as inferred from the
information directly got from the Muduvans during researcher's the stay
with them. The explicit and implicit meanings are hence, part of the
discussion that follows in each section. The two broad divisions of
Muduvan's *Āśaippāṭṭu* are based on the context and various themes as
mentioned in the following table.

S.No	Themes deal with	Various Contexts					
		Puberty (1-2)	Courtship (3-36)	Leaving *cāvaṭi* (37)	Before/ after Marriage (38-41)	After Marriage (42-69)	Leisure time (70-79)
1	Desire		3-10		38-39	42-43	
2	Desire/praise		11-13				
3	Praise		14-16			44-45	

S.No	Themes deal with	Various Contexts					
		Puberty (1-2)	Courtship (3-36)	Leaving *cāvaṭi* (37)	Before/ after Marriage (38-41)	After Marriage (42-69)	Leisure time (70-79)
4	Flirtation		17-21		40	46-47	
5	Mocking		22-24			48	
6	Reminiscences		25-26				
7	Assurance and pledge		27-28			49-50	
8	Determination		29				
9	Elopement		30-32				
10	Complaint		33-34				
11	Loneliness		35				
12	Separation					51-53	
13	Disappointment					54-56	
14	Counsel				41	57-59	
15	Domestic life					6o-63	
16	Domestic quarrels					64-67	
17	Reconciliation					68	
18	Sexual innuendoes		36			69	
19	Socio-cultural changes						71-74
20	Landscape						75-77
21	History						78
22	Virtue						79

I.   The Contextual Frame

As indicated in the above table, the various contexts are discussed below in this section and further the songs are classified and examined on the basis of the various themes of significance that each song carries. The themes of the songs are thus worked out for better comprehension and this forms the main approach to this chapter. This classification is one by which the Muduvans themselves view these songs.

a. Puberty:

The puberty ceremonies in any culture signify the physical and mental maturity of a girl and the implications of that are quite clear in Muduvan's *Āśaippāṭṭu*. When a girl in the Muduvan culture attains puberty, pollution is observed for a few days and during that time she is secluded in a hut attached to their settlement. 'Pollution' here means that the tribe considers that the girl, who is maturing, especially the first time, is undergoing certain biological changes that are extraordinary and thus needs to be kept in seclusion. In reality the seclusion gives the girl the time necessary to recuperate and also mentally prepare herself for the future responsibilities. Once the pollution period is over she is taken back home where the members of the settlement celebrate her attainment of puberty with songs and rituals which are followed by a feast. The songs usually

emphasize the growth of the girl and the happiness of the members of the community. For example:

> Mūngapū pūkkāto?
>
> Muttumuttāi tiralāto?
>
> Pātiripū pūkkāto?
>
> Pattupēr̲ santōṣam.

Translation:

> Will not the bamboo blossom
>
> Into pearls, rich and round?
>
> Will not the *pātiri* blossom
>
> And bring happiness to all folks? (Song 1)

These songs that are sung as post-puberty ritual draw generally from images of fertility and youth. They are also temporally located in the season of spring and summer rather than in those of rain or winter. In this song the girl is compared to a species of bamboo which usually blossoms once in twelve years which here signifies the girl's reaching puberty and becoming ready for marriage and motherhood. The line "Mutumutāi tiralāto" (drop seeds) indicates the society's belief in a woman's capability to perpetuate life, represented in an image that is familiar to them occupationally and culturally. It is expressed in the song that all are happy because she has blossomed to bring fortune to the community.

The mixed feeling evoked by the attaining of puberty of a girl in her family members is evoked in song 2:

Kāśi kaṭanna muttu,

Kaivilakyu vāṅgum muttu,

Ñāneṭuttu koñcum muttu,

Nāleyareṭutu koñcuvāno?

Translation:

Pearl most dearly bought,

Most preciously paid for,

The one I take and caress,

Who will caress it tomorrow? (Song 2)

This song expresses the anxiety of the father regarding the future of his daughter, as she might be leaving the home soon as somebody else's woman. This song also points to the grave issue of the sudden shift in responsibilities imposed on a girl by a physiological phenomenon, in quite an uncomplicated way.

b. Courtship:

Quite sequentially, following songs to celebrate puberty, the songs sung to celebrate puberty, the songs sung during courtship are placed. The Muduvan tribe gives a great deal of freedom to its unmarried adolescents to meet and voice their feelings for each other. Thus these moments of emotional exchange became excellent contexts for the expressions of love,

longing and feigned distress. The spontaneous and simplistic manner in which the universal theme of love emerges in these lyrics distilled of poetic extravagance but expressive of nuanced feelings. The social freedom enjoyed by the courting adolescents gives them the simultaneous freedom to draw upon suggestive, erotic images in their lyrics. These lyrics are generally traditional though like all other genres improvised from time to time. Damiana L. Eugenio, in *Philippine Folk Literature: An Anthology*, remarks about courtship songs:

> These songs express the whole range of feelings and attitudes that the lover and the loved one can have for each other, from comments on the appearance and virtues of the loved one to near-despairing laments of the rejected suitor. Between these extremes and forming the greatest number are songs that contain appeals and pleadings of the lover to the loved one (438).

The same holds true of Muduvan culture too in which the romantic feelings are expressed in songs before they get married, usually with the consent of both family and community. In Muduvan culture courtship songs are mainly sung by the male to woo a girl even though at times girls too participate in the process of singing to express their feelings. The mood of the songs changes according to the various themes interpolating the songs. The

various themes of the courtship songs that are available as per the

collected list are the following:

S.No	Themes	Song No
1	Desire	3-10
2	Desire/Praise	11-13
3	Praise	14-16
4	Flirtation	17-21
5	Mocking	22-24
6	Reminiscences	25-26
7	Assurance and pledge	27-28
8	Determination	29
9	Elopement	30-32
10	Complaint	33-34
11	Loneliness	35
12	Sexual innuendoes	36

c. Leaving *Cāvaṭi*:

The term *cāvaṭi* in general usage means a rest-house. It functions as a

transit in between childhood and marriage. The *cāvaṭi* or bachelor-hall is a

place where the unmarried Muduvans of a particular settlement gather

together, especially in the evenings, around a fire pit. It is a custom in

Muduvan culture for the unmarried to stay in cāvaṭi till they get married.

While leaving for the marriage from the *cāvaṭi*, the boy sings a song (Song

37) to express his intention and feelings. In this song he addresses the

whole *cāvaṭi* expressing his affection for it, though he is quitting the life he

had been having there. He says that a girl of his choice and dream has

come and so he is leaving to tie the knot. The song goes like this:

> Utṟa tūne,
>
> Ulari varum kanmaniye,
>
> Catra cāvaṭiye,
>
> Sirutāli muṭike ñān pōre.

Translation:

> O beam and pillar,
>
> O sweet girl with lisping words,
>
> O *satṟa savaṭi*,
>
> I am leaving to tie the *tāli*. (Song 37)

The song oscillates between the address to the *cāvaṭi* or bachelor-hall and

the description of the girl he is going to marry. Revealing as it is about the

boy's desire to get married to the girl of his choice, the song like the others

of its kind, points to the cultural and social structure and traditions of the

Muduvans.

d. Before/after marriage:

The songs included in this section could be sung before or after marriage and these express aspects of romantic and domestic life. Songs 38 and 39 depict the desire of the lovers or married couples. Songs 40 and 41 illustrate the dimensions of flirting and tips for earning the girls' love respectively through metaphors. The description of these will be given in the thematic analysis. Whether the songs are sung before or after marriage they express both love and desire. They celebrate physicality in its most spontaneous sense without inhibitions. Supported by larger cultural context and the celebratory acceptance of the songs both as cultural expression and as aesthetic self-construction; preserves them as indeed as it does the other poetic genres of the Muduvas from being evaluated through other-than-Muduvan poetic norms.

Ethnopoetics valorises the unique poetic and cultural identities of verbal expressions simultaneously and thus argues for the singular characteristic of such bodies of verbal art-forms.

e. After marriage:

The songs of this section are sung after the marriage and hence deal more with the complexities of life and hardships that a married couple is confronted with. Drawing various instances from life and experiences, the married couple expresses various feelings via songs in the guise of one

talking to the other. The various themes that are prevalent in these songs
are:

S.No	Themes	Song No.
1	Desire	42-43
2	Praise	45-45
3	Flirtation	46-47
4	Mocking	48
5	Assurance and pledge	49-50
6	Separation	51-53
7	Disappointment	54-56
8	Counsel	57-59
9	Domestic life	60-63
10	Domestic quarrels	64-67
11	Reconciliation	68
12	Sexual innuendoes	69

f. Leisure time – Songs of Relaxation:

The songs sung during leisure are also the communal space for self-
assessment of the community. The songs record their memory of their
achievements and trace their past. Songs given in this section are sung
when the Muduvan get free time, especially, when they come back after

work and gather together in *cāvaṭi*. Here, usually the elders start singing songs followed by others. One such song (Song 70) speaks of the Kāni (headman) of a particular settlement and how he got the talent or knack of making songs. It says that his ability is gifted by lord Shiva. The song goes like this:

> Śūsanikuṭiyatile,
>
> Śuḷivuḷḷa kāniyavar,
>
> Pāṭṭeḻutum bāgyam,
>
> Ātya paramaśivan koṭutāre.

Translation:

> In the Susanikuṭi
>
> Its elder with a mark of fortune,
>
> Has been blessed with poetic gifts
>
> By Ātya Paramaśivan. (Song 70)

The main aim of the songs of this section is to teach the younger generation and to remind the current one about their past and the socio-cultural variations that have crept into their society (Songs 71-74). Some songs sung during the leisure time revolve around familiar landscapes (Songs 75-77), their history (Song 78) and virtues (Song 79).

II.   The Thematic Frame

This section of the chapter focuses more closely on the Muduvan *Āśaippāṭṭu* or love-songs as they may be translated in terms of their

themes. The various major themes associated with Muduvans' *Āśaippāṭṭu* are listed and discussed here. They are:

1. Desire:

One of the major themes of the love-songs of Muduvans is desire and it is relevant in their life at the time of courtship, marriage and even after marriage. The lovers' wishes, hopes, dreams and longings are well incorporated in their songs, and all such songs collected are put together under this section.

The man's desire to marry a woman of his choice is expressed in Song 3. He sings:

> Kaṭṭanam *māṅgalyam*,
>
> Kāmākṣi *māṅgalyam,*
>
> Pūṭṭaṇam *māṅgalyam*,
>
> Peṇṇum peṟumāḷku,
>
> Poṟuttapōle poṟukka kaṭavu.

Translation:

> The auspicious *māṅgalyam* must be tied,
>
> The *māṅgalyam* of Kāmākṣi,
>
> It must be secured,
>
> So must my bride be mine,
>
> By the consent of *Peṟumāḷ.* (Song 3)

In this song the man wishes his beloved be with him forever with the consent of 'perumāl' (Lord Vishnu). The intervention of divine characters is sought in this song while he says that the *māngalyam* or the jewel tied around the woman's neck is Kāmākṣi, one of their goddesses. Even though the song speaks about the tying of *māngalyam*, it is to be noted that Muduvans do not have the custom of tying a *māngalyam*. It is a unique fact in their culture as compared to the Indian society in general. It can be seen that a *māngalyam* or *tāli* is a privilege symbol for any married women in Indian society, especially in Hindu culture. It is said by the Muduvans that they do not have the custom of tying a *māngalyam* or *tāli* but keep a bamboo comb on the tresses of married woman as a symbol of her marriage. The particular song that the male sings seeking the interference of divine characters at the time of marriage goes like this. In another song (Song 4) the man expresses his desire to see her. He sings:

> Ura śuṭi puḷiyan maram,
>
> Ulaki viṭṭā kalakalakkam.
>
> Peru śolli kūppiṭiṟen,
>
> Pennaḻaki iṅga vāṭi.

Translation:

> The tamarind trees around town,
>
> Will rattle noisily if shaken.
>
> So shall I call your name,

Come here, you female beauty. (Song 4)

In the above song the man addresses his beloved as *Penna̱laki* (female

beauty) and expresses his desire to see his beloved. He says that he calls

her by name as a way of confirmation for her even though Muduvans do

not call the other by name on such occasions. Different ways of expressing

man's desire are seen in Muduvans' courtship songs. In one song (Song 7)

the man sings:

Ānakāl paṭṭiyile

Alakusemba nella̱ratu

Koppatākuṭiku

Konṭupōṇam penmayilē

Translation:

I wish to reap the

Semba paddy of Ānakāl paṭṭi

And take it to Koppatākuṭi

My beautiful lass. (Song 7)

It is clear in the song that the man is from the settlement or place called

Koppatākuṭi and has come to marry a beautiful woman from Ānakāl paṭṭi'.

Semba refers to a particular kind of rice crops. The reference that he gives

is that he wishes to reap *semba* paddy from Ānakāl paṭṭi. Here the man

indirectly compares the women to *Alakusemba* ('Alaku' means beautiful or

pretty). Even while comparing the woman to paddy, the man addresses

the woman as *peṇmayile* (pea-hen). Likewise in song 10 the man sings:

> Malayaṭivāratilu,
>
> Manippr̠ā mēyakaṇṭe.
>
> Cembr̠āntu vēṣatilu
>
> Centūkku tūkkiṭuve.

Translation:

> In the valley I saw
>
> A dove roosting.
>
> In a kite's disguise
>
> Will I swoop down and pick you! (Song 10)

 Here the man compares his beloved to a dove that is flying in the valley

while he compares himself to a kite. He tells her that he will come in a

kite's disguise to get hold of her. The women's consent is not asked here,

but he asserts that he has seen her from a distance and is confident that

he is strong enough to carry her.

Similar to the man expressing his desire for his beloved, the woman

too explicitly expresses her desires through different songs at the time of

courtship. The socio-cultural space accorded to Muduvan woman is

remarkable in its liberalism. The visibility and speech of these women are

brought to the fore when they too sing songs of courtship. The expression

of desire, especially of the body is generally both in literature and society a

male prerogative. The social codes of urban communities and literate societies see the female enunciation of desire as lack of propriety. In one song the woman sings:

> Kallīṭṭa poḷi veṭṭi,
>
> Kāśera pāi moṭañcu,
>
> Villēñcara kayuku,
>
> Velamatika ñān āśai.

Translation:

> Slicing the reed
>
> And weaving a shining mat,
>
> To the one who wields a bow,
>
> I shall give the price-money. (Song 5)

The woman's desire to have a man of her choice is indicated in this song. Here she says that she makes a mat by cutting and slicing *kallīṭṭa* (a type of bamboo) to value her man's hand that holds a bow which indicates that she wishes to be cared for and protected. Through the lines she says that her desire is to get a man of the above type. Weaving a mat for her lover signifies her willing self-surrender to the man she loves. In another song (Song 8) the girl sings about a man of her dreams:

> Ñāvapaḻam pōle
>
> Ñān oruti penpiṟannē.
>
> Ēḻu sūryane pōle

Enikyorutan vāikyavēnam.

Translation:

Like a jamun fruit

Was a girl born.

Let me have a man

Like seven suns. (Song 8)

She considers herself as not so beautiful but wishes to have a handsome man. To say that she is not beautiful, she compares herself to a jamun fruit is purple in colour, though it looks black and in this song the girl means to say that she is dark in colour and so not conceivably beautiful. But her dream is mentioned in the last two lines. She says that she wants a man who is bright and shiny like seven suns. But it is interesting to note what the woman sings in another song:

Ānayum āna,

Āśayuḷḷa matavāna.

Komburanṭum pāluveḷḷa,

Kōṭā paśugiḷam.

Translation:

The elephant, such a one,

Truly a bull-elephant in rut,

With tusks milky white,

Bred at the king's stable. (Song 9)

She says that the man of her dreams is dark in skin like an elephant with tusks white like milk indicating the contrast in colour between his skin and teeth. With the comparison to the elephant, the woman wishes to mention that he is strong and handsome. She uses the line "Āśayuḷḷa matavāna" (a bull elephant in rut) that may indicate how she desires fascinating beauty and strength in her man. In the last line she says that the elephant is the property of the king. Her dream to have a strong and lovable man of high fortune is clearly mentioned in this song. In another song too (Song 6) the man is described directly as a dark one:

> Āḷu kaṟuta āḷu
>
> Āmeniku ēta āḷu,
>
> Āśa vacen unakku.

Translation:

> The man, the dark one
>
> Best suited for the girl,
>
> He longs for you. (Song 6)

In this song the third person, possibly a friend or companion of the man, acts as a messenger and informs her that his friend longs for her. Hence the man is portrayed in front of her in a very simple manner. The man is said to be dark in colour but best suited for her according to the speaker. Here the third person's duty is to incite love and passion in her mind by giving a description of the man in limited words.

There are some songs which can be sung before or after marriage as mentioned above in the contextual frame but deals with the theme desire. As such in one song the woman sings:

> Veḷañja tina kāṭile,
>
> Vēppumāṟ nippatu.
>
> Muḷḷutina kāṭile,
>
> Mūlineku vannavane.

Translation:

> In the ripe millet-field,
>
> The elders are standing.
>
> By the thorny shrubs,
>
> Come to meet me. (Song 38)

Considering this song sung before marriage, the situation is when the man has come to see his beloved in the weedy shrubs. The ripe millet field is not the right place to meet the beloved since elders are there which disrupts their privacy. But in weedy shrubs there is not much chance of interruption and hence the woman addresses the man and sings the particular song. In another song (Song 39) the man sings in the form of advice to have her:

> Āṭuṇṭu māṭuṇṭu,
>
> Añcakuḷatil tanniyuṇṭu.
>
> Puḻayēṟi kuḷiccu vā,

Ente ponnuni<u>r</u>atāḷe.

Translation:

Sheep is there, cattle too,

Water too in the bathing ghat.

Cross the river, bathe and come (to me)

My golden-lass. (Song 39)

In song the man calls his beloved as *ponnuni<u>r</u>atāḷe* (golden lass) and asks her to cross all barriers and reach him. The above two songs are sung after marriage too indicating domestic life. The references of millet field (Song 38) and cattle and sheep (Song 39) indicate the type of work they do daily.

There are songs that deal with the theme desire along with descriptions of life after marriage. In one song (Song 42) the man hopes and wishes to start a new life after marriage and hence sings:

Tekku vāsalile,

Tengumara ṭōpparike

Nammuṭe vayalile,

Nātunaṭa pōvamāṭi.

Translation:

At the southern gate,

Near the coconut grove,

In our own field,

Let us sow the paddy. (Song 42)

The man calls his beloved to come with him to sow paddy near the coconut grove. The place where they have to sow paddy is mentioned in the first line; "Tekku vāsalile" (at the southern gate) while the field is mentioned as "Nammuṭe vayalile" (in our own field). These references signify his desire to live together and start having children metaphorically. In song (Song 43) the woman expresses her earnest longing to have a baby and sings:

> Eṭēṟu keṭi,
>
> Eṭiyiloreṟu tān piṭippu.
>
> Patēṟu keṭi,
>
> Payaṟumukham pāṟppateppa?

Translation:

> Eight yoked cows,
>
> You hold in the middle.
>
> With ten yoked cows,
>
> When will the new seedlings sprout? (Song 43)

Here she asks her man when she can have the fortune to see a *mukham* (face), indicating her wish to see a baby. It is mentioned in the song that her man is working in the field with eight yoked cows. She then asks him to have ten yoked cows instead of eight to bring forth new sprouts. The *patēṟu* (ten yoked cows) indirectly suggests the ten months she has to carry a baby in her womb, the result of their love.

2. Desire/Praise:

In this section the three songs sung at the time of courtship deal with the theme/s of desire and praise were available to the researcher. In one song (Song 11) the man praises the beauty of the beloved and expresses his desire to unite with her. He sings:

Accilaṭiccu,

Aḷakāṟnna śilavāṟtu,

Aḷakāna peṇmayilē,

Āśaviṭṭu pōkavilla.

Translation:

Sculpted and chiselled into perfect form,

O beautiful girl,

My passion for you is unabated. (Song 11)

In this song the man's desire for her is directly expressed to her by calling her "Aḷakāna peṇmayile" (literally, beautiful pea-hen). Earlier he praises her beauty by saying that she is like a beautiful sculpture. In another song (Song 12) she is praised for having beautiful tresses and later mentioned as a seductress with *poṭṭu* or a beautiful mark on the forehead. And later he tells her that he is a useless one but loves and longs for her. The song goes like this:

Aḷakāna koṇṭakāri,

Āḷe mayakkum poṭṭukāri.

Oru nātiyat̲ra payyan,

Ñān āśappaṭṭēn.

Translation:

O girl with a beautifully rolled tresses,

The mark on your forehead is seductive.

This useless lad

Longs for you. (Song 12)

In the same way she is compared to a newly blossomed flower of an ash-gourd in another song (Song 13). He states that even if she is not liked by anybody else, she is attractive and desirable to him. He sings:

Pūsani pūve,

Pūttatellam ilam pūve,

Nātiyatta pūvuku

Ñān āśapeṭṭēne.

Translation:

O flower of ash-gourd,

Bloomed fresh all around,

For the blooms none care for

Do I desire. (Song 13)

The song indicates the simple and graceful way in which Muduvans express their feelings, especially love. Urbanised and consciously accultured poetry

will not describe the beauty of a girl as comparable to that of an ash-gourd flower.

3. Praise:

Praising the beauty, physical features and talent of the beloved is the main aspect of love poetry and songs in general. The love-songs of Muduvans also exhibit the unmasked expressions of their feelings towards the beloved in simple diction. At the time of courtship the woman is usually portrayed as a beauty to be possessed by the man. Such songs also show that their society allows a man to create an occasion to express his love which helps to generate love in the woman of his choice and it also helps to expel any feeling of strangeness towards him, and vice versa. It is to be noted here that the diction is not so vividly imaginative but simple and elegant to create a striking image in the listener's mind. In one song (Song 15) the man praises the beauty of the woman and sings:

> Kaṇṭaṅkaḷittiye,
>
> Kellayiṭum tōkayāḷe,
>
> Maṯrakaḷittiye,
>
> Malayēṟi piṭiyukāre.

Translation:

> O lass with a beautiful neck,
>
> Adorned with a drooping garland,
>
> O lass with a fine neck,

You are a seductress. (Song 15)

The woman in this song is praised by the man as having a beautiful and fine neck wearing a garland. The woman's physical features are a matter of praise for the man as physical features with big and broad neck is always desirous and attractive for men in their culture. Twice, in this song, the man addresses her with an attractive neck and finally states that she is a seductress which specifies that he has fallen in love with her. In another song (Song 16) the man indirectly praises the beauty of his woman:

> Pākku pakiṭatu,
>
> Palayōravum minnatu.
>
> Kākkavāi koñcāme,
>
> Kiḷimūkku māmbaḷamo.

Translation:

> Looks beautiful
>
> And glows all around.
>
> A *kiḷimūkku* mango fruit,
>
> Undetected by a crow. (Song 16)

The man here compares her to a "Kiḷimūkku māmbaḷam" (a type of mango that gets its name because of its shape like the *mūkku* (beak) of a *kiḷi* (parrot). The lover praises her indirectly by saying that the ripened mango looks so beautiful and it shines well which symbolizes her being pleasing to the eyes of the man. In the next line he states that the mango is not

touched or seen by any crow, which suggests that she is still a virgin and that he would be fortunate to have her. In another song (song 14), sung by the man at the time of marriage, the beauty of the girl is praised:

> Kuñciyum kuñcipiḷḷe,
>
> Nī pukāri sīpaḻaki.
>
> Neñjukku amiṟnnavaḷe,
>
> Ninavonnu māṟuḷḷei.

Translation:

> Oh, little girl, you are a beauty
>
> Adorned with the *pukāri,* o fair one.
>
> You dwell in my heart,
>
> As a dream that never fades. (Song 14)

The portrait of the woman adorned with *pukāri* (bamboo comb) on her tresses is presented here which creates a picture of her and its associations in the minds of the people who have gathered for the marriage. It is clear through his words that he has conceived of her in his mind as most desirable to him as well as to those who have gathered for the occasion.

After marriage too Muduvans sing songs that deal with the theme of praise which exhibits their love life. For example, in one song (Song 44) the man sings:

> Kannāṭi vaḷavi pōṭṭu,
>
> Katiraṟakān pōravale.

Kannāṭi oḷikaṇṭu,

Vannatāṭi unpuruśan.

Translation:

Wearing glass bangles,

You were leaving for harvest.

Sighting the glasses' brilliance,

Your man has returned. (Song 44)

The man says that he has come to her attracted by the brilliance of the glass bangles that she wears when she is going to the field to harvest the crops. The image is as culturally significant for them as it is imaginatively conjoined with the actual fact of the girl wearing glass bangles. In another song (Song 45) it is the woman who praises the family and talent of her man:

Sāti samutramā,

Sāmikai pustakamā,

Enne toṭa mannavaṟku,

Enne kavipāṭu vannu?

Translation:

O, ocean of virtue,

O, divine book of wisdom,

To the prince who married me,

What song shall I sing? (Song 45)

She feels that she is not worthy enough to sing about him. Initially she says that her man's family and its knowledge is as vast as an ocean and a book respectively. And later she says that he is the one who has touched her and recited poems for her, or in other words, that he has been her 'muse', so to say. Transformation by touch is a part of the cultural belief of the Muduvans reflected as a thematic feature in the love-songs of varied kinds.

4. Flirtation:

Flirtation is one of the predominant themes in the love-songs of Muduvans sing at the time of courtship and even after marriage. The songs 17 to 21 are fine examples for flirting at the time of courtship. In song 17, the man flirts with the woman:

> Oru nīla karum kuyile,
>
> Ninavu māṟāta pūṅkuyile,
>
> Ñān iṅge nikkaṭṭamo?
>
> Ñān pōkaṭṭamo?

Translation:

> O! You blue-black cuckoo,
>
> Sweet bird, unflinching in love,
>
> Shall I wait here?
>
> Or shall I leave? (Song 17)

He asks her directly whether he should wait for her or leave as an act of flirtation. Before asking this he calls her a blue-black cuckoo. Here he is not sure whether the girl is already engaged or married to someone else, but expresses his interest and intention directly to her. As a response to his flirting, the woman sings:

> Aṭa śanṭāla,
>
> Ñān nikkasonnāl neṭṭōram.
>
> Ñān pōkasonnāl pollāppu.
>
> Ñān orutan ponṭaṭṭi.
>
> Ñān ennate sollapōren?

Translation:

> Why, you wretch,
>
> If I ask you to stay, it's at the ridge.
>
> If I ask you to go, it's also trouble.
>
> I am another's wife.
>
> What can I say? (Song 18)

As a reply initially she calls him a *śandāla* (a wretch) but later expresses her confused state of feelings in the mind. She says that she does not know what to reply; whether to ask him to leave or stay back as she is already married to another. Through her reply it is clear that she is also interested in him but expresses her inability to act in his favour since she is

already married to another man. But in another song (song 19) the woman

reacts to the flirtations of a man by mocking at him. She sings:

Maṇṇuruci kaṅṭavanō?

Maratturuci kaṅṭavanō?

Peṇṇuruci kaṇṭavanō?

Pōṭa sirupayalē.

Translation:

Have you known the soil?

Have you known trees?

Have you known woman?

Get lost, you little boy! (Song 19)

It is not clear whether the man too flirted with her but from the song it is

clear that she is displeased, and that is the reason why she asks him

whether he has known or tasted the real soil, touched a tree and known a

woman. Later she calls him a mere boy which denotes that he is still not

mature enough to know the many complexities of life. The woman

assumes that he is not experienced in life. But to her questions and hostile

talk, he answers her tit for a tat in the next song:

Maṇṇuruci piṭṭamaṇṇu.

Maratturuci cantanam.

Peṇṇuruci unnuṭe mukataḷaku.

Unne piṭikāte pōkavilla.

Translation:

> The best of soil is laterite.
>
> The best of trees is sandal.
>
> And of girls are you the beauty.
>
> I wont be off without you. (Song 20)

He says that the best soil is *piṭṭamaṇṇu* (soil good for cultivating crop), the best tree is sandalwood and the best girl for him is the one who is standing in front of him with a charming face and so he is not ready to leave her for sure. In an interesting way, in song 40 the man flirts with a woman. He sings:

> Ennayiṭu talavēisu,
>
> Enikku munti pōravaḷe,
>
> Eṇṇakarumkuyile,
>
> Enne mayakkātaṭi.

Translation:

> Going before me with oiled and combed hair,
>
> You beautiful black cuckoo, don't entice me. (Song 40)

By calling the woman as a black cuckoo the man tries to flirt with a woman. The man here portrays the picture of a beautiful woman with oiled and combed hair, walking in front of him. In a flirting tone he tells her not to entice him with her appearance and beauty. The same song is also sung to flirt with a woman after marriage.

The Songs 46 and 47 are usually sung after marriage deal with the theme flirtation. In Song 46, the woman tells a man not to allow the cattle to graze over the hills to eat tender grass. She sings:

Māṭṭaṇan ṭambiye,

Māṭu meikum en puruśā

Un māṭu malayeṟi meyāte,

Mañjappullu ṭinnāte.

Translation:

O step-brother,

My man who herds cattle,

Let not your cattle graze over the hills,

Nor eat the tender grass. (Song 46)

With the image of cattle grazing over the hills the woman indirectly warns the man, who is her step brother, not to approach her as her man will not allow such things to happen. But he reciprocates in a stubborn manner in the next song (Song 47) and continues his flirtation by saying that he does not mind even if the cattle graze over her bosom. His response to her is:

En māṭu malyeṟi meñjālentā,

Un māṟumeleṟi meñjālentā?

Ne kulikum mañjalile,

Ñjan vilpiṭisu valuventu.

Translation:

> What if my cattle went grazing over the hills,
>
> Or even over your bosom?
>
> The turmeric you bathe with,
>
> Shall be my bow. (Song 47)

As in all cultures the tension that prevails between what is right and acceptable and what is wrong are reflected best in the love-lyrics expressive of undistinguished desire.

5. Mocking:

Mocking or making fun at the time of courtship or even after marriage is an interesting theme in some of the love-songs of Muduvans. One such song sing at the time of courtship goes like this:

> Kattāḷa pāṟayilu,
>
> Kariṅkuraṅgu vēṣatilu,
>
> Kaṇṭēne unnayaṭi,
>
> Karikuraṅgu vāypōle.

Translation:

> Beside the large rocks.
>
> In langur's disguise,
>
> Did I see you first,
>
> Befitting a langur's mouth. (Song 24)

Here the man mocks at the woman by comparing her to a langur standing on the rock. The image of the beloved portrayed in this comparison is

meant to evoke laughter among them. Here the reference is to her dark skin and this is reiterated by saying that she is like the mouth of the langur which is assumed as darker, than the rest of the animal's body. In another song (Song 23) the woman sings:

> Cintāṇtu maṇalile,
>
> Cirumaṇalu koitiyile,
>
> Cinnapiḷḷayennu solli,
>
> Ciriccukoṇṭu pōnavanē.

Translation:

> On the banks of the stream
>
> While I played in the sand,
>
> You called me a liitle kid
>
> And left, laughing at me. (Song 23)

Here the woman says that the man has mocked her by saying that she has not grown enough when she was playing in the sand like a child. She is unhappy since he laughed at her and called her *cinnappiḷḷa* (little kid).

There is one beautiful song (Song 48) that the man sings after marriage to mock at the woman. The song goes like this:

> Iṭi iṭicu maḻa peye,
>
> Irukarayum koḷam perake,
>
> Koḷattil kiṭakkum manitavaḷa,
>
> Innu vāi polambe keḻkeliye.

Translation:

> While it thunders and rains,
>
> And the pond breaches its banks
>
> O, beautiful frog in the pond,
>
> Your sweet words are not heard today. (Song 48)

In this song the man compares the woman to a *manitavaḷa* (frog) and says that his beloved has not spoken anything the whole day. The song has another meaning too, that the Muduvans themselves present; the frog in pond symbolises a baby in the womb of the beloved. This meaning is relevant when she is pregnant and when her husband asks her whether the baby is making any sound in her womb. In that context the first two lines of the song indicate the couple's sexual life and the frog symbolising baby is it's result.

6. Reminiscences:

Lovers at the time of courtship cherishes the lovely moments that they had experienced. Song 25 and 26 are examples for this type in which the man cherishes the moment of seeing his beloved at a particular time and place respectively. In song 25, the man sings:

> Kallaḷayatile,
>
> Kāṭumaḻa kālattile,
>
> Kanṭene unnayaṭi,
>
> Kānakattu karumkuyile.

Translation:

> In the rocky cave,
>
> In the wind and rain,
>
> I saw you girl,
>
> You wild-cuckoo! (Song 25)

 The man cherishes the moment when he saw his beloved and hence says to her that he saw her when it was raining and windy and he was in a cave. He addresses his beloved as a "Kānakkattu karumkuyile" (black cuckoo of the forest) indicating how he conceived her when he saw her. While the emphasis in this song is of the time when he saw his beloved, the next song (song 26), speaks about the place where he saw her. He sings:

> Vaṅgaḷākaṭavattile,
>
> Valimariccu pēśayile,
>
> Kanṭēne unnayaṭi,
>
> Kānakatu penmayile.

Translation:

> At the *Vaṅgaḷā* ghat,
>
> When I waylaid you to speak with you,
>
> I saw you,
>
> Beautiful lass! (Song 26)

Here the man calls his beloved as a "Kānakatu penmayile" (pea-hen of the forest) and says that he saw her at Vaṅgaḷākaṭavu ('Vaṅgaḷā' ghat); a place near to the Susanikudi settlement of Muduvans. What is interesting to note is that the points of comparison emerge from recognisable specificities.

7. Assurance and Pledge:

Giving assurance and pledging one's love to the beloved/partner is one of the major themes that can be seen in the love-songs of Muduvans. In one such song (Song 27) the man assures his beloved that he will protect her and take care of her throughout his life. He sings:

> Kānakāṭu veṭṭi,
>
> Kariṅkuṟangu kāval vaitu,
>
> Kanniyaliñjālum,
>
> Kāval aliyāte.

Translation:

> Cut the forest,
>
> With a vigil like that of the langur,
>
> And even as the virgin is consummated,
>
> The guard shall not fail. (Song 27)

In this song, the man gives assurance to his beloved on three levels. He says that even if the virginity of the forest is lost by cutting it to make agricultural land, he will continue to guard her. On another level it could be taken as his declaration that he would continue to guard her even if her

virginity is lost. The line, "Kanniyaliñjālum" (virginity is lost), can be applicable to the virginity of the land or the forest or virginity of his beloved. The line "Karinku<u>r</u>angu kāval vaitu" (with a vigil like that of a langur) denotes the third level of his assurance. Here, he compares himself to a langur. Muduvans say that the langur is one of the most vigilant animals in the forest and it gives to other animals a warning with a special type of sound when there is any imminent danger in the forest. Here in this song the man tries to say that he will be very attentive and vigilant like a langur and she will not have to face any problems or dangers in future. He assures her that he will be there with her as a guardian and custodian. In another song (Song 28) the man sings:

> Mūnnu mo<u>l</u>am mallu vāṅgi,
>
> Muppattā<u>r</u>u śuṅgu viṭṭu,
>
> Śuṅgāsa ma<u>r</u>annālum,
>
> Unnāśai ma<u>r</u>akkate.

Translation:

> Even if I get the three-yard cloth,
>
> And make the thirty-six folds,
>
> And then forget the passion for the turban,
>
> The desire for you shall not die. (Song 28)

Here in this song the man assures his beloved that even when the time passes by, his desire and love for her will not diminish. To express this he

says that even if he forgot his passion for a turban he will not forget her. It is a custom in Muduvan culture for the men to grow hair and tie a turban with a long cloth, approximately three yards long, as mentioned in the song. Tying the turban is the adolescent right and passion for a grown up boy in Muduvan culture. In this particular song the man assures his beloved that she is more important to him than any other passion, even the dignity of his head-dress.

The theme of assurance can be seen in two other songs (Songs 49 and 50), sung usually after marriage. In Song 49, the woman sings:

Uccimalayeṟi uḷiyaṭikum āsāri,

Śabtam pōṭṭu uḷiyaṭiccāl,

Śabtam keṭṭu, ñān varuve.

Translation:

O, carpenter who chisels atop the hills,

If you chisel loudly,

Hearing it, I shall come. (Song 49)

Here the woman assures her man that she is vigilant and that she will be ready to come on hearing his voice. Here the man is addressed as a carpenter working on the top of a hill and if he chisels loudly, hearing the sound she can reach him. Wherever the man may be working his wife's guard is always on him, she assures. Another meaning that the Muduvans associate with this song is that, the wife is so vigilant that if her man has

any plan to go with any other woman, she will immediately reach there and wreck his plan. In another song (Song 50), sung by women when her man leaves her and go out, the singer recollects what her man had assured her earlier:

> Eṅgāti mayaṅgāti,
>
> Ennam ṭūkkam veikāti,
>
> Kaṭṭa kailāsam uḷḷamaṭṭum
>
> Kārpem bayapeṭāte.
>
> Kārpenṭu sonnire?

Translation:

> "Without misgiving or doubt
>
> Without sorrow in heart
>
> As long as the celestial *kailasa* is there
>
> I shall take care, fear not"
>
> Did you not assure me then? (Song 50)

Her man had earlier told her not to worry or sorrow and had promised her that he would take care of her as long as *Kaṭṭa kailāsam* (celestial Kailasa) is there. Now while he leaves the home, she is distressed and recalls his earlier assurance, asks him why he is leaving her alone when he had promised her to be with her always.

8. Determination:

In this section the man's determination to marry a particular girl is presented. He is so sure in his heart that he wants this woman alone or else he does not want to marry at all and has planned to become a hermit in the forest. In the beginning of the song he says that *vañci kāṭu* (a type of forest) is the best to be cut and cultivated to harvest more. Here the man compares her to *vañci kāṭu* and says that he is determined to marry this girl. He sings:

> Veṭṭanatu vañci kāṭu.
>
> Veṭṭāṭṭi kaileṅgiri.
>
> Keṭṭana inta ponnu,
>
> Keṭṭāṭṭi vāna dēśam.

Translation:

> If harvested it is *vañci kāṭu.*
>
> If not *kaileṅgiri.*
>
> If I marry, it's this girl.
>
> If not, a hermit in the forest shall I be. (Song 29)

9. Elopement:

The theme of elopement has a great deal of importance in courtship songs as the lovers express their wish to run away from the existing social constraints and overcome the hardships ahead to start a new life by uniting. In Muduvan culture, eloping from the community to live a life

together is hardly seen. But the theme is expressed in some songs, thus probably fictively, as an imaginative construct. In one song, sung at the time of courtship, the man calls his beloved to run away:

> Kūṭanatu kuṭumbi tala,
>
> Paḻaganatu pamba tala,
>
> Oru vāḻum p̲rāyam vanna,
>
> Vāṭi piḷḷe ōṭi pōlām.

Translation:

> If we unite, the hair shall be tied in a knot,
>
> If we do not, unkempt like a hermit it shall be.
>
> When you are old enough to live together,
>
> Come on girl, let's elope together. (Song 30)

He tells her that they are not young and so it is not the time for them to waste time in mere friendship but are old enough to live together. In another song (song 31), the man calls his beloved as "Māri kuḷantu vāsaniye" (smells like *māri kuḷantu*, a fragrant herb used mainly to make garlands). The song goes like this:

> Māma makaḻe,
>
> Māri kuḷantu vāsaniye,
>
> Vaṭāte peṇmayile,
>
> Vāṭi pille ōṭi pōkām.

Translation:

Oh my cousin,

Fragrant like *mari kuḷantu,*

You needn't tire yourself, oh pea-hen,

Come, lets run away. (Song 31)

As the smell of *mari kuḷantu* lasts for long, his beloved is also fresh and spreads fragrance, and he tells her not to be distressed for he is asking her to run away with him. In this song the man indicates that the woman is socially sanctioned for him. The reference for this is given in the first line when he calls her as "Māma makaḷe" (*māma* is mother's brother and *makaḷ* is daughter). A Muduvan man can marry the daughter of his mother's brother. It is interesting to note that in a socially sanctioned setup like this, there is no need for the man to call the woman to run away with him and in that case what he means by the song is the expression of his desire to live with her. These songs suggest the use of the idea of elopement by Muduvans to express intense desire for a woman.

10. Complaint:

The lovers complain about each other for various reasons at the time of courtship. In one such song (Song 33) the man sings:

Santana kāṭṭile,

Sāyamkālam poḷutiyile,

Santyaku sonnatāṭi.

Santyaku illayaṭi.

Translation:

> In the sandalwood forest,
>
> In the evening,
>
> You said we would meet.
>
> But it did not come to plan! (Song 33)

Here the man complains to her that she has not fulfilled her word because she had promised him to meet him and has not yet. The place and time of rendezvous has been fixed. As per that, sandalwood forest is the meeting place and time of meeting is the evening. But the plan has not worked out since she has not turned up and so he complains about her in the song.

11. Loneliness:

The lovers suffer loneliness when their partners/companions are not with them. This is expressed in song 35, in which man expresses his isolation. Through the song he portrays his situation, which he wants his beloved to hear. He says that he is left alone in a hermit's cave when it is dusk and raining outside. This song which is one of the most poignant in the collection and remarkably etched in detail runs as follows:

> Sāmiyāṟ alayil,
>
> Saramaḻa kālātile,
>
> Oru muniruṭṭu neratile,
>
> Pin tunakārumilla.

Translation:

> In this hermit's cave,
>
> In the season of incessant rain,
>
> In the dusk,
>
> There is none to walk with me. (Song 35)

12.   Separation:

Songs dealing with this theme are sung mainly after marriage in Muduvan culture. The feeling of loss and anxiety are expressed while partners are away from home or separated and such feelings are put together under the heading separation in this section. In one song (Song 52) the man sings:

> Veḷḷikaḷamayilē,
>
> Vīṭuviṭṭu pōnavaḷē,
>
> Pōnakāl tirumalayē,
>
> Penmayilē enneviṭu.

Translation:

> O, peacock-like girl,
>
> Leaving home,
>
> Did you set forth on a Friday?
>
> Will not you retrace your steps? (Song 52)

Here the man asks the girl who is leaving him and their home whether she will come back to him. He is anxious because she is going on a Friday

which according to Muduvans is a bad day to do any good thing. So her leaving does not bode a good sign and it makes him sing a song like this. In another song (Song 53) the loss of his beloved is expressed by the man:

> Ēḻu malakaṭannu,
>
> Eṭutuvanna sevuttupennu
>
> Vaccirikyamāṭāme,
>
> Veraṭiviṭe

Translation:

> Crossing seven hills
>
> Was brought a fair girl,
>
> (I was) unable to put up with her,
>
> And she was driven away. (Song 53)

Here he says that it is because of his fault that she left him. He remembers how he got a fair girl like her in the first line of the song; "Ēḻu malakaṭannu" (crossing seven hills). But his conduct repelled her off and now he sings a song regretting the mistake he has done and expresses his loss he feels.

In another song (Song 51), possibly the messenger or the companion of the woman tries to incite anxiety in the mind of the woman whose man is working hard in the field. The companion gives a picture of the man ploughing in the field in knee deep water with the oxen in yoke. The messenger expects her to go to her man and so sings:

Tonṭi maṇalile,

Tuṭayaḷavu ṭaṇṇiyilu,

Śanṭimāṭu keṭṭi,

Śākarānṭi un puruśan.

Translation:

In the cultivable earth,

In knee deep water,

With the oxen in yoke,

Your man works himself to death. (Song 51)

13. Disappointment:

Even though one can see some apparent similarities with the previous section, the songs of this section deal with the disappointments of partners and are sung mainly after marriage. In one song (Song 54) the man sings to his beloved who is sad:

Seṭṭisi piḷḷe,

Saṭam kai selakāri,

Saṭam kai selayilu,

Saṅgaṭam vannatāṭi.

Translation:

O, traders' daughter,

Wearing a traditional dress,

O, girl, does it bother you,

Wearing it in our fashion? (Song 54)

It is mentioned that his beloved is not from the Muduvan community, but is the daughter of a trader, a different class, and was brought here. She is sad since she is not sure about being able to dress like Muduvans. In another situation the woman sings a song (song 56) that describes the disappointment of her man:

Kōṭāli tōḷ pōṭu,

Maramuṭakyān pōravane

Maramō uṭayilla,

Manasōṟnnu nikkunnu.

Translation:

O, man with the axe on your shoulder,

Leaving to fell trees,

It is not the tree,

But the heart that is broken. (Song 56)

Here her man is pictured as standing with an axe on his shoulder. He is disappointed because he tried to cut trees but failed in his attempt. The disappointment of the man is projected in the last line of the song. In Song 55 the woman sings about the sad condition of her life. After marriage, she is sent to a place/settlement called Koṭṭakuṭi which in her description is a wasteland. To reach that place itself is difficult, as she has to climb the hill called Ēnimala (literally, Ladder Hill) that is steep. In this song, the girl tries

to say that she is sent to such a wasteland by her parents without her consent and the song goes like this:

> Ēnimalayēṟi eṟaṅgivanna Koṭṭakuṭi.
>
> Pālaṭañja koṭṭakuṭiku,
>
> Tayitāppa keṭṭivaccāre.

Translation:

> I climb up and down the Ēnimala,
>
> I reach Koṭṭakuṭi.
>
> To this wasteland Koṭṭakuṭu,
>
> My parents have sent me. (Song 55)

This song is unique because the young Muduvans usually marry only after courtship when there is both easy familiarity and desire for each other.

14. Counsel:

The Muduvans use love-lyrics to counsel the couple especially after marriage. In Song 57, the man advises the woman to serve him food:

> Malakki mañcu kappi,
>
> Kuṭikuṭiki āḷu varum.
>
> Kūppiṭṭu annam vayyi,
>
> Kōṭiyana eḷamtāriyē.

Translation:

> When the hill is mist covered,
>
> Thundering shall he come.

Invite him and serve him a meal

You lass, as tender as a creeper. (Song 57)

He calls her as "Kōṭiyana eḷamtāriyē"(a lass as tender as a creeper), which indicates that she is not well experienced and is probably married recently. Initially he explains to her the possible way of his sudden entry to home. He says that while the hill is mist-covered and there is all possibility for a rain and thunder, he may come like the thunder itself. He also indicates it may rain and thunder at any time and so she should be well prepared to serve food to her man. The same song can be sung by a companion of the woman advising her to take care of the man. Almost the same mood prevails in another song (song 58) in which the man or the companion advices the woman to serve food:

Paṭṭaṭa nelleṭuttu,

Parapayar̲ nellu sikki,

Āle pāttu annam veyi,

Annapaśam kiḷiye.

Translation:

Taking paddy from the granary and

Husking it on the mat,

Take care to whom you serve the rice

O parrot, of a gracious gait. (Song 58)

In another song (Song 59), the man asks the woman to give him a helping hand while he is climbing the ladder to reach on the tree-hut where Muduvans usually stay while guarding the field from wild animals. The song goes like this:

> Ēṇi tiṭutiṭuke,
>
> Ēṇikkāl nintalaya,
>
> Ēnti varum tirumalaiku,
>
> Eṭattukai tirumarivu.

Translation:

> While the ladder is shaking,
>
> And rungs are trembling,
>
> Lend your left hand
>
> For the husband who climbs it. (Song 59)

The image of the man climbing the shaking ladder is portrayed in this song. This song is more of a request rather than a counsel. There is another song (Song 41), which can be sung before or after marriage:

> Veḷḷi veṭiyeṭuttu
>
> Vēṭaiku pōravare,
>
> Taḷḷi ninnu tī vecca
>
> Kālamānu vilukam.

Translation:

> Oh, those who go hunting with a gun

If you hide and shoot,

A horned-stag shall fall. (Song 41)

While considering this song at the time of courtship, the woman compares herself to a stag and advises the man to hide and shoot so that she will be conquered by him. Here she expresses her wish to be in the hands of the man. While considering the song sung after marriage, the mood shifts to advising her man who is going to forest with a gun to hunt. It is to be noted that the replacement of the bow and spear is seen in this song though the Muduvans do not have guns for hunting.

15. Domestic life:

Pictures of domestic life feature repeatedly in the love-songs of Muduvans, especially those sung in contexts after marriage. Daily activities and household work is embedded in these songs. In Song 61 the girl asks her man to bring flowers that make her tresses lovely:

Malakyu mānalaku,

Malakyu kīḷe payaralaku.

Konṭakyu pūvalaku,

Konṭuvāṭā panṭārame.

Translation:

The deers beautify the hill,

The buds so do the vale,

You who sells flowers, bring me some

That make lovely my tresses. (Song 61)

As the hills and valley are beautified with deers and birds, the girl wishes to beautify her tresses and so asks her man to bring flowers. In another song (Song 62) the man gives a image of woman making garland. He sings:

Īnāte vāḷaveṭi,

Īḷavāḷa nāṟeṭuttu,

Turati peṉgalaku,

Tuṭuttuviṭṭe pūntiṟam.

Translation:

Cutting tender-plantain

And peeling its soft-fibres,

Make garlands for

The elder women. (Song 62)

The woman weaves a garland by cutting tender plantain-stem and peels of its soft fibers. The song indicates the type of works women usually do in Muduvan culture. In another song (Song 63) the man asks the woman to clean the pyol, threshold and the rest of the house denoting the household work that the Muduvan women do:

Tiṇṇamuḷaku penne,

Tiruvāsapaṭi muḷaku.

Innum muḷaku penne,

Iniyuḷḷa kaṭṭaṭatte.

Translation:

Swab the pyol girl,

Swab the threshold,

Swab some more,

The rest of the floor. (Song 63)

16. Domestic Quarrels:

There are occasions of quarrel fight among married couples and such situations are well presented in some of the love-songs of Muduvans. In one song (Song 64) the woman sings to her angry husband:

Maṇtiyilu Māṭaṭayum,

Mantṟimakan cīṭeḷutum,

Koṇṭayilu pūmuṭiyum,

Kōpamuḷḷa rājāve.

Translation:

Cattle will reach the shed,

The minister's son will give away the wages,

O, king of wrathful temper,

With flowers on the top-knot. (Song 64)

She calls her man as "Kōpamuḷḷa rājāve" (angry king) and tells him that he need not get angry with her for the cattle has not reached their shed. The woman says that at the right time the cattle will return. Minister's son is an

honorific the wife uses for her husband dispenses of wealth. As a continuation of the same song the woman sings the next song:

> Rājāve nī,
>
> Canṭrakulam sūryakulam,
>
> Mantiyilu vaḷakkapeśam,
>
> Matikeṭṭa rājāve.

Translation:

> Born of the lunar dynasty and solar dynasty,
>
> Yet you speak unbecomingly in the cattle-shed.
>
> O lord, o foolish king. (Song 65)

Here she says that even if he is born in a good family he speaks unbecoming words and gets angry as if he has lost his senses. It is clear that he is out of mind and hence as a continuation she again sings one more song in which she accuses her husband saying that he does not quite know what he says as he repeats the same problems. In the last part of the song she asks him to talk straight rather than just blabber and getting angry. She sings:

> Tirippiṭṭu tīyūti,
>
> Tīṟnta nyāyam tirippipēśi
>
> Maṇṭiyiṭu nyāyam pēsu,
>
> Matikeṭa rājāve

Translation:

> Rekindling the embers,
>
> Talking again about a solved problem!
>
> Kneel down and talk justly
>
> O, foolish king. (Song 66)

In the above three songs the woman calls her man *rājāve* (king) in different tones and suggesting different kinds of meaning. While he is presented as an angry king in the first song, he is presented as foolish king in the next two songs. As a reply to these songs the man sings:

> Śaṅgu mutale,
>
> Samutrakara kaṭalōram.
>
> Kaṭalatanni tiṭiliṟumo?
>
> Kaṟantapāl mulayēṟumo?

Translation:

> The beach scattered with conch-shells
>
> Lies by the sea.
>
> Can the water of the sea be exhausted?
>
> Can the milk return to the udder? (Song 67)

Here the man expresses his adamant nature and indicates that he is not ready for reconciliation. He says that the problem is not going to get over and for that he gives a beautiful comparison to that effect. He says that there is no chance of sea water getting exhausted and the milk going back to udder.

17. Reconciliation:

Among couples, after quarrelling the possibilities of getting reconciled to each other are given in the love-songs of this section. In Song 68 the man tries to reconcile with the woman with whom he has had fight. He calls her by soft words initially and finally asks her to return to be his love. This is the song:

> Ēntumuṭṭi elakkamuṭṭi,
>
> Eḷavāḷa tanṭumuṭṭi,
>
> Īnāta vāḷamuṭṭi,
>
> Enniṭattil enaṅgavāyo.

Translation:

> When the plant matures and so does the cardamom,
>
> When the tender plantain-tree matures,
>
> When the plantain fruit ripens,
>
> Will you surrender to me? (Song 68)

18. Sexual innuendoes:

Eroticism forms a vital segment in the uninhibited and spontaneous expressions of love-words by the Muduvans. Directly or indirectly expressing sexual desires or presenting sex related images are seen in many of the love-songs of Muduvans. In one song (Song 36) sung at the time of courtship the woman says:

> Vānate pātu,

Vaḷaṟnnatu raṇṭu tirukumuṭi

Tirukumuṭiyōratilu,

Raṇṭu tiruṭupayyanmāṟ pōkate.

Translation:

Staring at the skies,

Grew two hillocks.

Towards the hillocks,

Move two thieves. (Song 36)

Here in the song the woman indirectly compares two hillocks to her two breasts which denote that she is mature and attractive in the eyes of the men. The two thieves who come to the hillocks are compared to the two eyes of the man who courts her. In Song 69 the man expresses his desire to have sex with the woman whom he married. The first three lines do not have much connection but each presents sexual images. But in the last line he says that he is ready to father a child indicating his desire to have sexual relation. The song goes like this:

Kuttakkuttu ari veḷukum,

Kuḷanta vilayāṭā kuḷamuṇṭu.

Piriyumā pāl koṭu,

Piḷḷavaram ñjan taruve.

Translation:

As you pound, grains are cleansed,

A pond is there for children to play in.

Give me some milk with love

And I'll give you an infant. (Song 69)

19. Socio-cultural changes:

Socio-cultural changes are expressed in many love-songs of Muduvans, sung mainly when they have leisure time. Such songs deal with the changes in life style in the course of time. The influence of modern elements due to their interaction with mainstream society is seen in some of their songs. The elder people of the community sing such songs to make the younger generation aware of the life they had in the past which is different from life now. In one such song (Song 71) the man sings:

Kūravīṭu keṭi

Kuṭiyirunna akkālam.

Kāravīṭu keṭi

Kannāṭi pāppatu ikkālam.

Translation:

Putting up a thatched house

Did we live in those days.

Building in a house of mortar,

We live these days,

Gazing into fancy mirrors. (Song 71)

The man here sings about the way they lived in small hut instead of the big houses made up of cement and bricks. In another song (song 73) he sings about the changes in hair style. The earlier custom of growing hair among Muduvan men is now replaced by the urbanised hair-cut. He sings:

> Uccikuṭumbi
>
> Taṭi mūṭaṟatu akkālam.
>
> Kōna kṟāppum
>
> Kombusīppum ikkālam.

Translation:

> It was beauty to
>
> Wear top-knot and beard those days.
>
> Haircuts and crop-cuts
>
> And combs are of these days. (Song 73)

Women too sing about the socio-cultural changes that have occurred in their life-style. In Song 72 the woman sings about the changes in dress style in the course of time. This is the song:

> Ottasutti puṭava keṭi,
>
> Oluṅga naṭannatu akkālam.
>
> Ippo tāṇṭān śīla,
>
> Śamboṭi lavukka.

Translation:

> Wearing a single cloth as garment

Did we walk upright in those days.

Now he gives me a saree

And a waist-jacket to go with it. (Song 72)

This song narrates the past when they used only one long piece of dress to cover themselves. But nowadays they have saree, and blouse to cover their body. In another Song 74 the woman sings to narrate how they carried earthen-pots to fetch water in their olden days. But nowadays they go to the shop to get a plastic or brass pot of the right size they need. Even the words 'shop' and 'size' is used in the third line of the song, "Ṣōppukaṭa tuṟannu saisāke koṭameṭutu", denoting the influence they have from the mainstream society. The song goes like this:

Mañcaṭṭi tūkki,

Tanniku pīyatu akkālam.

Ṣōppukaṭa tuṟannu saisāke koṭameṭutu

Taṇṇiku pōnṟatu ikkālam.

Translation:

Carrying the earthen pots

For fetching water, was in those days.

At the new wares-shop choosing a brass pot,

To fetch water, is in these days. (Song 74)

The above songs of this section have the peculiarity of expressing directly the changes that have occurred in their life. These songs are

devoid of imagination but deals with real facts especially for those who stay near to the mainstream society. These songs also show their talent in composing songs dealing with real life experiences. These songs also throw light on the fact that soon or later their oratures will be replaced with film songs or any other literatures of mainstream society and hence the need to document them as early as possible.

20. Landscape:

The love-songs of Muduvans give visual pictures of their environment in a poetic manner. In the previous sections too, to express various feelings, landscape is referred to. But this section deals exclusively with songs that speak of the landscape alone. For example, Song 76 sung either by the man or woman narrates the particular features of the various places where Muduvans live or their life associated. The song goes like this:

Kūṭatakku Kūṭakāṭu,

Nāyatakku Nāgamala,

Kāttaṭikum Kavalasūji,

Kambaḷitūkum Śālapāṟa,

Sōṟuku Sōlakāṭu,

Sukhamuḷḷa rāsiyuma.

Translation:

Kūṭakāṭu for counsel,

Nāgamala for justice,

Kavalasūji for a cool breeze,

Śālapāṟa for trading shawls,

Śōlakāṭu for food-grains,

O, this land of plenty! (Song 76)

This song illustrates how each place is famous for in their perception or how they associate each place with certain features that are part of their life. What they want to exhibit is that their land is prosperous and peaceful. With the same mood in another song (Song 77) either the man or woman sings about the prosperity of their land:

Mānaṭayum Vaṭapāṟa,

Mayilaṭayum Śāntapāṟa,

Tēnaṭayum mutuvākkuṭi,

Tēṭivarum lakṣamkōṭi.

Translation:

Deer aplenty in Vaṭapāṟa,

Peacocks aplenty in Śāntapāṟa,

Honey aplenty in the Muduva land,

Sought after by millions. (Song 77)

Here it is said that Vaṭapāṟa is a place where deers are in plenty and Śāntapāṟa is a place where peacocks are in plenty. The Muduva settlements are rich with honey and many come in search of its resources.

The knowledge that they have regarding the various places in the mountains are well presented in these songs. Actual details are imaginatively presented in poetry and one has the unique experience of making a verbal tour of the Muduvan world.

21. History:

As mentioned in the first chapter the Muduvans are of the belief that they came from Madurai in the Western Tamil Nadu plains when the Pandyas ruled there in the ancient times. This historical reference is highlighted there in their love-songs (Song 78). The song presents how King Pandya set out with troops to the accompaniment of trumpet and clarion. When this song is sung in the context of a wedding it reveals that the bridegroom has started for the bride's place with his relatives and friends. The song goes like this:

> Sīkuḻalūti,
>
> Siṅganāṟ paṭakūṭi,
>
> Ponnukuḻalūti,
>
> Puṟapeṭa Pāṇṭiyāṟ.

Translation:

> Playing on the sweet flute
>
> And blowing the royal trumpet,
>
> Playing the golden flute,
>
> Did the Pāṇṭiyāṟ set forth. (Song 78)

22. Virtue:

Here in this section there is one song (Song 79) that deals with the theme of virtue. The main purpose of this song is to make others aware of the some general principles and systems. The man says that there are chances of snakes and scorpions in rotten trees but there will be flowers on a virgin's tresses, thus denoting the virtue of the woman. To the Muduvans, it is the duty of both the man and woman to uphold morality and virtue in life. This is reflected in their strict community behaviour. The song goes like this:

> Paṭamaratilu,
>
> Pāmbu varum tēḷu varum.
>
> Taṭavāṇṭi koṇṭayilu,
>
> Tappāmā pūvirikyum.

Translation:

> On a withered tree,
>
> Snake and scorpion may crawl about.
>
> A virgin's tresses
>
> Flowers shall always adore. (Song 79)

The love-songs of Muduvans touch on many aspects of life and are performed at various situations. The love-songs are in the form of dialogure reveal the inner feelings and emotions. The transliterated and translated versions of love-songs which were not mentioned in the above

discussions follow immediately. The Muduvans themselves classified to the researcher whether the singer in the context of the song or dramatic personae is a man or woman, though either may sing it while sharing it with the researcher. This is indicated in brackets following the English translation.

22)   Unnaye toṭṭatakku,

Un aṇṇan sākṣi sonnatakku,

Maṟutukaṭa sayyalile,

Vaccirippēm kaimarunnu.

Translation:

For (the malady used by) my touching you,

-Your brother giving witness to it-

By the bull's stable,

Shall I give you the remedy! (Man)

32)   Koyyāpaḻame,

Kōvayilu vikkum paḻame,

Vāḻapaḻame,

Vāṭi piḷḷe ōṭi pōlām.

Translation:

You guava-fruit

Sold in Kovai,

You plantain-fruit,

Come, let's run away! (Man)

34) Kolayāḷi kaḷavāḷi,

Koṭumayuḷḷa śanṭāḷā,

Kōṭati munvayatu,

Kōṭāṟ vititāre.

Translation:

In the court

The judge has pronounced

You a murderer, a thief and

A cruel wretch! (Woman)

60) Nillaṭi penne,

Nerutaṭi ninte kālnaṭa.

Sollaṭi penne,

Ninte sontakinavanōṭu sollaṭi.

Translation:

Stop there, girl.

Stop your ambling.

Talk girl,

Talk to your husband. (Man)

75) Ōṭa nillōṭa,

Osantanikum pūntōppu.

Tāṟam ceyum māppiḷakku,

Tanipiṭaku nillōṭa.

Translation:

Big is the pond that stays on

In the high flower-grove.

For the groom who comes to wed,

Verily, it is the best to fetch water from. (Woman)

This chapter presented the *Āśaippāṭṭu* (Love-songs) of Muduvans and the next chapter will focuss on other genres of songs.

CHAPTER-III

LULLABY, WORK-SONG, KUMMI-SONG, FESTIVAL-SONG AND LAMENTS

The folk songs of Muduvans under consideration in this chapter comprises of different genres sung at various occasions like songs to put the babies sleep (lullaby), songs sung at the time of work and at work places, songs related to festivals and songs to mourn a death.

Tālāṭṭu (lullaby)→ songs 80-82

Songs at work and work places→ songs 83-85

Kummi Pāṭṭu→ songs 86-89

Festival songs→ songs 90 and 91

Oppāri→ song 92

Tālāṭṭu (Lullaby)

> A child's first experience of the charms of tradition is in the form of a lullaby (the word means 'lull to bye-byes', that is, (a sleep). Lullabies must be the most instinctive music in the world: a woman with a child in her arms automatically rocks it and sings. Even today, the song may be only a repetition of meaningless hushing syllables sung to a spontaneous tune, but more often than not a young mother will sing a lullaby handed down in her own family, possibly for generations (Opie 173).

In any culture lullabies are usually sung by mothers or grandmothers to make babies sleep and form the first genre of folk songs that the babies hear. Lullabies are thus in a sense a continuation of the prenated, foetal bond between the infant and mother/naturer. Lullabies are notable for their rhythm and rhyme which help the mother to make her baby sleep. The performance of the lullaby is also a way to express the emotions and feelings of a woman while putting the baby to sleep. Lullaby, or *tālāṭṭu* in the Muduvan language, is one of the important genres of folk songs that the Muduvans have. The baby is called *ratanamē* (gem) while being nursed by the mother in the first lullaby (Song 80) of the collection. There are various levels of concepts and meanings, which are socially and culturally embedded in Muduvans' life and cannot be taken as apart from it. The baby is repeatedly praised as a precious gem and is associated with the surroundings, especially with forests and dwelling places in forests which are part and parcel of their daily life in one way or other. Moreover, the associations that the mother makes with religious concepts and matters of faith through the mention of divine characters in the lullaby, like calling the baby the son of Siva, play a role in binding initiating their child into their religious traditions. Even though this is beyond the infant's perceptions, the lullaby as a genre, the world over, embeds itself in the unconscious of the child. The mother sings to put her child to sleep, but the significations of

the lullabies are deep and subtle as it is a socio-cultural construct. The

following is the first lullaby of this section:

Jyōti minnum ratanamē, en kaṇṇē,

Uḷḷam etirpārta ratanamē, en kaṇṇē,

En maṭiyil piḷḷayāyi vantu piṟanta ratanamē, en kaṇṇē,

Sinna malarvāyi ciricapaṭi pāl kuṭiku, en kaṇṇē.

Vaṇṇamaṇi kaṭṭilē vaiti sempa nitra ceyyum, en kaṇṇē.

Śaraṇamaṇi kāṭṭilē suntharamā nitra ceyyum, en kaṇṇē.

Kaṇṇalin cāre kanirasamē kaṇṇuraṅgu, en kaṇṇē.

Vaṇṇamaṇi kaṭṭilē ratanamē kaṇṇuraṅgu, en kaṇṇē.

Śaraṇamaṇi kāṭṭilē ratanamē kaṇṇuraṅgu, en kaṇṇē.

Parameśvaran makanē, pāraḷanta māyan marumakanē

    kaṇṇuraṅgu, en kaṇṇē.

Translation:

O, lustrous gem, my precious one,

O, gem longed for by the heart, my precious one,

A gem born as a baby on my lap, my precious one,

Drink the milk with a smile on the flower-like lips,

    my precious one.

Sway like the rich crops in the gem-studded cradle hung

with ropes of gold , my precious one.

And sleep well in the gem-studded cradle hung with

ropes of gold, my precious one.

O, sweet one, like the juice of sugar-cane, close your eyes,

my precious one,

O, gem in the gem-studded, lustrous cradle, close your eyes,

my precious one.

O, gem-studded cradle hung with ropes of gold, close

your eyes, my precious one.

O, Son of Siva, O, son-in-law of Mayan who measured

the universe, close your eyes, my precious one.

(Song 80)

The opening lines of the lullaby are sung in praise of the infant's beauty. Apart from calling the baby a gem, the baby's lips are compared to a flower with which the baby is asked to feed. The enticing beauty of the baby expressed through her words in the first four lines are followed by five lines through which the association shifts quickly to nature and surrounding places and it is mentioned that the baby is sleeping in a gem studded cradle. The baby is asked to sleep like *vaiti sempa* (a type of paddy), a

point of bounty drawn into comparison that she must have seen in the course of her life in the fields. In the following line the baby is called as *kanirasamē* (sweet fruit or sugarcane juice) which also signifies the association with nature. But even while drawing associations with nature and the forest, she repeats that the baby is more precious than anything else and so calls him that he is a gem. The association of the child with divine characters in the song serves the purpose of invoking divine protection that is sought. Sophisticated metaphors are not used to compare the baby but only simple ones which are experienced in real life. One cannot find many differences in the essence of the famous Malayalam lullaby by Irayimman Thampi composed for Swathi Thirunnal who ruled the state of Travancore in the beginning of 19th century (Sharma, Irayimman Thambi An Artistic Genius) In the particular lullaby, the baby is compared to moon, lotus, honey and moonlight. The four lines of this lullaby go like this:

Ōmana tiṅkaḷ kiṭāvō?

Nalla kōmaḷa tāmara pūvō?

Pūvil niṟañja matuvō?

Pari pūṟṇēndu tanṭe nilāvō?

Translation:

Is it the child of moon?

Is it the beautiful lotus flower?

Is it the honey welling up in flower?

Or is it the full-moon's rays?

The Song 81 of this section is also meant to make the baby sleep but here the mother sings as if she is speaking to the infant. The baby is pacified while crying with the assurance that his father has gone to forest and will come back after sometime with milk and fruit in hand. The innate and intimate affection for her child and also for her husband is justified by the mother through the lullaby:

Īrakkuñciye nīyuraṅgu, ārīrārō rārīrārō.

Ninnappan kāṭṭukku pīyirukkatatra, ārīrārō rārīrārō.

Nīyuraṅgu, ārīrārō rārīrārō.

Ittiri nēram kaḷiccu vīṭṭukku varuvaru, ārīrārō rārīrārō.

En sellamē nīyuraṅgu, ārīrārō rārīrārō.

En kaṇṇē nīyuraṅgu, ārīrārō rārīrārō.

Etra nēramtān nī kēyivā, ārīrārō rārīrārō.

Ninnappan pālum paḻavum vāṅkivaruvāru, ārīrārō rārīrārō.

Īrakkuñciye nīyuraṅgu, ārīrārō rārīrārō.

Translation:

Sleep you little one, ārīrārō rārīrārō.

Your father has gone to the woods, ārīrārō rārīrārō.

Sleep, ārīrārō rārīrārō.

He'll be back in a while, ārīrārō rārīrārō.

My darling, Sleep, ārīrārō rārīrārō.

My precious one, sleep, ārīrārō rārīrārō.

How long shall you keep crying?, ārīrārō rārīrārō.

Your father shall bring milk and fruit, ārīrārō rārīrārō.

Sleep, little one, ārīrārō rārīrārō. (Song 81)

The absence of her husband and her expectations are projected in the lines she is conversing with the baby. To incorporate such feelings of hers, she lulls the child repeatedly with the sound 'ārīrārō rārīrārō' and the word *nīyuṟaṅgu* (you sleep), and in between adds the lines which narrate where her husband is. It can be noted that in two lines she speaks about her husband by addressing the baby with the phrase *ninnappan* (your father). The baby is lovingly called as *īṟakkuñciye* (little one), *en sellamē* (my darling), and *en kaṇṇē* (my precious one) which all are various appellations of her love and care for her baby. In the third lullaby (Song 82) of the section, the baby is addressed lovingly as *en kaṇṇē* (my precious one), *en sellamē* (my darling), and *en kaṇṇumaṇī* (apple of my eye). The lullaby goes like this:

Ōhōhōhōhō ōhōhōhōhō, ārīrārārō ārīrārārō.

En kaṇṇē nīyuṟaṅgu.

Ōhōhōhōhō ōhōhōhōhō, ārīrārārō ārīrārārō.

En sellamē nīyuṟaṅgu.

Ōhōhōhōhō ōhōhōhōhō, ārīrārārō ārīrārārō.

En kaṇṇumaṇī nīyuṟaṅgu.

Ōhōhōhōhō ōhōhōhōhō, ārīrārārō ārīrārārō.

Translation:

Ōhōhōhōhō ōhōhōhōhō, ārīrārārō ārīrārārō.

My precious one, sleep.

Ōhōhōhōhō ōhōhōhōhō, ārīrārārō ārīrārārō.

My darling, sleep.

Ōhōhōhōhō ōhōhōhōhō, ārīrārārō ārīrārārō.

O, darling of my eye, sleep.

Ōhōhōhōhō ōhōhōhōhō, ārīrārārō ārīrārārō. (Song 82)

In this lullaby the lulling is more important and to be noted with its repeated humming; "Ōhōhōhōhō ōhōhōhōhō/ ārīrārārō ārīrārārō". The repetitive and rhythmic pattern of the lines facilitates the lull to put the child to sleep and there is no hard and fast rule as to how many times

these lines can be repeated. The mother continues the song -usually the same song - till the baby sleeps peacefully. The repetition has a soothing effect psychologically.

Songs at the time of work

The songs under consideration in this section are sung usually to reduce the boredom and tiredness of various chores and tedious daily activities. Such songs help in refreshing the mind especially while engaged in collective works like harvesting, weeding, planting etc. The songs in this section are sung on such occasions, by the Muduvans, which are testimonies of their agrarian and pastoral life. The Muduvans usually cultivate rice, millet and ragi which form their main food. While the first two songs (Songs 83 and 84) in the section deal with their agricultural activities, the third one (Song 85) deals with their pastoral life. The first song of this section goes like this:

> Ūrōram katirarattu, ēlēlō, ēlēlō.
>
> Nērāna keṭṭu keṭṭi, ēlēlō, ēlēlō.
>
> Tūkki viṭu en talayil, ēlēlō, ēlēlō.
>
> Pōyicērum kaḷam niṟayē, ēlēlō, ēlēlō.
>
> Ēlēlō, ēlēlō, ēlēlō, ēlēlō.
>
> Ūrōram katirarattu, ēlēlō, ēlēlō.
>
> Nērāna keṭṭu keṭṭi, ēlēlō, ēlēlō.

Tūkki viṭum nin talayil, ēlēlō, ēlēlō.

Pōyicērū kaḷam niṟayē, ēlēlō, ēlēlō.

Ēlēlō, ēlēlō, ēlēlō, ēlēlō.

Ūrōram katirarattu, ēlēlō, ēlēlō.

Uralupōle keṭṭu keṭṭi, ēlēlō, ēlēlō.

Tūkki viṭu en talayil, ēlēlō, ēlēlō.

Pōyicērum kaḷam niṟayē, ēlēlō, ēlēlō.

Ēlēlō, ēlēlō, ēlēlō, ēlēlō.

Ūrōram katirarattu, ēlēlō, ēlēlō.

Uralupōle keṭṭu keṭṭi, ēlēlō, ēlēlō.

Tūkki viṭum nin talayil, ēlēlō, ēlēlō.

Pōyicērū kaḷam niṟayē, ēlēlō, ēlēlō.

Ēlēlō, ēlēlō, ēlēlō, ēlēlō.

Translation:

Reap the paddy in the fields, ēlēlō, ēlēlō.

And tie a proper bundle, ēlēlō, ēlēlō.

And lift it up on my head, ēlēlō, ēlēlō.

And I shall go till the threshing floor is full, ēlēlō, ēlēlō.

Ēlēlō, ēlēlō, ēlēlō, ēlēlō.

Reap the paddy in the fields, ēlēlō, ēlēlō.

And tie a proper bundle, ēlēlō, ēlēlō.

And lift it up on your head, ēlēlō, ēlēlō.

And you will go till the threshing floor is full, ēlēlō, ēlēlō.

Ēlēlō, ēlēlō, ēlēlō, ēlēlō.

Reap the paddy in the fields, ēlēlō, ēlēlō.

And tie it so that it looks like mortar, ēlēlō, ēlēlō.

And lift it up on my head, ēlēlō, ēlēlō.

And I will go till the threshing floor is full, ēlēlō, ēlēlō.

Ēlēlō, ēlēlō, ēlēlō, ēlēlō.

Reap the paddy over the fields, ēlēlō, ēlēlō.

And tie it so that, it looks like mortar, ēlēlō, ēlēlō.

And lift it up on your head, ēlēlō, ēlēlō.

And you will go till the threshing floor is full, ēlēlō, ēlēlō.

Ēlēlō, ēlēlō, ēlēlō, ēlēlō. (Song 83)

The above song depicts how they harvest paddy and take it to the threshing floor. The song is sung in dialogue form. The second and fourth sections of the song are a reply to the first and third sections which are in the first person speaking-voice. In the first section the person asks his/her co-worker to reap the paddy and make proper bundles of it. The singer

then asks him/her to lift the bundle up on his/her head so that he/she can carry it to the threshing floor. As reply for this, the co-worker says that the paddy has been bundled and is ready to be carried to the threshing floor.

In the third and fourth sections of the song, the only change is in the second line which is as follows: "Uralupōle keṭṭu keṭṭi" (And tie it so that it looks like a mortar-stone) instead of "Nērāna keṭṭu keṭṭi" (tie a proper bundle) of the first and third sections. In these lines they depict the way they tie the bundle of paddy after harvesting. The highly repetitive lines of this song help the active participation of the workers in the process of reaping paddy and carrying it to the threshing floor for further processing. Even though the song seems to be a conversation between two workers, all those who are present in the field participate in it by singing the refrain, 'ēlēlō, ēlēlō'. While harvesting, the number of persons carrying the bundled paddy stalks is more as compared to the persons who lift them up on the head of the carriers. Each carrier has the liberty to sing either the first section or the third section and depending upon this the second and fourth ones are sung as counter songs. The carrier who awaits his /her turn sings the refrain, a process of collective participation by all individuals.

The second song of the section (Song 84) is sung at the time of cultivating millet. Like the previous song, this one is also repetitive and rhythmic which demands the participation of all the workers. The first four lines of the song go like this:

Onnām ta tiṅkaḷile, orelayum tinapaya_ra.

Orelakku kāppukeṭṭa onnām pāna poṅkal vecu.

Ranṭam tiṅkaḷile, rantelayum tinapaya_ra.

Ranṭelakku kāppukeṭṭa ranṭam pāna poṅkal vecu.

Mūnnām ta tiṅkaḷile, mūnnelayum tinapaya_ra.

Mūnnelakku kāppukeṭṭa mūnnām pāna poṅkal vecu.

Nālām ta tiṅkaḷile, nalelayum tinapaya_ra.

Nālelakku kāppukeṭṭa nālām pāna poṅkal vecu.

Añcām ta tiṅkaḷile, añcelayum tinapaya_ra.

Añcelakku kāppukeṭṭa añcām pāna poṅkal vecu.

Ā_rām ta tiṅkaḷile, añcelayum tinapaya_ra.

Ā_relakku kāppukeṭṭa Ā_rām pāna poṅkal vecu.

Ē_lām ta tiṅkaḷile, ē_lelayum tinapaya_ra.

Ē_lekku kāppukeṭṭa ē_lām pāna poṅkal vecu.

Eṭṭām ta tiṅkaḷile, eṭṭelayum tinapaya_ra.

Eṭṭelekku kāppukeṭṭa ēṭṭām pāna poṅkal vecu.

Ompatam ta tiṅkaḷile, ompatelayum tinapaya_ra.

Ompatelekku kāppukeṭṭa ompatām pāna poṅkal vecu.

Pattam ta tiṅkaḷile, pattelayum tinapaya_ra.

Pattelekku kāppukeṭṭa pattām pāna poṅkal vecu.

Translation:

After the first moon, the millet sprouts a single leaf

Decorate that single leaf, and cook *poṅkal* in a single pot.

After the second moon, the millet sprouts two leaves

Decorate those two leaves, and cook *poṅkal* in two pots.

After the third moon, the millet sprouts three leaves

Decorate those three leaves, and cook *poṅkal* in three pots.

After the forth moon, the millet sprouts four leaves

Decorate those four leaves, and cook *poṅkal* in four pots.

After the fifth moon, the millet sprouts five leaves

Decorate those five leaves, and cook *poṅkal* in five pots.

After the sixth moon, the millet sprouts six leaves

Decorate those six leaves, and cook *poṅkal* in six pots.

After the seventh moon, the millet sprouts seven leaves

Decorate those seven leaves, and cook *poṅkal* in seven pots.

After the eighth moon, the millet sprouts eight leaves

Decorate those eight leaves, and cook *poṅkal* in eight pots.

After the ninth moon, the millet sprouts nine leaves

Decorate those nine leaves, and cook *poṅkal* in nine pots.

After the tenth moon, the millet sprouts ten leaves

Decorate those ten leaves, and cook *poṅkal* in ten pots.

(Song 84)

The song narrates the growth of the millet with the sprouting of a new leaf

each day for ten days and the joy of the folks is depicted when they adore

the new life by making *poṅkal* (a sweet dish) as an offering in celebration of nature's plenitude. What is important in such songs is not the content but the structure of the song. The repetitive lines with marked rhythm help the workers to sing the song without any difficulties and hence reduce the boredom of work. The next song (Song 85) is sung when Muduvans herd their cattle. The song goes like this:

> Attimarattēlu māyavarō, kaṇṇuṟakkam koḷḷaṟaṟu.
>
> Attimarattēlu māyavarō, kaṇṇuṟakkam koḷḷaṟaṟu.
>
> Maṭellām malamalakkum maṟumalayum pōkutō.
>
> Eṭuttāru sīkuḻalu ūtināru sīkuḻalu.
>
> Olakam eṅkum tattalakka.
>
> Pāṭiṇāre sīkuḻalu parvililum tattalakka.
>
> Māṭu ellām varukitine maṟumalayum varukitine.
>
> Mānattil mēkampōl varukitine māṭellām.

Translation:

> Māyavan on the fig tree sat and fell asleep.
>
> The cattle climb the hills and cross over to the next hills.
>
> He took his sweet flute and played a sweet melody.
>
> The whole world swayed with it.

> The sweet flute was played and the whole universe
>
> swayed with it.
>
> The cattle are coming back crossing back over the hills.
>
> Like the clouds in the sky, the cattle are coming back.
>
> (Song 85)

Here the mythical story of Krishna herding the cattle and his musical performance with the flute is presented. It is said that Mayavan (Krishna) fell asleep while the cattle went grazing over the hills. When he woke up from sleep he saw that the cattle had crossed the hills. Then he took his flute and played. The music was so melodious that the whole world trembled and swayed with it. Hearing the melodious music the cattle came back in herds like the clouds in the sky. As seen above, this song is notable for its imagery. The flute performance of Krishna and how the cattle cross the hills and return back are all depicted in the song in simple wordings. A different and short version of this song is collected and presented in the unpublished M.Phil dissertation of the research scholar (Jose 55). Through the association of the mythical story of Krishna, the Muduvans depict their own pastoral life. The main purpose of singing songs of this kind is to spent time when they take rest under shady trees while the cattle graze in the hills and forests.

Kummi Pāṭṭu

Kummi Pāṭṭu is a notable genre of the folk songs of the Muduvans, which they sing mainly to celebrate their life, especially, after harvesting. The performance of these songs are usually performed by the women of the community in a particular settlement by sitting together in a circle and clapping hands and moving their body according to the rhythm of the song. The movement of the body, especially the head with flowing hair, in a sort of frenzy when the song is sung in a fast pace, is called *kummiyadi* and hence the name for the song as *kummi Pāṭṭu*. The repetitive lines of the songs help the performers to continue with the song for quite a long time. The religious aspects of some of these songs are noteworthy because some songs are sung in praise of their gods and goddesses. One such song goes like this:

> Taṅkamalakku vēṭṭakkupōyi,
>
> Vīraperumāl vērtu varar̲.
>
> Taṅkakuñcam keṭṭi vīsuṅkammā.
>
> Veḷḷimalakku vēṭṭakupōyi,
>
> Vīraperumāl vērtu varar̲.
>
> Veḷḷikuñcam ketti vīsuṅkammā.
>
> Ponnumalakku vēṭṭakkupōyi,

Vīraperumāl vērtu vara<u>r</u>.

Ponnukuñcam keṭṭi vīsuṅkammā.

Nīlamalakku vēṭṭakkupōyi,

Vīraperumāl vērtu vara<u>r</u>.

Nīlakuñcam ketti vīsuṅkammā.

Paccamalakku vēṭṭakkupōyi,

Vīraperumāl vērtu vara<u>r</u>.

paccakuñcam ketti vīsuṅkammā.

Translation:

Hunting in the golden hills,

Vīraperumāl comes sweating

Fan him with a gold-gilted fan.

Hunting in the silver hills,

Vīraperumāl comes sweating

Fan him with a silver-gilted fan.

Hunting in the golden hills,

Vīraperumāl comes sweating

Fan him with a gold-gilted fan.

Hunting in the sapphire hills,

Vīraperumāl comes sweating

Fan him with a sapphire-gilted fan.

Hunting in the emarald hills,

Vīraperumāl comes sweating

Fan him with a emerald-gilted fan. (Song 86)

The picture of Vīraperumāl (believed to be one of their gods) coming back sweating after hunting in various hills is narrated in this song. Followed by this, all are asked to fan him with various fans made precious metal and studded with gems. A short version of this song is presented in the unpublished M.Phil dissertation of the research scholar (Jose 58). The next song (Song 87) is in praise of 'muttumāri' or 'kāḷi', a goddess whom they worship. This song is also repetitive with couplets about the number of *karakam* one performs to please the goddess. The *karakam* is actually a small brass pot decorated with flowers and fruits and balanced upon the head while the dancer performs wearing anklet bells. Two couplets of this song go like this:

Onnām karakamammā, ēkamuttumāri

Ēkavarum cōti uccātamā kāḷi

Tannānē tānē tillēlō tillēlō

Raṇṭām karakamammā, ēkamuttumāri

Ēkavarum cōti uccātamā kāḷi

Tannānē tānē tillēlō tillēlō

Mūnnām karakamammā, ēkamuttumāri

Ēkavarum cōti uccātamā kāḷi

Tannānē tānē tillēlō tillēlō

Nālām karakamammā, ēkamuttumāri

Ēkavarum cōti uccātamā kāḷi

Tannānē tānē tillēlō tillēlō

Añcām karakamammā, ēkamuttumāri

Ēkavarum cōti uccātamā kāḷi

Tannānē tānē tillēlō tillēlō

Ār̲ām karakamammā, ēkamuttumāri

Ēkavarum cōti uccātamā kāḷi

Tannānē tānē tillēlō tillēlō

Ēl̲ām karakamammā, ēkamuttumāri

Ēkavarum cōti uccātamā kāḷi

Tannānē tānē tillēlō tillēlō

Translation:

The first *karagam*, Ēkamuttumāri

A boon we seek, give us your word, Kali.

Tannānē tānē tillēlō tillēlō

The second *karagam*, Ēkamuttumāri

A boon we seek, give us your word, Kali.

Tannānē tānē tillēlō tillēlō

The third *karagam*, Ēkamuttumāri

A boon we seek, give us your word, Kali.

Tannānē tānē tillēlō tillēlō

The forth *karagam*, Ēkamuttumāri

A boon we seek, give us your word, Kali.

Tannānē tānē tillēlō tillēlō

The fifth *karagam*, Ēkamuttumāri

A boon we seek, give us your word, Kali.

Tannānē tānē tillēlō tillēlō

The sixth *karagam*, Ēkamuttumāri

A boon we seek, give us your word, Kali.

Tannānē tānē tillēlō tillēlō

The seventh *karagam*, Ēkamuttumāri

A boon we seek, give us your word, Kali.

Tannānē tānē tillēlō tillēlō (Song 87)

Another *Kummi Pāṭṭu* (Song 88) is performed after harvesting millet, to celebrate the collective effort, the harvest and the resultant prosperity. The song gives a visual picture of the various settlements nearby and the particular place where millet is sowed and how the members of the settlement nurtured the crop in a collective effort. The song clearly mentions the occasion of the song, which is the celebration of the harvest. The communal dancing of the young, clapping of hands and singing together have always been signifiers of celebration and shared joy in the realm of cultural semiosis. The occasion and content of the song reinforce the harvest spirit of plenitude. The song is as follows:

Māṭēkkuṭi kīṭēkkuṭi aṅgekkuṭi

Neṭuvil sēṟnnoru kōraṅkāṭu

Tannānē tānē tillēlō lēlō

Ellārum kūṭi atil kōrān vetassāṟu

Tannānē tānē tillēlō lēlō

Pūvāi kāyāi veḷavāi

Ellārum sēṟnnu kāval keṭannāṟu

Tannānē tānē tillēlō lēlō

Kaḷayeṭuttāṟu taṇṇiyaṭissāṟu

Tannānē tānē tillēlō lēlō

Caṅgārmārum kuṭṭāḷmārum sēṟnnu aṟutteṭuttāṟu

Tannānē tānē tillēlō lēlō

Putukkōṟāṅgāṭṭittinnāṟu, paṭṭiṇi illāṇṭikkini māṟikkinān

Tannānē tānē tillēlō lēlō

Kuuṭṭāḷmārum caṅgārmārum sēṟnnu āṭṭupāṭṭu veccāṟu

Tannānē tānē tillēlō lēlō

Santōṣamāka virunnu veccāṟu

Tannānē tānē tillēlō lēlō

Translation:

There are settlements above, below and across

And in the middle of these are the millet fields

Tannānē tānē tillēlō lēlō

Together, everybody sowed the millet in it

Tannānē tānē tillēlō lēlō

And it blossomed, bore fruit and ripened

Tannānē tānē tillēlō lēlō

Together, everybody kept vigil,

Tannānē tānē tillēlō lēlō

Did the weeding and the watering

Tannānē tānē tillēlō lēlō

Together the husbands and wives reaped the millet

Tannānē tānē tillēlō lēlō

Ground the new grain, ate and drove out starvation

Tannānē tānē tillēlō lēlō

Together, the wives and husbands dance and sing

Tannānē tānē tillēlō lēlō

And in happiness, hold a feast.

Tannānē tānē tillēlō lēlō (Song 88)

The *Kummi Pāṭṭu* is also the carnavalesque moment of social interaction, when all senior members and young dance together, forgetting notions of kinship and communal hierarchy. The last *Kummi Pāṭṭu* (Song 89) of the section is notable for its rhythm and refrain. The refrain of this song, "Tannannam tannannam tānānō, tannannam tannannam tānānō", helps the performers to clap hands and move their body rhythmically in a fast pace. This is the song:

Āttukku kīḻe tīrttattoṭṭi

Tannannam tannannam tānānō, tannannam tannannam tānānō

Āttukku kīḻe tīrttattoṭṭi

Tannannam tannannam tānānō, tannannam tannannam tānānō

Añcutuṟam makkal āṭum toṭṭi

Tannannam tannannam tānānō, tannannam tannannam tānānō

Innum kiṭakkathu ponnum kuñcam

Tannannam tannannam tānānō, tannannam tannannam tānānō

Cinnatuṟam makkal āṭum toṭṭi

Tannannam tannannam tānānō, tannannam tannannam tānānō

Ammikkalleṭuttu arayil keṭṭi

Tannannam tannannam tānānō, tannannam tannannam tānānō

Ānanṭakummi pōkutaṭi

Tannannam tannannam tānānō, tannannam tannannam tānānō

Cinnakinaṟukku kallukeṭṭi

Tannannam tannannam tānānō, tannannam tannannam tānānō

Siṅkārakummi pōkutaṭi

Tannannam tannannam tānānō, tannannam tannannam tānānō

Translation:

The water-tank beneath the river.

Tannannam tannannam tānānō, tannannam tannannam tānānō

The water-tank beneath the river.

Tannannam tannannam tānānō, tannannam tannannam tānānō

Five feet long is the water-tank where my daughter bathes,

Tannannam tannannam tānānō, tannannam tannannam tānānō

It still stands, the water tank, for the daughter, wearing

golden tassels and a red dot in the fore-head,

Tannannam tannannam tānānō, tannannam tannannam tānānō

Fasten the mortar-stone to grind the turmeric,

Tannannam tannannam tānānō, tannannam tannannam tānānō

And dance joyfully and clap for the *kummi*

Tannannam tannannam tānānō, tannannam tannannam tānānō

Fasten the stone to the little well,

Tannannam tannannam tānānō, tannannam tannannam tānānō

And dance enchantingly and clap for the *kummi*

Tannannam tannannam tānānō, tannannam tannannam tānānō

Festival Songs

The songs sung at the time of various largely religious festivals are included in this section. Muduvans celebrate many religious functions. The deities of their village and clan are described as Hindu deities; Vinayakan, Murugan, Meenakshi etc. They also worship deities like Karuppuswami and

Mariyamma so as to appease them and avoid disasters and calamities.
Worship of the spirits of ancestors is very popular and they are treated as
domestic deities. To ensure timely and adequate rains Muduvans have
special religious performances which are offering to hill gods in general.
Their deities are situated inside the forest, mainly near flowing water, such
as a stream. *Tāi Poṅkal* celebrated for a week in the month of January-
February and *Kārttika Dīpam* in the month of November, are the two major
festivals celebrated by Muduvans. *Tāi Poṅkal* is their harvesting festival as
they celebrate this festival after their harvest while the later is a festival of
lights when they light clay lamps filled with oil in the open spaces of their
settlement.

During these festivals they sing songs, in praise of their gods and
goddesses, which are quite lengthy as compared to other genres of songs.
In the first song of this section (Song 90), Lord Vinayaka, who is the
Remover of Obstacles, is praised in the beginning as a kind of invocation
followed by asking favour from the Goddess of Wisdom and Learning,
Saraswati, to gift proper words and sounds while singing. The sounds of
words are as significant to the Muduvans as are their meaning. This is a
fact that characterises all oral literature, especially songs that have to be
heard, learnt, internalised in their proper cultural context and reproduced
to be handed over to the next generation. Thus, the invocation asking the
goddess to grant with the right words and sounds. It would not be an

exaggeration to say that at times, sounds are above meaning in the oral

song. For instance in the lullabies discussed earlier, the elongated (i)

ārīrārō rārīrārō' or (ii) ēlēlō, ēlēlō in the harvest songs, are an integral part

of the semantics of the songs in the sense of the sound amplifying the

intent of the song. This is so because (i) cannot replace (ii) vice-versa.

The particular song is performed at the time of *Kārttika Dīpam* and

the indication of that is clear in the song itself. After invocation and seeking

favour for right words and sound the song tells about offering lamps to

various gods, goddess, concepts and facts. This is the song:

Munti munti vināyakanē muruka sarasvatiye

Tānā tattana tānānē, tānā tattana tānānē

Kantharukku munpirantha vināyakanē munnaṭavāy.

Tānā tattana tānānē, tānā tattana tānānē

Vāṇi Sarasvatiye, nāvil kudiyiruvamma,

nallōsa taravēnavamma.

Tānā tattana tānānē, tānā tattana tānānē

Onnenna onnenna, onnam tirumuṭi vāsalile.

Tānā tattana tānānē, tānā tattana tānānē

Ranṭenna ranṭenna, cantra sūrinukku rantenna.

Tānā tattana tānānē, tānā tattana tānānē

Mūnnenna mūnnenna, mummūrttikku mūnnenna.

Tānā tattana tānānē, tānā tattana tānānē

Nāleṇṇa nāleṇṇa, nālu ṭēśattukkum nāleṇṇa.

Tānā tattana tānānē, tānā tattana tānānē

Añceṇṇa añceṇṇa, añca pānṭavarkkum añceṇṇa.

Tānā tattana tānānē, tānā tattana tānānē

Āṟeṇṇa āṟeṇṇa, āṟumuka Vēlvaṟku āṟeṇṇa.

Tānā tattana tānānē, tānā tattana tānānē

Ēḻeṇṇa ēḻeṇṇa, ēḻiya kōvaram ēḻeṇṇa.

Tānā tattana tānānē, tānā tattana tānānē

Eṭṭeṇṇa eṭṭeṇṇa, eṭṭu ṭikkukkum eṭṭeṇṇa.

Tānā tattana tānānē, tānā tattana tānānē

Onpateṇṇa onpateṇṇa, onpatu namikaṟkum onpateṇṇa.

Tānā tattana tānānē, tānā tattana tānānē

Patteṇṇa patteṇṇa, pattum pāṭi muṭicatamma.

Tānā tattana tānānē, tānā tattana tānānē

Pattum paṭi muṭicatamma, pāpā pattini vāsalile.

Tānā tattana tānānē, tānā tattana tānānē

Toṟavīṭamma toṟavīṭu, taṅka kataku toṟvīṭu.

Tānā tattana tānānē, tānā tattana tānānē

Kīvīṭṭu santyamma, tīyūti vilakēṭṭu

Tānā tattana tānānē, tānā tattana tānānē

Taccanaṭicca tāpāḷu, tāne tāpāḷ ōṭātō.

Tānā tattana tānānē, tānā tattana tānānē

Kollanaṭicca koṭivilakku, koḷaccuviṭṭa koḷenteriyatu.

Tānā tattana tānānē, tānā tattana tānānē

Kār̠ti māsam kulirupani, kayyode vettala varavēnam.

Tānā tattana tānānē, tānā tattana tānānē

Punyam ceyta kaināle, pokala vettala varavēnam.

Tānā tattana tānānē, tānā tattana tānānē

Bakyam ceyta kaiāle, pākku vettala varavēnam.

Tānā tattana tānānē, tānā tattana tānānē

Śūryam ceyta kaināle, suṇṇampu vettala varavēnam.

Tānā tattana tānānē, tānā tattana tānānē

Koṇṭāṅkamma koṇṭāṅkamma kolakaṭṭa paniyāram koṇṭāṅgu.

Tānā tattana tānānē, tānā tattana tānānē

Ālupōl tal̠acu, ar̠ukupōl vērūnni, mūṅgipōl mur̠iyāmal

Vāl̠ke vāl̠ke, vāl̠ke, vāl̠ke.

Translation:

The first among the foremost, O Vinayakane, Muruka

    and Saraswathi

Tānā tattana tānānē, tānā tattana tānānē

I come before you Vinayaka, born before Kandar.

Tānā tattana tānānē, tānā tattana tānānē

Saraswathi, dwell in my tongue, and make the right sounds.

Tānā tattana tānānē, tānā tattana tānānē

One lamp, one lamp, at the threshold of the one peak

Tānā tattana tānānē, tānā tattana tānānē

Two lamps, two lamps, two lamps for sun and moon

Tānā tattana tānānē, tānā tattana tānānē

Three lamps, three lamps, three lamps for the trinity

Tānā tattana tānānē, tānā tattana tānānē

Four lamps, four lamps, four lamps for four countries

Tānā tattana tānānē, tānā tattana tānānē

Five lamps, five lamps, five lamps for the five Pandavas

Tānā tattana tānānē, tānā tattana tānānē

Six lamps, six lamps, six lamps for the six faced Velvar

Tānā tattana tānānē, tānā tattana tānānē

Seven lamps, seven lamps, seven lamps for the seven kings

Tānā tattana tānānē, tānā tattana tānānē

Eight lamps, eight lamps, eight lamps for eight directions

Tānā tattana tānānē, tānā tattana tānānē

Nine lamps, nine lamps, nine lamps for nine planets

Tānā tattana tānānē, tānā tattana tānānē

Ten lamps ten lamps, for finishing all ten couplets.

Tānā tattana tānānē, tānā tattana tānānē

Finished all ten couplets, in front of your door, Goddess

Tānā tattana tānānē, tānā tattana tānānē

Open it, open it, open the golden door

Tānā tattana tānānē, tānā tattana tānānē

As evening darkens, make fire and light the lamps

Tānā tattana tānānē, tānā tattana tānānē

The lock made by the carpenter, can it open by itself?

Tānā tattana tānānē, tānā tattana tānānē

The lamp for the garden made by a blacksmith,

      rekindles itself when prodded once

Tānā tattana tānānē, tānā tattana tānānē

In cold mist of *kārttika*, bring betel-leaves when you

      come along

Tānā tattana tānānē, tānā tattana tānānē

With virtuous hands, bring tobacco and betel leaves when

      you come along

Tānā tattana tānānē, tānā tattana tānānē

With fortunate hands, bring betelnut and betel-leaves when

      you come along

Tānā tattana tānānē, tānā tattana tānānē

>
> With conquering hands, bring lime and betel-leaves when
>
>   you come along
>
> Tānā tattana tānānē, tānā tattana tānānē
>
> Bring, o, bring, bring *kolakatta paniyaram*
>
> Tānā tattana tānānē, tānā tattana tānānē
>
> Thrive like a banyan tree, with roots like *aruku*,
>
> Unbreakable like bamboo
>
> You live long. (Song 90)

This song is replete with references to Hindu mythology. For instance the references like Vinayaka Saraswati, Pandavas and the trinity which include Lord Śiva, Viṣnu and Bṛamha clearly shows the influence of Hindu mythology in their oratures. Thus the intermingling of Muduvan/tribal culture and oral literature with other, such as Hindu mythology signifies the symbiotic relationship which the two have shared as seen in oral literature. The offering is followed by asking the Goddess to open the door. The Goddess is then offered betel-leaves, betel-nuts, tobacco and lime. And finally the goddess is wished a long life. The refrain of the song is sung by the people who are gathered for the festival. While the harvest festival is a communal celebration with a dance performed on the fields which yields the Muduvan their staple, 'millet', have the local centres around the simple temple that is marked by stones and barest of structures. The offering of betel-leaf and betel-nut with a paste of lime is a

sign of both prosperity and auspiciousness and its offer or exchange

signifies the compatible relationship between the donor and the recipient.

Next song (Song 91) of this section is *Māriamman Tālāṭṭu* (The

Lullaby in praise of Māriamman). The song goes like this:

Munti munti vināyakare, mukkaṇṇanātan makanē

Kantanukku munpiṟanta kaṟpakame munnaṭavāi

Vēlavaṟkku munpiṟanta vināyakare munnaṭavāi

Vēppaṭi piḷḷaiyāre vijñanāre munnaṭavāi

Pēlavaittonē peruccāḻi vāganarē

Kārāṇamamār maṟuṅka kaṟpagamē meypporuṭē

Sīrāna nanpaṟkaḷ selvakkaṇapatī

Oṭrakkompane uyaṟtirumakanē

Kaṭrai saṭai aṇinta kaṇkaṟum tan makanē

Vittaici vināyakane veṇṇayunṭom an maṟukam

Mattakkari mūlavā māyon marukōne

Aintu karattonē ānamukattone

Tantimara vāṟanane tarparane munnaṭavāi

Neñcil kuṭiyiruntu nīyenakku munnaṭavāi

Pañcanciru mellaṭiyāl pāṟvatiyāḷ puttiṟanē

Vēlan mūttone vināyakare munnaṭavāi

Un taḻvillā śaṅkaranāṟ saṟpputtira Vāṟumaiya

Munnaṭakkam piḷḷaiyāṟkku kaṇ naṭakkum ponnāṟe

Kaṇ naṭakkum ponnāṟe kāṟccilampu muttāḷe

Muttāḷe kaṇṭa onṟru munnaṭavāi piḷḷayārē

Selvakkaṇapatiye siṟvālane ñjān maravēn

II

Tāyē sarasvatiyē śaṅkariye munnaṭavāi

En tāyē kalaivāṇi ēkavallī nāyakiyē

Vāṇi sarasvatiyē vākkil kuṭiyiruntum

En nāvil kuṭiyiruntum nallōsai tārumammā

Kamal sanattālē kārāvi iṭṭavalē

Enkuṟaḷil kuṭiyiṟuntu koñcam aṟivu iṭṭavaḷē

En nāvu tavarāmal nallōsai tārumammā

Māriyamman tān katayey manamakiḻntu ñjān pāṭa

Sariyāka en nāvil taṅki kuṭi iruppāi

Kaṇṇanūṟ mārimuttē kai toḻutu ñjan pāṭa

Pinne illāmal puṟam iṟuntu tāṟumammā

Māyi makamāyī maṇimantita śēkariyē

Āyī umaiyavaḷē ādiśivan dēviyārē

Mārittāi vallaviyē makarāsi vārumammā

Māyan sagōdariye mārimuttē

Tāyē sauntariyē śankariyē vārumammā

Tikkellām pōṯṟum ekkāla dēviyārē

Ekkāla dēviyārē tikkellām nintṟa śakti

Kaṇṇappuṟattalē kāraṇa sauntariyē

Kāraṇa sauntariyē nārāyanāṟ taṅkayammēl

Nārāyanāṟ taṅkayammēl nalla muttu māriyārē

Nalla muttu māriyārē nāgakkaṇṇi tāyārē

Un karagam piṟantatammā kaṇṇanūṟ meṭaiyilē

Un vēmpu pirantatammā vijayanagarapaṭṭanamā

Un śūlam piṟantatammā tuḷuṅkumaṅi maṇṭapattil

Un aḻaku piṟantatammā ayōtinagarapaṭṭaṇattil

Un piṟampu piṟantatammā picānṭi sannitiyil

Un uṭukkai piṟantatammā uttirāsupūmiyilē

Un pampai piṟantatammā paḷiṅkumā maṇṭapattil

Un karuttu piṟantatmma kañcakkiri kiravūram

Un aruḷāl tān, un aruḷāl taḻakkayamma vaykkaṅgal īṭēre

Un kumāravarkal tān aḻaikka kumbaniye mārimuttē

Unakku mūnṯṟu karakkamammā, muttāna naṟkarakam

Unakku aintu karakamammā, asaintu āṭum porkkarakam

Unakku ēḻu karakamammā, ñjān eṭuttāḷum porkkarakam

Unakku pattu karakamammā, paṭittānṭum porkkarakam

Vēppilai porkkarakam vīti vilayāṭi varum

Āyiram kaṇṇuṭayāḷ alaṅkāri vārumammā

Patināyiram kaṇṇuṭayāḷ parāśaktiyē vārumamma

Tulakkanai ellai ellām kuḷakkaṭai paṇṇiruntāi

Tulakkanai ellai viṭṭu sauntariyē vārumamma

Tāye sauntariye śankariyē vārumamma

Malayāḷa dēśam viṭṭu varaṇmammē iṅka ūru

Samaintāl samayapuram, sātittāi kaṇṇapuram

Nīyiruntāi vīrāṭpuram, I iyiruntāi kaṇṇapuram

Samayapurattālē sāmpiṟāṇi vāsakiyē

Samayapurattella viṭṭu tāyarē vārumamma

Kaṇṇapurattālē kāraṇsauntariyē

Kaṇṇapurattella viṭṭu kāraṇiyē vantaruḷumammā

Kāṭumpāṟi ellai ellām kāval koṇṭa mārimuttē

Muttukkattumuḷḷavaḷē paraśurāmanum peṭravaḷē

Paṭa veṭṭum viṭṭumellām pattiniyē vārumamma

Periya pāḷayamamaṟṅta pēiyennum māriyārē

Periya pāḷayatte viṭṭu pēraraśi vārumamma

Āṟaṇi periya pāḷayam atilirikkum āttaṅkarai

Āttaṅkarai mēṭu viṭṭu ācciyāre vārumammā

Vīrampaṭṭaṇamamarnta vēdānta mārimuttē

Kōḻiyennur ellaiyile kuṭilkoṇṭ māriyārē

Tuṇṭiliṭṭu tūṇṭu vaikka toṇṭṟināyē nī orutti

Sattiyani amaṟntāi tanikkuṭṭiyil kāvukoṇṭāi

Unnaippōle daivam ulakattile kaṇṭatillai

Ennaippōle piḷḷaikal eṅkum uṇṭo vāliyattil

Kottamuttu vāṭamsaiya koṅkai ṟaṇṭum pāl oḻukka

Ēṭṭavarukku varam taruvāy ekkālattēviyārē

Ekkālattēviyārē tikkellām āṇṭavaḷē

Tikkellam āṇṭavaḷē tikampariye vāumammā

Mukkaṇṇāṟ sakkaṟattil moṟaṅkiyān niṇṭṟa śakti

Akkōṇantil vantu ācciyāre vantu amiḷum

Tāyē sauntariyē śankariyē vārumammā

Māyē maṟulāṟi maṇimantira śēkariyē

Vallanakkariyarē vākkāṭṭu mārimuttē

Nālu mūlai yomakuṇṭam naṭuvilākanakasabai

Kanakasabai viṯṟiṟukkum nārāyaṇāṟ taṅkayammā

Nārāyaṇāṟ taṅkayārē nalla muttu māriyārē

Nāṭāḷe suṭalayammā naṭu suṭale tillaivanam

Tillaivanatte viṭṭu tiṟumpumammā intapuṟam

Vārpukaḷ silayāḷē vastiṟamaṇi tērālē

Maṇṭaiyile teyta muḷḷu māṟuriye pokutammā

Pakkattil teyta muḷḷu paḷuttatum nikkutammā

Toṇṭayile teyta muḷḷu tōḷaruvil pokutammā

Kattikoḷuveppiriyē kattirivillāyi lokamellām

Īṭṭipōl vēppilayē iriyaṇaittu koṇṭavaḷē

Pāttinittāyē uḷḷaṟukkum pāvanayāṟ yāṟaṟivāṟ

Vēppilaikku ullaṟukkum vittaikaṇṇai yāṟaṟivāṟ

Tūṇṭimullu tūkki tūkkataikkum mārimuttu

Oṭṟaseṭilāṭa ūranaittum poṅkaliṭa

Reṭṭaiseṭilāṭa pāṭamannār kokkarikka

Paramaśivan vāsalilai pālpasu kāvukonnāi

Yamanati vāsalilai yeṟumakkaṭa kāvukonnāi

Yeṟumakkaṭa kāvukoṇṭāi ekkālatteviyārē

Ekkālatteviyārē tikkellām āṇṭa saktī

Kāsi vāḻa naṭṭeviṭṭu kāttālayē vārumammā

Ūsivilānāṭu ottiyakumāriya tesam

Aṭiyavam pāṭukinṟēn ammāṇantirukkaiyāi

Teriyātavam paṭukinṟēn tēvi tirukkatayai

Ēṭṭil uṇṭu nānaṟiyēn ēḻayammā unnaṭimai

Pāṭṭil uṇṭu nānaṟiyēn pālanammā unnaṭimai

Pāṭaḷavā kaiyaṟiyēn pāṭṭilēn payanaṟiyēn

Vaṟunta vakaiyaṟiyēn vaṟnikka pēraṟiyēn

Pērum aṟiyēnammā pettavaḷe en tāyī

Kuḷantai varuntuvatum koyilukku kekkaliyo

Maintain varuntuvatum māḷikaikku kekkaliyo

Pālan varuntuvatum pāṟvatiyē kekkaliyo

Koyilukku aṭimayammā koṇṭāṭum pālakam nān

Māḷikaye viṭṭu māṭāvē vārumammā

Sannitiye viṭṭu tāyārum vārumammā

Araṇmanai viṭṭu mātāvum vārumammā

Koyilukku aṭimayammā koṇṭāṭum pālakam nān

Sannitikku maintanammā śankariyē pettavaḷē

Veṟunti alaikkiṉṭṟēn vannamukam kāṇāmal

Tēṭi alaikiṉṭṟēn tēvi mukam kāṇāmal

Pāṇan kuḷantayammā pāttōṟukku pālanalli

Maintan kuḷantayammā makarāsi vārumammā

Kallo un manatu karayalayō ellaḷavum

Irumbo un manatu iṟaṅkalayō ellaḷavum

Kallum karaintu viṭum un manam karayātu ennavitam

Irumbum urugitum un manam urugatu ennavitam

Mun ceita tī venayō mutal kālattu payaṇō

Periyōrkkaḷ ceita tī venayō pettavalē collumammā

Ētum aṟiyumammā īśvariyē collumammā

Kāṭumpāṭi ellayilē kaṭṭaḷaiyāi viṭṭuṟuppāi

Kāṭumpāṭi ellai viṭṭu kaṭṭaḷaiyāi vārumammā

Kaṟakattaḷakiyārē kaṭṭaḷaki mārimuttu

Kaṟakattu nīyiruntu kaṭṭaḷaki koñcumammā

Kumbattu aḷakiyammā kōbālan taṅkayārē

Kumbattu nīyiruntu koñcumammā pettavaḷē

Koñcumammā pettavaḷē kuṟaikalontum vārāmal

Enakku pattu pāvalameṉṉam pāṭakkā cēraṭan

Unakku muttu mēlameṉṉam mōtirattāl cēraṭan

Ulakammellām mutteṭukka ullapaṭi tāṉ vantāi

Dēsamellām mutteṭuttai dēvi kaṇṇaṉūrālē

Mutteṭuttu tāṉ pukuntāi uttamī mārimuttu

Kōyilin santariyil pūpāṭṭal kēḷātō

Aṟaṇmanai santariyil alaittālum kēḷātō

Māṭiyin santariyil mātāyē kēkkaliyō

Makkaḷiṭa santariyil marumakkaḷ santariyil

Piḷḷaikaḷ santariyō pēraṇmāṟ santariyō

Āṇantattāl perumīyō āsāṟāṟ santariyō

Santariyē nīkkiyammā tāyāṟum iṅka vāṟāi

       III

Kollimalai āṇṭavanē kumārā kuruparanē

Kāttān āṟayaṇattān kaṭṭaḷayē tāṇaḷayum

Maturai vīrappanē mātāvē tāṇaḷayum

Pāvalaṟāyanattān pattiniyē tāṇaḷayum

Kaṟuppaṇṇa svāmīyē kaṭṭaḷayē tāṇaḷayum

Mūṅkil kaṟuppanattān saṭutiyil tāṇaḷayum

Muttāḷ rāvuttan mūḷaiyuḷḷa sēvikārē

Periya pāḷayamarnta pēcciyārē mātāvē

Pālayakāriyammā paḷḷikāri mārimutte

Kaṇṇanūru mārimutte kalakalantu naṭanamiṭum

Unnaippaṇintavaṟku uṯra tuṇai nīyeyammā

Ātiparamēsvariyē arukē tuṇayirammā

Unnaippōl daivatte ulakattil kaṇṭatillai

Ennaippol maintan eṅkumuṇṭo vaiyakattil

Un makimai aṟiyātavaṟkaḷ maṇṭalattil yārumillai

Un seyti aṟiyāṟo dēsattu māṇiṭāṟkaḷ

Un makimai nānaṟintu maṇṭalattil pāṭa vantēn

Un makimai aṟiyātulakil māṇṭatu kōṭiyuṇṭu

Un seyti aṟiyātulakil settatu kōṭiyuṇṭu

Tappu piḷa vantālum śankariyē nī poṟukku

Āṟu tappu nūṟu piḷai aṭiyāṟkaḷ seytatellām

Manatu poṟuttu manamakiḻci āka vēṇam

Kārakka kaṭanunakku kāraṇa sauntariyē

Pakkā tuṇayiruntu pālakariyē kāṟumammā

Muttayamma mātā nī eṟakkum

Mukattinil muttayammā munnatāi nī eṟakkum

Kaḷuttil muttayammā kaṭṭaḷaye nī eṟakkum

Tōḷil muttayammā toṟantakiyē nī eṟakkum

Mārpil muttayammā mātāvē nī eṟakkum

Vayattil muttayammā vaṭivaḷaki nī eṟakkum

Toṭayinil muttayammā dēviyārē nī eṟakkum

Moḷaṅkalil muttayammā mīnācciyē nī eṟakkum

Kanakkālil muttayammā kāmācciyē nī eṟakkum

Pādattil muttayammā pārinil iṟakkiviṭum

Ūnil iṟakkiviṭum pettavaḷē tārumammā

Pettavalē tāye pēracci mārimuttē

Uṟra tunai iruntu ugantariyē tārumammā

Unnaiviṭa pūmitannil uṟra tuṇa veṟumuṇṭo

Pakkattuṇai iruntu pādukāttu recciyammā

Sekkaccevantavaḷē seṅkaṇṇan tankaiyāre

Maṅkai ennum mātarasi makarāsi vārumammā

Tiṅkaḷvataniyārē dēvi kaṇṇanūrāḷē

Eṅkaḷ kula dēviyāre īsvariyē kaṇpāṟum

Makkaḷ vinōti mātāvē kaṇpāṟum

Ēḻaikku iṟaṅkāmal ippaṭiyē nī iruntāl

Vāḻvatu nān ikkālam vāṟppuśilayāyē

Āyi mahāmāyi āṟaṇaṅku sol kāraṇiyē

Māyi mahāmāyi maṇimantira śēkariyē

Iraṅkum iraṅkum tāyāre eṅkalai kāppāttumammā

Mārittāi vallaviyē makarāsi vārumammā

Vīraṇan cōlayilē āṟaṇamāi ānasakti

Vītī mannar vāsalile nērāikkoruviruntāi

Koruviruntā saktiyarē kōttamuttu nī iṟukkum

Kōṭṭamuttu nī iṟukkum kombanē mārimutte

Kōṭṭamuttu nī iṟukkum poyyāta vāsakiyē

Poyyāta vāsakiyē puṇyavati īsvariyē

Seṭiloṭuṭapperumān tūṇṭimuḷaṅkaittarumān

Aṭaṅkāta mānidārē āttivaikkum mārimuttē

Duṣṭaṟkaḷ tan daniṭṭu tuṭikkaṭakkum mārimutte

Kaṇṭavaṟkaḷ tan daniṭṭu kalaikkayiru mārimutte

Aṇṭāta tērai eḷuttān ānāvattai tānaṭakki

Rāsākkaḷ ellōrum nalamākattān paṇiyān

Makuṭamuṭi mannaṟuḷ manōnmaṇi tān paṇiyān

Kirīṭamuṭidaritta kīṟttiyuḷḷa rāsākkaḷ

Makuṭamuṭi mantiṟikal mannittu taṇṭaniṭṭu nikka

Paṭṭāttoṟaigaḷ paṭamukattu rāsākkaḷ

Duṣṭaṟkaḷe tānaṭakkum śūli kāḷiyammā

Aṭaṅkāta mānitārē aṭimaippaṭi koṇṭakattu

Tancamenta mānitārē taṟkkākkum pakavatiyē

Avaravaṟkaḷ tān paniya

Translation: I

The first salutations to Piḷḷāyār, whose golden form we

      behold first

Whose golden form we behold first, whose feet are

      adorned with golden anklets

Adorned with anklets of pearls, walk ahead of us, O Piḷḷāyār

Prosperous Piḷḷāyār, O auspicious one, never may I forget you !

      II

O Mother Sarasvati, Saṅkari, walk ahead of us,

O my mother, Kalaivani, Ekavalli, Nāyaki

Vani Sarasvati, dwell in my words,

Dwell in my words and grant me good sounds,

O goddess that signaled protection with your lotus-like hands

Dwelling in my voice grant me some wisdom,

Without a blunder in my tongue, grant me good sounds,

The story of Māriamman with a gladdened heart do I sing,

Dwell upon my tongue, properly, abide and rest therein,

Kaṇṇanūr Mārimuttē, as I sing with palms saluting,

Stay not behind, but stay by my side,

Māyi, Makamāyī, with a bejwelled forehead

Āyī, Umayavaḷē, Ātiśivan's divine consort,

Mārittāyi, Vallaviyē, Makarāsi, reveal thyself,

Māyan's dear sister, O Mārimuttē,

O mother, Sountariyē, Saṅkariyē, reveal thyself,

Adored from all directions, O Goddess eternal,

O Goddess eternal, pervading all directions,

O goddess of Kaṇṇapuram, O goddess beautiful,

the primordial cause,

O goddess beautiful, the primordial cause, dear

sister of Nārayanā

Dear sister of Nārayanā, Nallamuttu Māriyārē,

Nallamuttu Māriyārē, Nāgakannitāyārē,

Your karagam take form in the stage of Kaṇṇanūr,

Your auspicious neem leaves[1] sprouted in the town

of Vijayanagara,

Your trident took form in the resplendent hall,

Your beauty took shape in the town of Ayothiya,

Your scepter took form at the altar of Picchānṭi

Your kettle-drum took form in the northern lands of the dead,

Your hand-drum took form in the marbled hall,

Your truth took form at Kañchiṅgiri Karuvūr,

By your grace alone, may the words come true,

With your virgin words alone, shall the welcome be Mārimuttē,

For you did the third karagam take form, a karagam

bedecked with pearls,

Five karagams for you, the swaying golden karagam,

Seven karagams for you, the golden karagams that I

carry for you,

Ten karagams for you, from across the threshold,

The golden karagam decked with neem-leaves,

comes dancing down the road,

O thousand-eyed one, come forth O beautiful one,

O ten-thousand-eyed one, come forth O Parāśakti

O dweller at the edge of Tulakkāṇam[2]

Forsake the edge of Tulakkāṇam and come forth, dear mother,

O mother, Sountariyē, Saṅkariyē, reveal thyself,

Leave behind the Malayala land and come into our hamlet,

You came of age in Samayapuram and rested in Kaṇṇapuram

You rested in Virātapuram, you rested in Kaṇṇapuram,

Goddess of Samayapuram, fragrant with incense,

Leave behind Samayapuram and come forth dear mother,

O goddess of Kaṇṇapuram, O goddess beautiful,

    the primordial cause,

O Mārimuttē, protector of lands beyond the forests in

    all directions,

Protector of the pox-afflicted, O child of Parasurāman,

Leave behind your eight camps of war and come forth

dear mother, Chastity embodied,

O dweller of Periyapāḷayam Māriyārē, called the Spirit,

Leave behind Periyapāḷayam and come forth, O mighty queen,

By the river-bank at Āraṇi, Periyapāḷayam,

Leave behind the river-bank and come forth, revered mother,

O Vēdānta Mārimuttē, seated at Vīrāmpaṭṭiṇam,

O Māriyārē, dwelling at the limits of Kōḻiyennur,

You manifested to make many of the One,

O Śakti, you rested in a solitary abode, a temple of your own,

A goddess such as you none have seen the world over,

A child such as I, has there ever been, the world over?

The strings of pearls clashing with each other and the

pair of breasts streaming milk,

You grant boons to those that seek, O goddess of eternity,

O goddess of eternity, Mistress conquering all directions,

O mistress conquering all directions, clad by the directions,

    come forth,

O Śakti dwelling in the wheel of time wielded by the

    three-eyed Lord,

O mother, Sountariyē, Saṅkariyē, reveal thyself,

Māyē, Maruḷāri, O Dweller in the gem-studded hall with a

    crescent upon the forehead,

O goddess skilled in all arts, O Māriyārē of Vākkaṭṭam,

Fire-pits for sacrificial offerings in the four corners, and a

    golden stage in the middle,

Younger sister of Nārāyana seated on the golden stage

O Goddess of the cremation-ground, the ground that is Thillai,

O goddess seen in the icon famed the world over, clad in silk

and gems!

The thorn that pierces the head goes down to the chest,

The thorn that pierces from the sides stands like an abyss

The thorn that pierces the belly goes near the shoulder,

With a bunch of neem leaves as scissors,

With a bunch of neem leaves as spear held close to you,

O goddess chastity embodied, beyond measure is your skill

     to cut asunder,

Beyond measure is your skill to cut asunder with neem leaves

     the malady within,

O Mārimuttē, gracious in removing the dreadful thorns,

With the leaves of a single tree brushing off (my malady),

     a feast for the whole village,

With the leaves of two trees brushing off and the singers

     making éclat

At Paramaśivan's threshold, sacrificing a milch cow,

At Yama's threshold, sacrificing a buffalo,

Accepting the sacrificed buffalo, O goddess of eternity,

O goddess of eternity, Mistress conquering all directions,

Leave behind the prosperous land of Kāśi and come forth

     in the breeze,

Leave behind the prosperous land of Kumari,

Your devotee sings of you, O Devi, your sacred song,

An ignorant one sings, Devi, your sacred song,

I know nothing of the written word, your slave am I,

     goddess of horizons,

I know nothing of the words sung, this child - a slave of yours,

I know neither to grieve nor sing your greatness,

I know not your name too, O mother that has birthed me,

Does not the temple hear the cry of the child?

 Do not the hills hear the weeping of the son?

Does not Pārvati hear the cry of the infant?

A slave of your temple am I, a child that adores you,

Leave behind the mansion and come forth, O mother,

Leave behind the altar and come forth, O mother,

Leave behind the palace and come forth, O mother,

A slave of your temple am I, a child that adores you,

A slave of your altar am I, Saṅkariyē, O mother that has

birthed me,

In distress I call for you, yearning to see your radiant face,

Searching, I call for you, yearning to see the goddess' face,

This singer is but your child, seeking the fruit of the song,

This singer is but your infant, come forth O prosperous queen,

Is your heart made of stone that it melts not as much as

a grain?

Is your heart made of iron that does not give in as much

as a grain?

The stone shall melt, but not your heart towards me!

Iron shall melt, but not your heart towards me!

Is it the demerits of my past lives or the demerits I brought

from the days of yore?

Is it the demerits of my ancestors, tell me, O mother that

    has birthed me,

I know nothing at all, O Īśvariyē, tell me,

O goddess wielding sway from the edge of Kāṭumpāṭi,

Leave behind the edge of Kāṭumpāṭi and come forth to weild

    your sway,

O goddess that holds the river-banks in place,

O beauteous one, come forth,

Hold the river-banks in place, O beauteous one and caress me,

O goddess that dwells in the rod of the spine, O sister

    of Gopala,

Dwell in the rod of the spine and caress me,

 O mother that has birthed me,

Ten corals shall I bring to you with my song,

Countless pearls[4] shall I bring to you, to stud your rings with,

You manifested in your natural form to collect the pearls

    the world over,

You collect the pearls the world over, O Devi of Kaṇṇanūr,

Collecting the pearls, you distributed them the world over,

O Virtuous one, Mārimuttu,

Do you not hear my songs of adoration in the alter of

your temple?

Do you not hear me roaming at the altar of your palace,

Do you not hear me, great mother, in the top storey of

your palace,

Amidst the gathering of my children, amidst the gathering of

my daughters,

Amidst the gathering of my sons, amidst the gathering of

my grandchildren,

In the midst of joy, in the presence of kings,

Leave behind the altar come forth, O mother!

III

Lord of Kolli mountains, Kumarā, Preceptor celestial,

By his will preserves the divine laws of the Lord reclining on

The serpent-bed,

Maturai Vīrappanē, by his will preserves the divine laws of

the Mother,

Pāvalaṟāyanattān, by his will preserves the divine laws,

Kaṟuppaṇṇasvāmī, by his will preserves the divine laws,

Mūṅkil kaṟuppanattān, in a trice preserves the divine laws,

Muttāḷrāvuttan, worshipped by the intelligent,

O Pēcci seated in Periyapāḷayam, dear mother,

Dweller of Pālayam, o dweller in the settlements of paḷḷi towns,

Kaṇṇanūr Mārimutte, dancing to the jingling of jewels

and anklets,

You are the best refuge to those that surrender to you,

Promordial goddess supreme, dwell beside me as

my companion,

A goddess such as you none have seen the world over,

A child such as I, has there ever been, the world over?

None there is the world over, that knows not your greatness!

Do not the people of the land know of your greatness?

Do not the people of the land know of your manifestation?

Knowing of your greatness, I came forward to sing of it,

For many there are that knows not your greatness,

Bear the faults and errors (in my song)

A hundred errors by your devotees bear with,

Bear with (our faults) and may your heart gladden,

I owe you a karagam, O beautiful goddess of all cause,

Dwell beside me and protect O Child divine,

Mother Muttāyamma, step down from the front,

Mother Muttāyamma, step down from the face,

Mother Muttāyamma, by your will, step down from the throat,

Mother Muttāyamma, step down from the chest,

Mother Muttāyamma, beautiful goddess step down from

    the mouth,

Mother Muttāyamma, O mistress supreme, step down from

    the thigh,

Mother Muttāyamma, O Mīnakṣi, step down from the thigh,

Mother Muttāyamma, O Kāmākṣi, step down from the ankle,

Mother Muttāyamma, from the soles of the feet remove to

    the earth,

From the body remove, grant relief, O mother that has

    birthed me,

O mother that has birthed me, great mother, Mārimuttē

As my trusted companion, all relief grant,

Is there another trusted companion, but you on earth?

Dwell beside me and protect , granting refuge, O mother,

O golden-hued one, sister of the lotus-eyed Lord,

Eternal virgin, queen among women, come forth, O mother,

O goddess with a resplendent moon-like face, goddess

    dwelling in Kaṇṇanūr,

O Goddess of our clan, Īsvariyē, look at me,

O Goddess incomparable, O mother look at me,

If you continue thus without grace for this wretch,

Of what use my living, in turbulent sorrow?

Āyi mahāmāyi, O primordial girl of power, speak,

O goddess of Cause,

Māyi mahāmāyi maṇimantira śēkariyē

Step down, step down, O my mother, protect us,

O mother Māri, goddess powerful, O queen among women,

    come forth,

O jewel, mother divine, in the woods of Vīraṇan,

You are seated in resplendence with kings thronging your way,

Seated in resplendence, Divine Force, may you step down,

O form great pearls, mighty mother, may you step down,

O form great pearls, of infallible words, may you step down,

O (with) swellings and eruptions, on the limbs and face,

You control the unruly in this world, O Mārimuttē,

You punish the wicked and keep them under control,

You vanquish the egoistic with your might,

All kings in modesty salute you,

All kings adorned with bejwelled crowns O Manōnmaṇi,

    cerst-jewel, salute you,

Kings wielding power with crown and scepter,

Kings adorned with crowns, kneeling in supplication,

    seeking forgiveness,

Feudal lords with sanctioned power, kings of the lands al over,

You punish the wicked, wielder of trident, Kāḷiyammā,

You control the unruly and subjugate them to your rule,

O Goddess Pakavatiyē, protectress of the world, savior of

    those seeking refuge,

Each to his allotted duty. (Song 91)

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1. Throughout this song the many names of the goddess are sung addressing her.
2. neem leaves: neem leaves and all the components of the neem tree are medicinally beneficial and associated with the Goddess Māriyamma, who symbolizes the phenomenon in all its positive and negative aspects
3. A favourite dwelling-place associated with the goddess
4. The term 'pearl/s' is a euphemism for the eruptions of the pox, to remove which the goddess is invited with the song.

The song is structured in a simple manner, relying on repetition of sounds and words, making it easy for oral reproduction. The various names

of the goddess are given in the translation as they are in the original, because giving a literal translation of them would mean paraphrasing them elaborately and thus reducing the poetic quality of the song. This song is sung both in adoration and as a prayer for relief from all kinds of pox. As such each time it is sung there may be spontaneous renderings with slight alterations - as it happens in the case of all oral literature -although the song is essentially the same.

The song begins with a lengthy invocation of the elephant-faced, child-god, Piḷḷāyār who is invited to remove all obstacles and make the singing possible. The central part of the song, which is the main one also, is an invocation of the primordial energy in the form of the divine mother, who is invited to remove the afflictions of the devout, especially the affliction of pox. While the song is sung, the priest who is the chief singer, holds a bunch of neem leaves and waves it gently brushing the pox-afflicted patient who is stretched on a mat, from head to foot and as the song progresses the intensity of the affliction is believed to reduce with the illness moving down from head to foot and finally leaving the patient. The priest sings on behalf of the patient and identifies with his family. As the song progresses, the goddess is identified as the singer's /patient's own mother with the words, 'ammā pettavaḷe' which mean 'O mother that has birthed me'. Simultaneously the divine attributes of omnipresence, pervading all life and phenomenon, omnipotence that holds sway over the

horizons and omniscience such as knowing everything, of the past, present and future are attributed while she is humanized and invited into the village, then into the family. She is invoked to come riding in the breeze, forsaking all her sacred dwelling places and altars, to tend to her infant who is the singer, thus signifying her divinity and human attributes and proximity at the same time.

Following the invocation and adoration of the goddess, the next deity who is adored is Murugan, also known as Kumaran, who is traditionally the god of mountain-dwellers. His prowess forms the theme of the section devoted to his praise. This is extended to include all the cult-gods and other deities, most of them specified by their dwelling places. The last line of the song is, "Each to his allotted duty" signifying the close of the prayer for healing and the return to the rhythms of daily life, which is conceived as divinely sanctioned.

Oppāri:

Oppāri is a mournig-song sung at death and funerals. The Muduvan men do not sing these songs. There are set songs sung according to the relation of the singer to the dead. The song in this section (Song 92) is sung by a woman when her husband is dead:

> Enneviṭṭu pōkkuṇarē rāsā
>
> Enṭe rāsāvē

Kaṭṭamaramā keṭakkattaṟa

Ñānum oṯramaramā ānennē

Eṭakkāṭṭu piṇamāyiṭṭu pōkkuṇarē

Ennaṭṭu oru vāṟttūṭi pēsiyillē caṅgāṟē

Ini ñān eṯrakālatēkku oṯraykkutānē iruppān pōṇṯṟēn

Ini ātirippaṇikku anusirippaṇikku iniyenikku āḷillē eṇṭe rāsāvē

Translation:

My king leaves me,

My king,

You are lying like a fallen tree

And I am a lone tree now

Leaving me alone, he leaves for the cremation-ground

O Husband, not a word did you speak of this to me

Now, how long do I have to live alone?

Now I don't have anyone to look after or obey,

my lord! (Song 92)

It is replete with images representing the woman's loneliness and sense of loss. The image of the dead while comparing to a fallen tree is the most striking one in this song. She expresses the sense of loss by singing that there is nobody for her to take care of nor anybody whom she can obey. Further examples of this genre could not be collected by the researcher,

because the Muduvans do not sing it out of context, to please the visitor or to pass time. Like all other forms of oral poetry, this too is rigidly set in its context. However, while the other songs are readily shared with others and outsiders, such as this researcher, the death-song or *Oppāri* is not sung out of context for that would retract its sanctity according to the Muduvans.

All the kinds of songs given in this chapter are context-based, but while the love-songs given in the preceeding chapter are not singer-specific. The love-songs are attributed to the male or female lover. But the harvest-song and others are sung by one and all in the community. This chapter presented the different genres of songs that Muduvans have and the next chapter will focuss on other genres like tales, riddles and proverbs.

CHAPTER- IV

TALES, RIDDLES AND PROVERBS

The different genres of Muduvan oratures under consideration in this chapter are tales, riddles and proverbs.

1. Tales 1-5

2. Riddles1-25

3. Proverbs1-9

These forms of oratures come alive in daily-life situations prompted by specific needs. Although tales and proverbs are self-contained in meaning, their contexutalised meanings are more significant. The former are part of the Muduvan oral heritage, while the latter are the rejuvenated forms of these inheritances which give them renewed life from time to time. The first genre considered here is the tale.

There have been attempts to classify and analyse folk tales of different cultures in different ways. The first famous attempt among them is to classify and analyse tales on the basis of motifs. Alan Dundes says, "A motif is a unit of folk narrative which may be a distinctive actor (e.g., a witch), an item (e.g., a magic wand), or an incident (e.g., a deceptive tug-of-war)" ("Ways of Studying Folklore" 42). Classifying stories in terms of their motifs or motif analysis is indebted to Stith Thompson's *Motif-Index of Folk-Literature: A Classification of Narrative Elements in Folktales,*

Ballads, Myths, Fables, Medieval Romances, Exempla, Fabliaux, Jest-Books, and Local Legends which came out in 1955-1958 in an enlarged and revised form. Thompson's analysis is based on European materials and hence it cannot be applied specifically to other cultures of the world, although the general principles are suitable to the folk-tale as such. The availability of different tales in form and meaning in different cultures is an proof enough for this. Another notable effort to classify and analyse tales is done by Vladimir Propp with the help of segmentation of tales as morphemes and narratemes. The seminal work of his in this field is Morphology of Folktale (1928) focussing on the folk 'wonder-tales' of Russia. Propp says:

> The basic idea of Morphology is that the tremendous diversity of details of Russian wonder tales is reducible to one single plot, that the elements of this plot (thirty one in number) are always the same and always follow one another in the same order and, finally that only seven different characters should be taken into consideration (xii)

Propp's work is a seminal contribution to Structuralism such that it influenced other scholars like Lévi-Strauss. While Propp's contribution is on syntagmatic structural analysis, Lévi-Strauss' is on paradigmatic structural analysis. Propp considers that each tale has its own structure and is a

definite unit. Whereas Lévi-Strauss considers the relation of many tales and tries to bring the link between them. The general conclusion is that these classifications and analyses fail to incorporate all the tale- types of the world. Each culture has its own tales manifesting its culture and social realities in different forms. This is the most distinguishing feature considered by contemporary folklorists. Dorson says:

> ...the hallmark of folklore is change, and that for anything to be considered an item of folklore it must exist in more than one form. It must show itself to be a variation on a theme. If, for example, a tale has all of the characteristics of a folktale, it still cannot be called a folktale unless there is more than one text, and these texts must differ in some way from each other. Thus. for an item to be folkloristic it must show some form of continuity; it must be recognizable as itself while at the same time it must reflect the effect of imprecise— imprecise, not necessarily imperfect—transmission. (*Handbook of American folklore*, xii)

The Muduvans narrate tales mainly when they sit together in the bachelor-huts or cāvadi of a settlement. The wise old people who preserve the knowledge about their community, history and migration transfer them to younger ones. Depending upon the narrator, listener and the intention,

each narration is varied. Through the words, expressions and gestures, the narrator tries to unfold the world to the listener. The process of narrating a tale is therefore a communal activity. Apart from the listener who has actually caused the tale to be told, every other member who is present shares the experience. Thus causes communal binding in its most intense manner, because, the private experinces of the listener and the narrator is extended to include others outside of it and thus via the first listener the whole group benefits from the wisdom of the elder. A large amount of teaching and learning takes place in this manner. No tale narrated by a elder in the community is non-purposive. If it is not instructive, it functions as documentation of their history or their communal memories. The experiences of the narrator along with his creativity mould a tale. It is clear that tales keep changing in the course of time depending upon many external and internal factors.

The Muduvans have tales (*Kata* in their dialect) narrating their history and locality, tales of wisdom, trickster-tales etc. It is difficult to isolate their tales from their socio-cultural background. The Muduvans generally consider themselves as migrants from Madurai in Tamilnadu. Many tales are related to Kannaki, a chaste and divine woman whose wrath on the unjust punishment of the death of her husband Kovalan caused the burning of Madurai city and the successive migration of its people. The first tale (Tale 1) in this section narrates the exodus of Muduvans from Madurai

in Tamil Nadu plains. In the first chapter it was mentioned that many

scholars have pointed out the possible migration of Muduvans due to

various problems they might have faced with the Pandyan King who ruled

Madurai. The tale goes like this:

mutuvakkuṭiyil uṇṭāyirunnavarellām Kaṇṇaki kūṭe vannavaru.

Paṇṭaṅgu tamiḻ nāṭṭilu maturēlu iruntavaru. Kaṇṇaki kata

ennennā, mature paṇṭyarācāvu parikkumbōtu aṅke

Kaṇṇakīnnoru aḻakuppoṇṇu irunte. Ā ūrilirunta ellārum Kaṇṇaki

mēle āsappeṭṭe. Kaṇṇaki puruśan oru nāḻu Kaṇṇaki kālvaḷa

eṭuttu piye. Kaṇṇaki kālvaḷa tēṭi ā ūrellām alañju. Pāvam! Ā

samayam Kaṇṇaki puruśan kaiyile Kaṇṇaki kālvaḷa

paṇṭyarācāvoṭe ṟāṇi kaṇṭe. Ṟāṇi Kaṇṇaki puruśane konnu anta

kālvaḷa eṭuttu maturakkoṭṭāratti piye. Inta vāṟtta keṭṭu Kaṇṇaki

koṭṭārattile piye. Rācāvukkum Kaṇṇakikkum valiya śaṇṭayāyatu.

Kaṇṇaki kōpappeṭṭu maturakkoṭṭāravum maturarācyavum

ericcu aṅkēnnu piye. Kaṇṇakikku oḷikkarutukku oreṭam vēṇam.

Kaṇṇaki mutuvakkuṭiyil vante. Mutuvanukku appo inta pērille.

Matura tāṇṭi kāṭum mēṭum irukkiṟa eṭattukku pōlāmnu mutuvar

sonne. Mutuvarum kaṇṇaki kūṭe sēṟntu pōlāmnu muṭiveṭutte.

Mutuvaru ellā poruḷum kuñcikaḷum mutukileṭuttu Kaṇṇaki kūṭe

piyaṅg. Pōṟa vaḻiyile orāttōram vantatu. Āṟu peruki

oḻukīṭṭiruntatu. Yārukkum āṟu tāṇṭṟatu eppaṭīnnu puriyale. Oru

cila periyōṟkaḷ viśvāsam ennenna, Kaṇṇaki avare mutukile eṭuttu āṟe tāṇṭinnu tān. Kaṇṇaki mutukilēṟi pōṇatināle ellārum avare mutuvarnnu kūppiṭṭā. Innum celaru viśvāsam ennenna, Kaṇṇakiye mutuvaru mutukile eṭuttu āṟe tāṇṭinnu. Kaṇṇaki nanṯṟiyāle arumayā avare mutuvarnnu kūppiṭṭā. Aṅgane avaru malayāḷadēśattile kāṭṭilum mēṭṭilum etti. Kaṇṇaki pakkattile oru kunnu mēle ēṟi aṅke taṅkināṟ. Mutuvaru ā kunne sutti pakkattu kunnukaḷḷe taṅkināṟ. Kaṇṇaki taṅkina kunnile orōṭe iruntatu. Kaṇṇaki saktiyāle ōṭe āṇṭupūrā oḷukīṭṭiruntatu. Mutuvaṟu kaṇṇakiye oru dēviyā pākka ārambiccāṅke. Ellā āūṭum anta tīṟttamala ēṟi kaṇṇakiye kumbiṭṭāṅke. Ippōtum mutuvaṟ anta ōṭayile taṇṇi tīṟttam pākkiṟaṅke. Ippōtum mutuvaṟ anta malayēṟi kaṇṇakiye kumbiṭaṟṅke.

Translation:

Everybody who was in this Muduva settlement came from Madurai in Tamil Nadu long ago along with Kannaki. The story of Kannaki goes as follows. When Madurai was ruled over by Pandya kings, there lived a beautiful girl called Kannaki. Everyman in that place desired her. One day her husband left home with her anklet. Wandering in Madurai she searched for it everywhere. Poor girl! Meanwhile the Pandya king's queen spotted the anklet in Kannaki's husband's possession. The

queen killed him and took the anklet with her to Madurai palace. Coming to know of this, Kannaki went to the palace. She fought with the king. In her anger, Kannaki burnt the palace and the city of Madurai into ashes and left. Kannaki wanted a hiding place. She came to the Muduvans. The Muduvans were not called so then. The Muduvans suggested that she could go to the hills and woods beyond Madurai. The Muduvans also decided to follow Kannaki. They took all their belongings and children on their back and left with her. On the way they reached a river bank. The river was overflowing. They did not know how to cross the river. Some elders believe that Kannaki took them on her back (muthuku) and crossed the river. Since they rode on her back, they came to be called Muduvans. Some others believe that the Muduvans took Kannaki on their backs and crossed the river. Kannaki was grateful and lovingly called them Muduvans. Then they reached the woods and hills in Malayaladesam. Kannaki climbed over a nearby hill and resided there. Muduvans occupied the hills surrounding it. There was a spring on the top of the hill where Kannaki resided. Because of Kannaki's power, the spring kept on flowing throughout the year. Muduvans started looking up to Kannaki as their goddess. Every year afterwards, the

Muduvans went up the hill with the spring, which came to be

called Tīrtamala (Water-Hill), to worship Kannaki. Muduvans

still draw the water from that spring. Even now they climb up

the hill to worship Kannaki. (Tale 1)

This particular tale unfolds various facts and beliefs that are prevalent in

Muduvan culture and helps to substantiate some arguments put forth in

the first chapter and discusses below. The version of the story that the

Muduvans narrate in this tale is their own. After her meeting with the

Pandyan king, Kannaki burnt the palace and the city and left the place with

a large following. It is held that the Muduvans directed Kannaki to a safer

place which is supposed to be the present locality where they live,

especially in and around Tīrtamala, where Kannaki resides even now as per

Muduvans' belief. They worship her as their goddess in ana annual festival.

The tale also narrates how they possibly got the name Muduvan. The tale

gives two possibilities for getting the name: one is because of the belief

that they carried Kannaki on their *muthuku* (back) while crossing a river or

that Kannaki carried them on her back; the second is derived with more

convincing etymological strength: the term 'Muduva' means ancient and is

therefore seen as an appropriate signifier of one of the most ancient tribes

of India.

There are many versions of stories available that narrate the migration of the Muduvan tribes from western Tamil Nadu towards the Western Ghats. Scholars have noted different views regarding the migration of Muduvans. Thomas states that "Muthuvans connect the cause of their flight from Madurai with the story of Kovalan and Kannaki in the great Tamil epic of *Silappadikaram*, which dates from about the second century A.D" (53). The authorship of the story and Epic *Silappadikaram* is "ascribed to Ilango Adigal, the younger brother of the Chera Emperor, Senguttuvan, who lived in the second century A.D" (Thomas 57). The last part of the story narrated in *Silappadikaram* noted by Thomas but different from what is mentioned above goes like this:

> According to the story, Kovalan, a young merchant prince of Kaveripattinam or Puhar (in modern Tanjore district) lost all his wealth by consorting with a courtesan named Madhavi. After several years he repented and returned to his loyal wife Kannaki. Being impoverished, Kovalan decided to go to the city of Madura to make a fresh start to his life. Kannaki followed him. When they reached the outskirts of the city, a shepherdess offered them hospitality in her house. Next day Kovalan proceeded into the city, capital of renowned Pandyan King Nedunjeliyan, with one of the anklets of Kannaki with the intention of selling it to raise money. In the market place he

saw the palace goldsmith and asked him if he could estimate the price of a rare anklet suitable for the Queen. Only a few days ago the goldsmith had stolen one of the anklets of Kopperundevi, the Queen of Nedunjeliyan. The King accused the goldsmith of the theft, but gave him a week's time to prove his innocence by producing the thief and the jewel. When Kovalan showed Kannaki's anklet to the goldsmith, the latter thought this was an excellent opportunity to save himself by putting blame on Kovalan. He detained Kovalan in his house saying that he would get a good offer for the anklet from the King himself. He forthwith went to the King and reported that he found the jewel and the thief. Later in the day, the King's officers executed Kovalan on the charge of stealing the Queen's anklet.

Hearing of Kovalan's execution, Kannaki took the remaining anklet and went to the palace raving that for this unjust execution the city will be consumed by flames. The palace guard reported to the King, "Sir, a terrible lady resembling some fierce Goddess is waiting at the gate. She is as self-confident as Korravai, the Goddess of Victory, and as terrible as Kali. She has with her a priceless anklet, and her face is stained with tears". Kannaki was then conducted to the

King's presence. After revealing the identity, she proved the innocence of her husband by dashing the anklet on the floor. Her anklet contained the purest rubies whereas the Queen's anklet had pearls inside.

At that very instant, the Royal Umbrella fell down and the King's Rod of Justice became crooked. The King exclaimed in agony that he is unfit to be a ruler. Praying, "May this sin end with me and not affect the royal lineage", he fell down and died. Seeing this the Queen also fell dead by his side.

Kannaki, mad with grief at the loss of her husband and determined on terrible retribution, twisted off her left breast and hurled it over the city crying, "If chastity can produce fire, then let this city of the unjust King be burnt to ashes. May all be burnt except the righteous ones and Brahmins, cows, chaste women, old people and children". At once Agni, the God of Fire, appeared before Kannaki in the form of a Brahmin, blue in hue, with a red tuft and milk-white teeth, and said, "I shall carry out your orders". He then opened his mouth and the city was enveloped in flames.

Kannaki said to herself, "I shall not rest till I join my lord". She went to the temple of Korravai, the Goddess of

Victory, and broke her golden bangles in token of her widowhood. Then she left Madura by the western gate, exclaiming, "My husband and I entered this city together by the eastern gate; alas, I am going out alone, by the western gate". She walked along the flooded banks of the Vaigai River like one possessed, reckless of all dangers. Finally she reached the hill sacred to Neduvel and rested in a grove. Some hill folk went to her and struck by her beauty and dignity asked, "Are you the divine Valli, the consort of Vela?" "No", she said, "I am the unfortunate one who lost her husband by the unjust act of the Great Pandyan, and set Madura in flames in my anger. I am waiting to be taken to heaven by my husband". When fourteen days had passed, Indra, the lord of Heaven, came down to the hill with Kovalan, in a celestial chariot, and took Kannaki to heaven. The King and people of the country acclaimed her as the Goddess of chastity and built a temple in her honour.

(53-57)

In view of this Thomas says, "It is impossible to say whether the story is wholly a work of imagination, or there is some element of contemporary or past history in it." But most "Muthuvans believe that they fled from Madurai when Kannaki caused the burning of the city to avenge the unjust execution of her husband by the Pandyan King" (57).

The second tale (Tale 2) of the section can be considered as a continuation of the first one. The tale goes like this:

Paṇṭu mutuvar kaṇṇakiyōṭu sēṟntu maturēnnu varumbōtu malayēṟi kuṭi veccāṅke. Kaṇṇaki tīṟttamalayile kuṭiyiruntā.Mutuvaru sutti pakkattu kunnukaḷle taṅkināṟ. Paḻam, vēru, tēnu itellām kāṭṭiliruntu sāppiṭṭōm. Koñca nāḷile mutuvaru kṟiṣikkāke maram veṭṭa ārambiccatu. Avaru nellum tenayum vetaccāṅke. Atukkappuravum oru praccane. Kāṭṭumiṟukaṅgal vannu vayale naśippiccu pīyatu. Valiya pṟeccana ennennā, kāṭṭupanni. Ēṟumāṭam keṭṭi kāval iruntāṅge. Ānā kāṭṭupanni kūṭṭamā vantu viḷa naśippiccatu. Avarukku enna paṇṇaṇamnu teriyele. Atināle mutuvaru tīṟttamala ēṟi kaṇṇakīṭṭe pṟeccane connāṅge. Kaṇṇaki daivaṅkalōṭu kāṭṭupanniye ōṭṭasonnā. Daivaṅke kāṭṭupanniyoṭu yuttam seyya ārambiccāṅge. Inta nēram pañcapāṇṭavaum kṟṣṇanum aṅke vannu taṅkīṭṭiruntā. Daivaṅkaḷum kāṭṭupanniyum yuttam seyyaṟatu pākka kṟṣṇan oru mala mēle ēṟinā. Kayyile koṭa piṭittu aṅke oru pāṟamēl iruntā. Anta mala tīṟttamala etirile iruntatu. Atukkappuṟam kṟṣṇan koṭa piṭittu irunta mala koṭamalayennu kēlvippeṭṭatu.

Translation:

Long ago, when Muduvans came here from Madurai with Kannaki, they settled in the hills. Kannaki resided in the Tīrtamala. Muduvans resided in the surrounding hills. We ate the fruits, roots and honey from the forests. Gradually Muduvans started cutting trees for agriculture. They cultivated paddy and millet. Then again there came a problem. Wild animals came and ruined their grain. The main trouble was from the wild-boar. They made tree huts and kept vigil. But wild-boars came in herds and kept on ruining the grain. They did not know what to do. So the Muduvans climbed Tīrtamala and reported their problems to Kannaki. Kannaki asked the gods to drive away the wild boars. The gods battled the wild-boar. Meanwhile the five Pandavas along with Krishna came there and stayed in the woods. To watch the battle between the gods and the wild-boar, Krishna climbed atop a hill. He sat there on a rock with an umbrella in hand. The hill was the one facing Tīrtamala. After this incident, the hill where Krishna sat with an umbrella came to be called as kuṭamala (kuṭa is an umbrella and mala is a hill). (Tale 2)

Here too the tale begins a reference to the exodus from Madurai and the subsequent settlement in and around the Tīrtamala hill. The Muduvan tribes started collecting fruits, roots and honey from forest for daily

consumption, but gradually started to practice agriculture by cutting / burning the forests in the mountains for short-term crops. This substantiates the argument put forth by scholars, as given in the first chapter, that the Muduvans are shifting cultivators. The tale here narrates further the problems they faced from wild animals, especially wild-boars. When they seek help from Kannaki, the gods came on her request and vanquished the wild-boars. The Muduvans believe that it was then that Lord Krishna sat on a *mala* (hill) with *kuda* (umbrella) in hand. The hill is now known as Kudamala or 'Umbrella-hill'.

The above two stories (Tale 1 and 2) of this section show the association they have with their beliefs, both past and present and with their locale. Folk tales such as these help the younger generation to learn / inherit their culture and tradition and the significance of their religious practices like the one mentioned in the first story in which they climb the hill, Tiṟtamala, every year to offer special prayers where Kannaki resides. Tales such as these reinforce communal identity and help them to keep alive their communal beliefs which distinguish them from other tribes.

The second story is more of a local belief but what makes it different from other stories is because of the association it has with the Hindu Mythology. There are many folk tales in India which are related to incidents and characters drawn from epic texts like *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana*. In

this particular story the reference is to Lord Krishna sitting on the top of a hill with an umbrella. It is interesting to note that local places and areas get names with regards to the beliefs associated with them as it happened in the tale in which the particular hill got the name Kudamala.

The Muduvans of Susanikudi settlement which is situated at the ridge of Kudamala say that the settlement Susanikudi was not known so earlier but was known as Bhūtha Mānga Kudi because of the belief that there was a bhūtham or demon that lived on top of a mango tree. This belief is purely a local one but the mythological belief that they associate with the area of Marayoor is an interesting one. As per the belief Pandavas came there to hide at the time of Mahabharata war and hence the name Maraiūr ('marai' means that which is hiden or simply to hide and 'ūr' means place). It can be assumed that local beliefs in the course of time change into full-fledged stories and the two stories of the section might have developed thus. It is also possible to say that although such stories manifest local beliefs and practices but none can prove the validity of the origin of such beliefs and stories.

There is one tale (Tale 3) about the wisdom that the Muduvans have regarding the hardships of life. It goes like this:

Paṇṭu oru rājāvu uṇṭāyirunnu. Mariccupōkaṟatukku munnāṭi avaru rājakumārane kūppiṭṭā. Rājāvu rājkumāranukku oru

suruṭṭiya ōla koṭuttā. Atile enna eḻutiyirukkennu yārukkum teriyele. Etāccu periya pṟeccana varumbōtu maṭṭum ate toṟakka sonnā. Rājāvu mariccappo rājakumāran putu rājāvākinā. Avaru pala vaṟṣam nāṭu bariccā. Oru nāḷu pakkattu nāṭṭu rājāvu yuttattinu vantā. Rājāvu yuttam tōttupīyā. Aramanayum nāṭum viṭṭu kāṭṭukku pōkavēṇṭi vantatu. Rājāvu oru mala mēle ēṟinā. aṅkēnnu kuticcu marikka nenaccā. Kayyile oru vāḷum appā koṭutta ōlayum iruntatu. Sākaṟatukku munnāṭi ōlaye toṟantu atile eḻutiyirikkatu ennennu paṭikka nenaccā. Ate toṟantā mūṇṭṟu vākku maṭṭum pāttatu; inta nelayum māṟum. Ateppatti rājāvu yōsiccā. Yōsiccatennennā, "nānippo enna paṇṇaṇum? Ippo etu māṟum?" Yōsiccukkiṭṭirikkumbōtu koṟaccu mutuvanmāru anta vaḻi vantā. Avaru rājāvukkiṭṭe ennāccennu kēṭṭā. Kata kēṭṭu mutuvanmāru rājāvukku sagāyam ceyya muṭiveṭuttā. Nāṭṭe tiriccu piṭikkatukku vēṟē rājākkaḷōṭu kūṭṭu kūṭa sonnā. Avaru paṭaykku āḷe kūṭa koṭuttā. Rājvvu mutuvanmāru sonnapaṭi señcu nāṭṭē tiriccupiṭiccā. Aramanayile tiruppi varumpōtu rājāvu anta ōlaye toṟantu pāttā. Anta vāṟtti poruḷu avaṟkkippō teriyum; inta nelayum māṟum.

Translation:

Once upon a time, there was a king. When he was about to die, he called the prince. The king gave him a rolled palm-leaf.

Nobody knew what was written in it. The king told the prince to open it only when he faced serious trouble. The king died and the prince became the new king. He ruled his country for many years. One day, a neighbouring king attacked the country. This king lost the battle. He had to leave the palace, his his country and had to escape to the forest. The king climbed a hill. He thought of killing himself by throwing himself off the cliff. He had with him his sword and the palm-leaf scroll that his father gave him. Before dying, he decided to open the palm-leaf scroll and see what was written inside. He opened it and saw just three words; 'intha nilayum māarum' ('This too shall pass'). The king thought about the words. He thought: "What must I do now? What will change?" While he was thinking thus, some Muduvans came that way. They asked the king what had happened. Hearing the king's story, the Muduvans decided to help him. They told him that he could make alliance with other kings and regain his kingdom. They even offered men for an army. The king did as the Muduvans counseled and regained his kingdom. When he reached back his palace, he opened the palm-leaf scroll again. Now he knew the meaning of the words 'This too shall pass.'

It is said in the tale that all the hardships of life go away in the course of time. The tale is about the problem that a king faces in life while he has to flee from his country owing to his failure in a battle. When he decides to die he opens the palm-life scroll given to him by his father in which it is written that 'intha nilayum mārum' ('This too shall pass'). Later he overcomes the defeat and cherishes the meaning of the three words.

Trickster tales are part of folktales in almost all cultures. Among the animal tales the tricks of a fox are most common. Propp says, "Animal tales are almost entirely about tricks that clever animals, especially the fox, play on other animals" (28). The tale (Tale 4) in the section tells about the tricks of a fox and its successive defeat. Here the fox play trick to have dry fish from a man who is ploughing in the field. The fox acts as if it is more intelligent but the man foresees the fox's possible trick and decides it teach a lesson. The fox falls into man's trap and later realizing it's foolishness runs away from the spot. This is the particular tale:

> Vayal oruttan oḻakīṭṭēnē. Oru kuḷḷān atu vaḻi vantatu. Kuḷḷān avanāṭṭu tī, "Ventanakku vayalu uḻutatō?" Avan tirippetāne pēśītenṟān, "karuvāṭu nāṭuvān". Kuḷḷān enna pēśīntān, "valitteventu māṭṭine kēsiviṭṭinē, enne keṭṭu". Avan valatte māṭṭine kēsiviṭṭu kuḷḷāne keṭṭi. Avan kuḷḷāne ranṭu aṭiccenne. Kuḷḷān ninaccatentān, mīnine vayalile kiṭaṇatakku mītu vayalu

uḻutēnu. Kuḷḷān tōṇṭi tōṇṭi pāttālum mīnine kāṇala. Avan pinneyum pinneyum kuḷḷāne aṭiccēn. Kuḷḷān masaṅgi vīṇu oru mūlayilu kaṭa vacceṇān. Kuḷḷān pēśi viṭṭān, "enne kēsiviṭu, enne kēsiviṭu". Avan kuḷḷāne kēsiviṭṭinēn. Kuḷḷān kiṭa kiṭa ōṭine.

Translation:

A man was ploughing the field. A fox came that way. The fox asked him, "Why are you ploughing the field?" He answered, "To sow dried fish". And the fox said, "Untie the ox on the right side and tie me instead". He untied the ox on the right side and tied the fox.. Then he whipped the fox a few times to drive it. The fox thought he would get dried fish when he ploughed the field. Even when the fox dug and searched again and again, he did not find any fish. The man beat the fox again and again. The fox fainted and sat in a corner. The fox said, "Untie me, untie me". He untied the fox. The fox ran away for his life.

(Tale 4)

There is another tale (Tale 5) in the section also has animals as its principal characters that assist a man preparing to kill a demon. The demon one day swallowed the man's cows while he was away. When he came back he came learns of this and decides to kill the demon. In his venture a crab, a jackfruit-seed, a scorpion and a bee-hive help him. The

conversation that he makes with these animals and things are very

interesting. He converses with them as if he were talking to human beings.

The tale goes like this:

> Oru cōlayilu oru kuṭi uṇṭāṟnatu. Atinilē oru pūtam payankara
>
> śalyam. Āṭu, māṭu, kōḻi ellattine tinnanne. Avane kollān
>
> pōṇavane tinnanne. Kuṭiyilu oruttanu raṇṭu māṭuṇṭārnatu.
>
> Māṭṭine veccu tā avan eri vāṅgita, kai kaṟi ellā vāṅgita.
>
> Ennāccana oru nāḷu pūtam vannu māṭṭine tinne. Avan vannu
>
> pāttappo avaṇṭe māṭṭine pūtam muḻuṅgitinnine. Avan oṭaye oru
>
> kattiyeṭuttu pūtatte veṭṭuvān pōkkaṇāru.

> Pūtatte veṭṭuvān pōkkaṇēṭattu, ōṭakku oru ñaṇṭu
>
> pēśiyatu, "eviṭēkku pōṇṯrānṯru?" Appo avan pēśiyatu, "enṭe
>
> māṭṭine oru pūtam tinnanne, avane veṭṭuvān ponṯre". Appo
>
> ñaṇṭu pēśiyān, "ñjanum venṯrēnṯru". "Nī varāte" ennu avan
>
> pēśinēn. "Illa, ñanum venṯrēnṯru" ennu ñaṇṭu pēśiyān". "Śari
>
> nīyum vā" ennu avan.

> Pinne pīkkoṇṭirunnappo, pilākkāmarattil pilāmaṇi
>
> pēśiyān, "nī eviṭēkku pōṇṯrānṯru?" Appo avan pēśiyatu, "enṭe
>
> māṭṭine oru pūtam tinnanne, avane veṭṭuvān ponṯre". Appo
>
> pilāmaṇi pēśiyān, "ñjanum venṯrēnṯru". "Nī varāte" ennu avan

pēśinēn. "Illa, ñjanum ventṟēntṟu" ennu pilāmaṇi pēśiyān".

"Śari nīyum vā" ennu avan.

Pinne pīkkoṇṭirunnappo, oru tēḷ pēśiyatu, "eviṭēkku pōṇṭṟāntṟu?" Appo avan pēśiyatu, "enṭe māṭṭine oru pūtam tinnanne, avane veṭṭuvān ponṟe". Appo tēḷ pēśiyān, "ñjanum ventṟēntṟu". "Nī varāte" ennu avan pēśinēn. "Illa, ñjanum ventṟēntṟu" ennu tēḷ pēśiyān". "Śari nīyum vā" ennu avan.

Pinne pīkkoṇṭirunnappo, oru tēnīccikkuṭi pēśiyān, "nī eviṭēkku pōṇṭṟāntṟu?" Appo avan pēśiyatu, "enṭe māṭṭine oru pūtam tinnanne, avane veṭṭuvān ponṟe". Appo tēnīccikkuṭi pēśiyān, "ñjanum ventṟēntṟu". "Nī varāte" ennu avan pēśinēn. "Illa, ñjanum ventṟēntṟu" ennu tēnīccikkuṭi pēśiyān". "Śari nīyum vā" ennu avan.

Avaṟ ellām pūtattinṭe vīṭṭukku ettiyiṭṭēn. Avan pūtattinṭe vīṭṭukku mīte ēṟiyittu takininnu. Appo pūtam uḷḷakku kiṭannu oṟaṅgatte. Ñjaṇṭu naṭannu taṇṇiccembilu keṭaveccinē. Pilāmaṇi uruṇṭu tīppeṭi uḷḷe keṭaveccinē. Tēnī tūṇīlu tekaṇane. Tēḷu patiye ullakku kaṭantu pūtam kālilu kaṭicciṭṭā. Appo pūtam eḻuntu ārennu pāttā. Appo tēnī ellām sērntu pūtatte kuttiyatu. Pūtam oṭaye tēnīye toratte tīyeṭukke tīppeṭikku pīyattē. Appo tīppeṭikku uḷḷērunnu pilāmaṇi veṭiccatu. Kaṇṇu pākka muṭiyāme

pūtam taṇṇi eṭukka piyyattē. Taṇṇiccembiliruntu ñjaṇṭu pūtatte kaṭiccatu. Pūtam ōṭi vīṭṭukku veḷiye vantatte. Appo vīṭṭukkumīte irunta āḷu pūtatte kattiyāle veṭṭikkonnatte.

Translation:

On the bank of a stream, there was a settlement. A demon troubled that settlement to no end. He devoured the goat, cattle, hens and all. He ate whoever went to kill him too. In that settlement, there was a a man who had two cows. With those cows he made his living and bought rice and vegetables. The demon came and ate the cows one day. When the man came and looked for the cows, the demon had already swallowed the cows. He promptly took a knife and went to kill the demon.

While he was going to kill the demon, a crab from a stream asked him where he was going. He said then, "A demon ate my cows; I am going to kill him". Then the crab said, "I will come too". "It is better that you don't", said the man. "No, I'm also coming along", said the crab. "Right, then come along", said the man.

While he continued, on the way, a jackfruit-seed from a jackfruit tree asked him where he was going. He said then, "A

demon ate my cows; I am going to kill him". Then the jackfruit seed said, "I will come too". "It is better that you don't", said the man. "No, I'm also coming along", said the jackfruit seed. "Right, then come along", said the man.

While he continued to go , on the way, a scorpion asked him where he was going. He said then, "A demon ate my cows; I am going to kill him". Then the scorpion said, "I will come too". ". "It is better that you don't", said the man. "No, I'm also coming along", said the scorpion. "Right, then come along", said the man.

While he continued to go, on the way, a beehive asked him where he was going. He said then, "A demon ate my cows; I am going to kill him". Then the beehive said, "I will come too". "It is better that you don't", said the man. "No, I'm also coming along", said the beehive. "Right, then come along", said the man.

They all reached the demon's house. The man climbed on top of the house and stayed there. The demon was sleeping inside. The crab went in and lay inside the water pot. The jackfruit-seed rolled in and lay inside the hearth. The hive of bees hung onto the pillar. The scorpion went inside and stung

the demon on his leg. The demon got up and looked. Then the

hive of bees stung the demon. The demon went to the hearth

to scare away the bees with the fire. Then the jackfruit-seed

blasted from inside the hearth. The demon ran for water since

he could not see anything. From the water pot the crab bit the

demon. He ran outside the house. The man who was sitting

over the house took the knife and killed the demon. (Tale 5)

The narration of such stories involve lots of gestures and other external

tricks like creating sounds to have a marked effect upon the audience,

especially if children are also present. Here the narration creates a world of

fantasy in the mind of children and what is important is the final action.

The world of the tale animates all life in one holistic union, such that the

joys and sorrows of one are also those of another.

In any folktale the action is significant. In the above tales it is not

mentioned when or whether these incidents actually happened or whether

at all they could indeed happen. The event and its meaning are of primary

importance, and plausibility coupled with a willing suspension of disbelief

make them virtually come alive.

Riddles:

In any culture riddle is a puzzle put forward by the performer in various contexts, intended to be solved by the audience. It is usually presented metaphorically or allegorically to demonstrate the cognitive skills rooted in a particular culture and language. Riddle enhances the thought process of both the performer and the listener so as to draw multiple facts and successfully deliver the right answers implied by the riddles. A minimum of two persons are involved in riddling to reveal or share the hidden or experienced knowledge in various ways. One ancient and much quoted example of riddling is seen in the story of Oedipus in which the Sphinx killed itself when Oedipus had given the right answer for the riddle.

Aristotle defined the riddle in metaphorical terms. In The Rhetoric, Bk. III, Ch. 2, he says, "Good riddles do, in general, provide us with satisfactory metaphors: for metaphors imply riddles, and therefore a good riddle can furnish a good metaphor" (123). The earlier association of riddle with metaphor is clear in the definition of Gaston Paris quoted by Robert A. Georges and Alan Dundes in the article "Toward a Structural Definition of the Riddle" as "a metaphor or a group of metaphors, the employment of which has not passed into common use, and the explanation of which is not self-evident" (111). Later Archer Taylor proposed the following definition: "The true riddle or the riddle in the strict sense compares an

object to another entirely different object." ("The Riddle" 129) His definition is based on two descriptive elements; one positive and one negative, the first corresponds to metaphorical and the latter to literal. John Frow states that "Archer Taylor's exhaustive English Riddles from Oral Tradition, groups the content of riddles as: living creatures, animals, persons, plants, things, and the form, function, colour or acts of these entities" (36). Robert A. Georges and Alan Dundes say that Taylor's definition is narrowed and limited due to the fact that it can not be applied to many of the texts in his English Riddles from Oral Tradition and that "there is a large number of examples which do not appear to be true riddles in terms of his own definition" (112). Further they give a structural definition of riddle "A riddle is a traditional verbal expression which contains one or more descriptive elements, a pair of which may be in opposition; the referent of the elements is to be guessed" (113). Before this definition Robert Petsch provided a structural analysis of the riddles in 1899. "He sees five basic elements in the riddle form: an introductory frame, a denominative kernel, a descriptive kernel, a block or distractor element, and a concluding frame" (Green 3). Each definition poses a problem or the other in different cultures and so one can note that there is no universally accepted or standardized definition for riddles or methods to classify them. Hence, during the analysis of Quechua riddles Isbell and Fernandez presents three levels of complexity to classify those riddles.

There are riddles based upon rhythm and rhyme, simple riddles containing a simile or a simple comparison and there are also complex riddles containing multiple comparisons (20).

Muduvan orature is rich with riddles (they call riddles as *Viti)* that refer to the relationship between the individual /community and the natural phenomenon, things of daily use, human body, places of cultural importance etc. Thus, riddles 1- 12 bear a referential relationship with natural phenomena and things like rain, shadow, banana, corn, pumpkin etc. Referential relationship with animals like frog and fish is seen in the riddles 13-14. Riddles 15-20 have referential relationship with things of daily use like money, hearthstone, matchbox, calendar, umbrella etc. Body parts are the referential points in the riddles 21-24. A place of cultural importance is the referential point in riddle 25, in which the biggest hill of the region, Tīr̲thamala, is mentioned.

Isbell and Fernandez in analyzing Quechua riddles group them as follows. This categorization based on sounds, simplicity of details or their complexity, define the chief categories of Muduvan riddles also. Hence a reference to Isbell and Fernandez's grouping and not because the Muduvan riddles are grouped thus by the researcher.

1. Riddles based on figures of sound.

The sound patterns, more specifically the rhythm of the riddles, are the primary concern and metaphoric images are made clear to the listener by the specific use of sounds via repetition and stress. One such riddle (24) in the section goes like this:

Aḷayil aḷakaḷakata, entā? - Nākku

What is beautiful inside a cave? – Tongue (Riddle 24)

The rhythm in the word *aḷakaḷakata* (beautiful), uttered with mouth wide open helps the listener to solve the puzzle with the answer 'tongue'. The sound pattern created with the twisting of the tongue refers directly to the answer. The performer usually repeats the riddle till the listener gets the idea of what the performer intends. The research scholar had the experience of this type of repetition and could answer it properly by looking at the tongue movements along with the hand and facial gestures. In another riddle (3) the image of shadow is created with the stress in the beginning of the words:

Veṭṭiyālum veṭṭuvaṭāte, vīravāṇṭi kallu, avanēte – Neyalu

Who does not split if you cut him, who is this (hero)?

Answer: - Shadow (Riddle 3)

In the above riddles the rhythm is evident in the riddle but not in answers but in another riddle (25) the answer too is in rhythmic way in which the

word *mala* (hill) is given stress. In this culture-specific riddle it is asked which hill is the biggest of all hills and the answer is Tīṟtamala:

> Malayile valiyamala - Tīṟtamala
>
> Among hills, the greatest; Answer – Tīṟtamala (Riddle 25)

In another riddle (1) the sound of rain is indirectly referred to by comparing its sound with the sound made while one bites a green- pepper:

> Āna atiru varum, eri muḷaku sīnti varum, entā? - Maḻa
>
> Thundering like elephants, what comes along with the
>
> green-pepper? Answer: – Rain! (Riddle 1)

2. Simple riddles.

Riddles that contain only one metaphoric image or comparison are grouped under this section. Most of the riddles available in Muduvan community come under this section, which are usually directed to /performed for the children so that they answer easily. In riddle (5) the image of roasted corn that pops up and about the pan on the fire is created in a very simple manner with the association of a person who jumps and laughs:

> Kuti kuticce, palliḷicāl, avantān - Sōḷaku peri
>
> He jumps around and grins, who is he?
>
> Answer: – Roasted-corn (Riddle 5)

In another riddle (9) the image of jackfruit is created by comparing it to a fat mother having many pearls as kids:

> Amma soraci kuñcīlu muttumaṇikaḷ - Pilāpayam
>
> Fat mother, pearls for kids – Jackfruit (Riddle 9)

In simple riddles the referential relationships are usually to things which are available to them in the surrounding whether they are animals or plants or fruits or things of daily use.

3. Complex riddles.

Complex riddles deal mainly with more than one metaphorical image and contains multiple referential associations to reach the answer. Muduvans do not have many complex riddles. In one complex riddle (4), an image of corn is created with three references:

> Kāṭṭilenenṭe poṭavakaṭṭi nikkatu, vīṭṭukku vante poṭavēne kēmpiyiṭute, tīppaṭakki kūṭṭikinu irikkatu, avantān - Sōḷakam
>
> In forest he was clothed, at home he lost his robe, and looks like a torch, who is he? Answer: – Corn (Riddle 4)

The corn is described as wearing a dress in forest but shorn of it home and is compared to a torch. The multiple images of this riddle force the listener to think for a while and then draw at various available and experienced aspects to derive the right answer. Other riddles of this section are:

2. Mañjapakki neñcane kīri, makārājan pūjakku pōntatā -

Vāḻapaḻam

Ripping open the chest of an yellow bird, what is offered to the

lord in worship? Answer- Banana!

6. Āyiram enumālukku orē vālu – Vāḻakola

One tail for a thousand monkeys

Answer- A stem of banana bunches

In this riddle the word 'enumān', a warped version of Hanumān, the

monkey-god, is used instead of the word monkey.

7. Sevattu peyilu cillaṟa paisa - Muḷaku

Coins in a red bag

Answer – (Ripe) Chilli

8. Ninṭe kūṭe vantatetān- Neyalu

Who is the one who always comes with you?

Answer – Shadow

10.Pittikku pākānṭi kuñci iṭṭupōntatu - Mattaṅga

It delivers babies and doesn't even look back – Pumpkin

11.Ālemāke kuḻīṭuttu, atiloru moṭṭayiṭṭu, eṭṭippāttappe,

toṇṇūru moṭṭa- teṅgu

Dug a hole and laid an egg, reached up and saw ninety eggs

Answer– Coconut tree

12. Pūmikkuḷḷilu taṅkakkaṭṭi - Mañjaḷ

Nuggets of gold inside earth

Answer – Turmeric

13. Taṅtakkum tāyakkum vālilla, avaṅka petteṭutta kuñcilakku

vāluṇṭu – Tavaḷa

Parents had no tail, but their kid has.

Answer – Frog

14. Orammakku eṇṇamattāta kuñcikaḷ - Mīn

Countless kids for one mother – Fish!

15. Vantān piyāṅgu ētēn – Paṇam

He comes and goes.

Answer – Money

16. Mūnnu muttimāṟ suttu pēśattān - Eṭuppukallu

Three grannies talk in a circle.

Answer – Hearthstone

17. Orammēne neñjil kutti kuñjīlu sattupōṇṭralām, avantān -

Tīppeṭṭi

All the sons die stabbing on their mother's chest. He is –

Matchbox!

18. Cinna koṇṭakkāri, ūrile śaṇṭakkāri - Tīppeṭṭi

A woman with a small top-knot, but a trouble-make in town

Answer – Matchstick(s)!

19. Oru nāḷukku orila eṟaṅgute, avantān - Kalaṇṭaṟ

On each day a leaf is shed. He is falls

Answer – Calendar!

20. Kalil piṭicāl muṭṭilēṟutu – Koṭa

If you hold his leg, he will climb your head – Umbrella!

21. Oru vaṭṭappāṟayilu añcu viṟakukeṭṭu, avantān – Veralu

Five logs of firewood on a round rock . He is

Answer – Palm

22. Aṇṇanukku eṭṭipiṭuppān ettilla, tampikku eṭṭipiṭikkatē, avantān

– Vāy

The elder brother can't move, but the younger one can. He is

Answer – Mouth!

23. Mūkkukku maccam – Mīśa

A mole for nose

Answer – Moustache!

Riddling as a performance helps both the performer and the listener to engage in combining various experiences and wisdom so as to communicate effectively in a community. Sensory perception and cognitive skills of individuals play a vital role in riddling. Riddles bring new ideas and thinking in the minds which helps to create new riddles by associating with other facts and things.

Proverbs:

According to Archer Taylor "a proverb is wise; it belongs to many people; it is ingenious in form and idea; and it was first invented by an individual and applied by him to a particular situation" ("The Wisdom of Many" 3). Regarding the literal relevance of proverbs, Ruth Finnegan is of the opinion that "proverbs are a rich source of imagery and succinct expression on which more elaborate forms can be drawn" ("Proverbs in Africa" 11). Any proverb has its relevance in specific situations and contexts. In order to understand the meaning of any proverb one should know the situation in which each proverb is used. Regarding the contexts of proverbs and the functions they fulfil Finnegan says:

> There are two themes that one encounters particularly in any
> discussion of the uses and contexts of proverbs. First, there is
> the sense of detachment and generalization inherent in
> proverbs. The speaker stands back, as it were, from the heat of
> the actual situation and draws attention, for himself or others,
> to its wider implications. And secondly, there is the oblique and
> allusive nature of expression through proverbs which makes it
> possible to use them in a variety of effective ways. ("Proverbs
> in Africa" 27)

Proverbs have their significance in any community to effectively speak of experiences and wisdom that each individual possesses and hence they form the main part of oratures. Proverbs are used in various life situations to speak about general facts, life and morals and to advice others in a short way. Proverbs are usually loaded with many ideas that the hearer and the performer are well aware of in a particular culture. The functional role of proverbs alone is not enough to define proverbs according to Allan Dundes. For him functional definitions of proverbs are inadequate and hence proverbs can be defined in structural terms. Regarding the structure of the proverbs he says:

> My own approach to proverb structure assumes that there is a close relationship between proverb structure and riddle structure. While there is no doubt that there are important functional differences between these two genres, e.g., riddles confuse while proverbs clarify, I believe that structurally speaking there are major similarities. First of all, both proverb and riddle depend upon 'topic-comment' constructions. A minimum proverb or riddle consists of one descriptive element, that is to say, one unit composed of one topic and one comment. It is true that in riddles the referent of the descriptive element is to be guessed whereas in proverbs the referent is presumably known to both the speaker and the

addressee(s). And that is one of the principal differences between proverbs and riddles. (On the Structure of the Proverb" 50).

Proverbs have great significance in the oratures of Muduvans as these are used mainly by the elders of the community to advise and direct the younger ones and to teach moral values and virtues. In their dialect proverb is called *palamoli*. The first proverb of the section amplifies the importance and relevance of the words of elder people:

> Valiyavaṟ pēsanatu ātyam kasakkum pinne inikkum.
>
> What the elders say might be bitter first but will taste sweet
>
> later. (Proverb 1)

It is said that the words of the elder people might seem to be bitter for the younger ones but later only they would realize the value of what the elders had said. The value of blood relation is praised in one proverb:

> Aṭitaṭi otakatupōle aṇṇantampi otakum.
>
> Even the elder and younger brothers do not help like a
>
> thrashing (Proverb 2)

This proverb is also a homily on bringing up children. The importance of small things is philosophized in the third proverb by saying that even if the mustard is small it has its power and taste:

Keṭuku sinnanāṟnnālum kāram kuṟayatu.

Even if the mustard is small, its pungency is not. (Proverb 3)

The need to act wisely in life is said in another proverb with a metaphorical comparison with bull:

Kuḻiyil vīṇukiṭakkum maṭṭine kuttikkēṭṭiyāl nāmē kuttum.

The bull in a pit, if we goad it out, it will goad us. (Proverb 4)

Proverb 5 also deals with the same theme as said above:

Attṟakkāranukku aṟivu mattukam.

The one who acts hastily is less wise. (Proverb 5)

Proverbs 6, 7 and 9 convey almost the same meaning; there will be a result for everything one does whether it is good or bad. The following are the three proverbs:

6. Uppu tinnavan taṇṇi kuṭikkum.

   He who ate salt shall drink water.

7. Pantikku muntu, paṭuppukku pintu.

   Rush to get yourself a seat in the feast, lag behind in studies.

9. Tuḷḷutu māṭu poti sumakkum.

   The unruly bull will be burdened later.

The Proverb 8 says that one should do his or her part properly for the others to do the rest properly:

> Irikkunnavan nalta irunnal, cerakkunnavan nalta cerakkum.

> If you sit upright the barber shall crop your hair properly.

> (Proverb 8)

Like riddles, proverbs too metaphorically convey one's experiences and wisdom in a sharp concrete way. Proverbs are sometimes associated with tales to give a moral massage. As such the saying 'intha nilayum mārum' ('This too shall pass') in the third tale synopsizes the optimism of the Muduvans. This chapter presented the various genres of Muduvan oratures like tales, riddles and proverbs.

CHAPTER-V

CONCLUSION

The dialects and languages spoken by tribals in India are very large in number. The literary composition in most of them have survived in oral form, though some tribal languages have taken to writing as a means of recording literary compositions. The value of these oral literary works can by no means be undermined. Conventionally, they have been perceived as mere anthropological curiosity, or at best a source for oral history, and they have rarely been translated into English or an Indian language as a representation of tribal imagination. However, no systematic attempt to document and publish literary works in tribal languages –as literature *per se*- has been made in the past, the need for doing which can be hardly over emphasized (Devy, Forward x)

The rich and varied literatures of tribal communities in India have been often marginalized or neglected and not considered as part of the mainstream Indian literatures either due to the fact that most of the tribal literatures are in oral form or due to the reason that they have not been collected or documented and studied as part of literary canon. This besides the traditional conception of literature is that it is necessarily written and documented within the canonical constructs of its language's creative

history. Thus since literature is always and often considered as written and hence the oral literatures of communities such as the Muduvan are often considered as mere folklore.This takes us to another point, regarding the conception of folklore as not being a part of literature. The assumption has begun to change slightly now and the need to preserve such oral literatures which are vanishing due to the influence of globalization and information technology is being accepted. As such in India, the Sahitya Akademi took the initiative to preserve such dialects and languages of tribal communities and its projects envisage the documentation and publication of Indian literatures in tribal languages. Apart from this effort, individual efforts by scholars and researchers contribute to this visionary endeavor.

As an initial step in this direction from within the academy of comparative studies, this thesis attempts to bring forth the rich oratures of Muduvan tribe into main literary canon, through inscription, documentation and translation which is the most effective cultural link between the peoples of today's global village.

It is to be noted that Muduvans, one of the prominent tribal communities of south India, have many oratures preserved and transferred from generation to generation and performed in various situations. Their life and various life-cycle rituals are never devoid of renderings of songs such as at the time of marriage, puberty celebrations and death. The collective and communal feeling is always projected in the songs sung at

the time of work and the festival seasons. The conversation at leisure time, especially after work in the field and forest, is filled with tales and songs along with the experiences of the respective days. It is clear that the performance of their oratures is completely content-based. The performers, listeners and the 'oral texts' are all part of the text/texts which reaffirms their social and communal relationship with each other and their cultural coexistence since each member of the community is socially embedded in certain ways. The performance of the oratures is the celebration of life and helps the performer/ community establish their identity. Even if the performer's/ communities' individual authorship cannot be attributed to oratures, its relatedness with culture makes it an indispensible part of Muduvan life. It is Muduvan literature in its most literal sense.

The validity of considering Muduvan's oratures as part of their folklore is one aspect examined in the thesis, as a part of their repertoire and performed for entertainment, teaching and learning. Performance can be considered the primary practical aspect of folklore. In documentation, the perfomative aspect is lost. It is a mere printed word. Canonical literary pieces, like novels and poetry do not rely on performance for totality of meaning. These are self-contained and in that sense more complete than inscribed/ documented oral literatures. This point seems to be the disadvantage of oral literatures.

Muduvan's oratures is the main part of the verbal performance of folklore manifesting their traditions which is thus transferred from one generation to another. The familial bonds, social and communal patterns of a tribe are reflected and always documented in their literatures. Hence their folklore is a mirror of their culture and a channel to express their feelings, emotions, memories, experiences and so on. The tribal people who live mostly in the hills and forests do not have much contact outside their settlement and that is one of the reasons why they can preserve their oral literatures without much changes. However, now migration towards towns in search in jobs is changing this.

The concept 'ethnopoetics', a non-conventional, non-western frame to look at various divergent cultures which are hitherto considered irrelevant and not part of mainstream culture is used as the perspective of study in this thesis. As such oratures of Muduvans are examined from their socio-cultural background in their original language, situation and context. It helps to understand the role of their oral literature in their daily life. It also helps to preserve the beauty and aesthetic value of their oral literature. Since ethnopoetics does not encourage a comparative study of oratures with normative regional or European literature the studies in the thesis are largely descriptive, classificatory and highlight the poetic features of a community's oratures, in themselves.

Muduvans' oratures comprises of folk song, tales, proverbs and riddles which are collected from the field are the primary source in the thesis. The folk songs include different genres sing at various contexts. As such *Āśaippāṭṭu* (Love-song) is the first genre of songs examined in the thesis. These short songs are in the form of dialogue sing mainly at the time of marriage between the bride and bridegroom. These songs are also performed in other contexts like when a girl attains puberty, when a boy leaves the bachelors-dormitory to get married and/or when they spend time in the bachelors- dormitory. Thus the songs are classified according to the context they are performed. Further, to understand them more easily, the songs are classified depending upon the various themes they deal with like desire, praise, flirtation, mocking, elopement etc. Even though these themes are prevalent in different songs in different ways, the intention in majority of the songs is to explicitly reveal the feeling of love and hence the name *Āśaippāṭṭu*. Other genres of folk songs include *Tālāṭṭu* (Lullaby), *Kummippāṭṭu*, Songs sung at the time of work and work places and Festival songs and *Oppāri* (song sing at the occasion of death).These songs are lengthy and more context-oriented than *Āśaippāṭṭu*. These songs are notable for their rhythm and rhyme. *Tālāṭṭu* or Lullaby is the first genre of folksong encountered by the child in any community. Muduvan women do not have the custom of putting their children in cradles to make them sleep. But this genre of folk song is a main part of their culture showing

innate love of mothers towards children. *Kummippāṭṭu* is another genre of folk song that Muduvan women sing especially after the harvesting season. To reduce the boredom of work Muduvans sing songs when they go for work in fields or go to forest with cattle. Songs sung at the time of various festivals like 'pongal' form a major part of their folk songs. The use of divine and mythical characters in some of their songs indicates the influence of epics in their oral literatures. The other genre of folk song is *Oppāri* sing in the form of lamenting death. Most of the songs of Muduvans are related to their real life situations. Their songs are distinguished by the use of images, metaphors, similes and other poetic devises. Illustration of nature especially about animals, birds, vegetation, mountains and natural phenomena are part of their songs. The tales are usually narrated to the younger generation to make them aware of their culture and tradition and history even though there are some tales which are narrated for pure fun and entertainment. Other forms like riddles and proverbs have their relevance in daily life. These form the subject of the core chapters of this thesis, i.e. chapters II, III and IV prior to the conclusion.

To bring forth the oratures of Muduvans into mainstream literary canon has not been easy. The initial problem was in the collection and documentation of the primary sources. The settlements of Muduvans are largely in the dense forests and hence x permission was needed from the

state authorities to visit them. It was time consuming to reach their settlements by walk for hours and later to make rapport with them, to gain their trust and freidship. The data collection was from seven settlements. The Muduva women do not interact much with outsiders and hence the most of the songs and data are collected from men. The use of digital instruments in front of them to record the renderings always failed since they were not willing and shy. Still the research scholar managed to record some and the rest of the renderings were transcribed. Followed by this the main issue started when these songs were translated into English.

In this thesis a sincere attempt is made to place Muduvan oratures into the larger arena of literary studies through translation. Language seems to be more powerful and appealing in the oral form but while translating them into a print form, the original charm cannot be preserved as such. It is mainly because the oral literatures are more situational and contextual and fluid in nature. Geographically Muduvans are in a place where two languages converge. To the eastern side of the Western Ghats which they inhabit, Tamil is spoken while Malayalam dominates the western side. Since Tamil and Malayalam have influenced their oral narratives substantially, it is difficult to demarcate their language from these prominent, widespread languages of Tamil and Malayalam while one attempts to posit their language in the wider spectrum of languages. This makes it difficult for a translator in his/her act of translating since he/she

has to be open to the linguistic and cultural nuances of all Dravidian languages (Tamil, Malayalam, Muduvan language, English). Keeping this in mind the Muduvan oratures were approached by Malayalam which is the mother tongue of the research scholar and partially by Tamil which is the research scholar's   acquired language.

Certain general features relating to the research may be summed up as follows:

1. Although a lot of gender-related research is now taking place in the academy, the researcher could not find any instances of gender- constructs particularly characterizing Muduvan oral literature. The community itself is liberal in intra-relationship and at the same time, very conventional and strict in maintaining their links with the tribes outside. Both men and women seem equally well-empowered. In ordinary conversation although there are a lot of mutual light-hearted banter, and although the community itself is structured as a patriarchy with the men officiating as priests and head-men, the women are equally respected, but for individual instances of disagreement or quarrels.

2. The researcher noted that a lot of songs and tales are already lost by the Muduvans and that only the elders of the community were able to give the researcher most of the primary material. The younger could only contribute the smaller pieces like the riddle and love-songs. This sad fact strengthened the researcher's conviction that the documentation and

translation of Muduvan oral literature into English, was indeed relevant and timely. Changes were noted by the researcher even within a period of two years.

3. However, the Muduvans were very proud of their songs and tales and innate pride in their oral heritage was seen as a reassuring factor by the researcher.

4. Growing state-control of access to and stay with the tribal settlements for security reasons and preservation of forest-life, will also be a real factor that will determine the facilitation of primary research material for a study such as this, in the future.

The problems of translation were mainly at the linguistic level and cultural level. The differences in grammatical structure in source language and target language and ambiguity in meaning are the main linguistic problems. In the case of the Muduvan dialect (source-language) the grammatical pattern is same as that of Malayalam and Tamil; that is subject+object+verb. But in English (target language) the grammatical pattern is subject+verb+object. For example in the tale 4:

Vayal+ oruttan +o̱lakīṭṭēnē = literally, field+ a man+was ploughing

A man +was ploughing +the field

The grammatical pattern in the songs is more complex than in tales because in most cases the subject is absent in singing though it is

understood. But while translating them in to English the subject is needed to be added to get the sense. For example in Song 10:

> Malayaṭivāratilu,
>
> Maniprā mēyakaṇṭe.
>
> Cembrāntu vēṣatilu,
>
> Centūkku tūkkiṭuve.

Translation:

> In the valley I saw
>
> A dove roosting.
>
> In a kite's disguise
>
> Will I swoop down and pick you.

The ambiguity in the meaning of the word is another linguistic problem. One fine example is in the Song 27 in which the word *kanniyaliñjālum* is loaded with three meanings; the loss of the virginity of the girl, man, and land. But in target language only one meaning is retained; that is the loss of the virginity of the girl and hence translated as "even if the virgin is consummated"

In some cases the ambiguity arises in source language due to the reason that the same song can be sung in different context and as such the meaning varies. In such cases the context that matters rather than the rendering. In Song 48 the contextual ambiguity is created with the word *maṇitavaḷa* which is translated as beautiful frog. The word *maṇitavaḷa* in

source language, literally 'bejwelled-frog' is equated with a pregnant with
the baby in the womb, the precious child being equated to the bejwelled-
frog in the pond of water. The analogy is scientifically accurate,
incidentally with reference to the foetus within the fluid of the womb.

> Iṭi iṭicu maḻa peye,
>
> Irukarayum koḷam perake
>
> Koḷattil kiṭakkum manitavaḻa,
>
> Innu vāi polambe keḻkeliye

Translation:

> While it thunders and rains,
>
> And the pond breaches its banks
>
> O, bejwelled-frog' in the pond,
>
> Your sweet words are not heard today.

The other major problem in translation was at cultural level. Many words in
source language like *māngalyam*, *tāli, kuṭumbi* etc are culture-specific and
cannot be translated as the equivalent in target-language is not available.
Other cultural specific words which are related to flora and fauna, name of
animals, name of god and goddesses etc are difficult to translate. A
detailed glossary is given at the end of the thesis in which culture-specific
words are explained. Translation can bring forth Muduvan oratures and
cultures making it available to the rest of the world. Translation enables
them to be in par with other literatures.

Through the various efforts as mentioned above, the present thesis tries to bring forth the rich oral literature of Muduvans into the mainstream literary canon. Due attention is given to the literary and stylistic aspects of their oral literature since it is not an anthropological study but a research work in literature. Since no full-fledged research work has been done on Muduvan oral literature so far, the thesis is a pioneer study, an exercise in primary research. Although all available Muduvan oral literatures in all their versions cannot be accessed, a sincere attempt is being made to make the study as comprehensive as possible, keeping the scope of research in mind. It is hoped that this documentation of Muduvan oratures will help scholars in the field of literature and folklore to do further research to understand the literary and cultural aspects of not only the Muduvans, but the many ancient and poetry-rich tribes of India. Like Muduvan oratures there are many tribal communities with rich oratures which needed to be preserved by documentation and publication. A comparative study of oratures of different tribal communities outside the realm of ethnopoetics is also a possible area to be explored, in the future.

The oral literatures of tribals who have no written literary forms, exhibit their culture via poetic creativity. It is clear that Muduvan's oratures are interrelated to their culture and tradition and the performance of each genre in different occasions has its relevance in their life. Their oratures show that they are not just performers of received poetry and song but

arealso gifted poets. As such the research scholar takes the freedom to
conclude this disseratation with a song that the Kāni /headman of
Susanukudi sung exclusively for the research scholar when the latter took
leave of the tribe after field-work to collect primary research data. The
most important point to note is the reference to the never-ending treasures
of oral literatures, apart from the fact that the song itself is a standing
piece of evidence to the hospitable and affectionate nature of the
Muduvans:

> Malayāḻi kuñciyē pāṭṭeḻutum kaiyā
>
> Pāṭṭeḻuti muṭiym munne pātiyilum yātṛaya?
>
> Pāṭṭu muṭiccuviṭṭu pāṭiya kuṛuviṭaye kāl piṭiccu
>
> Santōṣamāke pōyi vā en makanē.

Translation:

> O, Malayāḻi child, writing down the songs
>
> Are you leaving halfway, before finishing it all?
>
> Finish this one and with blessings at the feet of the
>
>> singing-master,
>
> Leave happily and return again, my son.

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APPENDIX

The following is the list of the Muduvans (Name, age, name of the settlement they belong and approximate date of collection) who sang songs for the research scholar. The list is not complete since many a time it was not possible to get such information, especially at the time of festivals or when in bachelor halls. Most of the women who sang songs were not ready to reveal their names and other personal information such as age.

S. No	Name of the persons	Approximate age	Name of the settlement	Approximate Date
1.	Kalingamuthu (Male)	55	Nellipatti	2010, February
2.	Rajan (Male)	40	Periyakudi	2010, February
3.	Loganathan (Male)	45	Periyakudi	2010, February
4.	Chenan (Male)	35	Sembatti	2007, February
5.	Raman (Male)	40	Susanikudi	Severally
6.	Natarajan (Male)	65	Susanikudi	Severally
7.	Bose (Male)	30	Susanikudi	Severally
8.	Mattuthatha (Male)	75	Susanikudi	Severally
9.	Madhavan (Male)	40	Theerthamalakudi	2008, March
10.	Shantha (Female)	40	Susanikudi	2007, March
11.	Parvathy (Female)	25	Susanikudi	2007, March

GLOSSARY

Ānakāl paṭṭi- A Muduvan Settlement.

Āraṇi – Name of a place

Aruku – A type of grass, the roots of which runs deep.

Āśai- Love

Āśaippāṭṭu – Love-song

Ātiśivan – Lord Shiva

Ātya paramaśivan- The God of Destruction in Hindu Trinity.

Āyi – Mother

Ayotiya – The birth place of Lord Ram

Dēvi – A term of respectful address to a lady; a Goddess

Ēkamuttumāri – A diety associated with Kali- a Hindu Goddess

Ēkavalli – Valli is Murukan's wife

Ēnimala- Name of a hill (Ēni-ladder), (mala- hill)

Gopāla – (literally) one who looks after cows; Another name of Lord

Krishna- an incarnation of Lord Vishnu

kaileṅgiri- Where Lord Shiva reside.

Kāḷi – A Hindu goddess of time and change

Kāḷiyamma – Mother Kāḷi

Kāmākṣi – Goddess of Kānjipuram, a Muduvan deity.

kaňciṅgiri – Name of a place

Kandar – See Muruka

Kāṇi- Headman/ chieftain

Kaṇṇaki- A legendary figure

Kaṇṇanūr – A place in Kerala

Kaṇṇapuram – A place in Kerala

Karakam- It is actually a small brass pot decorated with flowers and fruits

and balanced upon the head while the dancer performs wearing

anklet bells.

Kārtika – A month in Hindu calendar

Kaṟuppaṇṇasvāmi – God of protection

Karuvār – Name of a place

Kāsi – A holy place for Hindus

Kavalasūji- Name of a place.

Kiḷimūkku- Beak of a bird or something that looks like the beak of a bird.

Kolakaṭṭa paṇiyāram – Some variety of sweet delicacies of South India.

Kolli – A mountain

Koppatākuṭi- A Muduvan settlement.

Koṭṭakuṭi- Name a settlement.

Kovai- The popular nomenclature of the city of Coimbatore in Tamil Nadu.

Kumāra – Son of Lord Shiva; also known as Murugan/Kandan

Kumāri – virgin

Kūṭakāṭu- Name of a forest

Kuṭamala – A hill; Kuṭa – umbrella, mala- hill.

kuṭumbi- Local name for tuft of hair grown on the back of the head by

    adult men.

Makamāyi – Maka- great; Makamāyi – Great māyi (Godesses Amman)

Malayalam – Language of Kerala; also used to denote Kerala.

māṅgalyam- marriage, a sacred thread tied around the married woman's

    neck by the man as a symbol of marriage according to Indian

    Tradition.

Maṇimantira Sēkariyē – Name of a goddess

Manōnmaṇi – Name of a goddess

Māriamman – A hindu diety associated with Kali

Mari kuḷantu- A fragrant herb used mainly to make garland

Mārimuttu – God of Rain

Maturai – A district in Tamil Nadu, India

Maturai Vīrappan – god of protection believed to be in Madurai

Māya – Delusion, also name of a godess as well as signifying the

phenomenon.

Māyan – Another name for Lord Vishnu

Māyavan – Sri Krishna, ninth incarnation of Lord Vishnu.

Māyi – Wife of Vishnu

Mīnākṣi – Wife of Lord Shiva

Mūṅkil kaṟuppanattān – God of protection

Muruka – Another name of Subrahmanian, the brother of Ganapathi.

     Son of Lord Shiva.

Muttāḷrāvuttan – Name of a place.

Muttayamma – Name of a goddess.

Nāgakannittāyārē – Goddess of snake

Nāgamala- Name of a hill

Nallamuttumāriyāre – Nalla- Good; O good Muttumāri

Nārāyaṇa – Lord Vishnu, one God among the Hindu Trinity

Nāyaki – Another name for Shiva's wife

Oppāri – Category of songs sung during a funeral in the Muduvan and

      some other societies

Sahādeva-The epic Mahābhārata is mainly about the war between

      Pāṇṭavās and their cousins Kauravās

Pakavati – Goddess

Pāḷayam – Name of a place

panṭāram- One who sells flowers.

Pāṇṭavās – The five sons of Pāṇṭu – Yudhishtira, bheema, Arjuna,

      Nakula and Sahādeva.

Pāṇṭiyāṟ- An ancient Tamil dynasty. (Here) the then Pandya King

Parāśakti – Wife of Lord Shiva

Paraśurāman – Sixth incarnation of Lord Vishnu

Pārvati - Wife of Lord Shiva

Pātiri- A seasonal flower usually seen in Muduvan locality

Pēcci – Name of a cult-goddess

Periyapāḷayam – Name of a place

Piccāṇṭi – Name of a place

Piḷḷyār – Lord Shiva's first son.

Poṅkal – A variety of dish usually seen in Tamil Nadu. A sweet variety

of it is cooked for festivals.

poṭṭu- A coloured spot placed on the forehead of the woman.

Pukāri- A bamboo comb that the bridegroom presents to the bride

at the time of marriage in Muduvan culture.

Śakti – Wife if Lord Shiva

Śālapāṟa- A name of a place.

Samayapuram – A name of a place dedicated to the goddess of pox

and deseases.

Saṅkari – Wife of Lord Shiva

śanṭāla- A name of a caste, here 'wretch'.

Śāntapāṟa- Name of a place.

Saraswathi – The Hindu Goddess of knowledge and arts

sat<u>r</u>a sava<u>t</u>i- Bachelor-hall in Muduvan settlement

Semba- a type of paddy.

Sōlakā<u>t</u>u- A name of a forest

Sountari - Name of a goddess

Susanikudi- A Muduvan settlement in Idukki district

Tāli- a symbol of marriage tied around the neck of a married woman

    according to Indian tradition.

Tillai – Name of a place

Tirttamala – A sacred hill for Muduvans, associated with Kannaki

Tulakkā<u>n</u>am – A cult-goddess

Umayava<u>l</u>e – O! Uma. Uma is the wife of Lord Shiva

Vākka<u>tt</u>am - Name of a place

vañci kā<u>t</u>u- Name of a forest. *Vañci* means boat and *kā<u>t</u>u* means forest.

Vaṅga<u>l</u>āka<u>t</u>av- The name of a ghat near Susanikudi settlement.

Vā<u>n</u>i – Word or speech; signifies Saraswathi

Va<u>tt</u>apā<u>r</u>a- Name of a place where tribes meet to hold councel and

    disperse justice.

Vēdāt – Interpretation of ancient Hindu texts/Vedas/philosophy; also used

as an adjective for addressing deities.

Vēlvar - See Muruka; Vel- a spear; Muruka is called Vēlvar for he

uses a 'vēl' as his weapon.

Vijayanagara – A name of a city

Vināyakan – Another name for Gaṇapathi, the elephant faced God of

Hindu mythology; the remover of obstacles.

Vīraperumāḷ - Vīra - Brave; perumāḷ - King

Virāṭapuram – A name of a place

Yama - The Hindu god of death

MAPS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

S.No	Features
Fig. 1.	India- Kerala. (Map)
Fig. 2.	Kerala- Idukki District. (Map)
Fig. 3.	Idukki District- Marayoor, Kanthaloor Region. (Map)
Fig. 4.	Marayoor-Muduvan Settlements. (Map)
Fig. 5.	Kanthaloor-Muduvan Settlements. (Map)
Fig. 6.	Muduvan with traditional turban. (Photograph)
Fig. 7.	Kāṇi/Headman of Susanikudi with an old woman. (Photograph)
Fig. 8.	Muduvans inside bachelor-hall. (Photograph)
Fig. 9.	Muduvans making hut. (Photograph)
Fig. 10.	A valley where Muduvans offer prayers.(Photograph)
Fig. 11.	Traditional worship offered to the mountains with sacrifice of fowl. (Photograph)
Fig. 12.	Muduvan women gathered for Pongal festival. (Photograph)
Fig. 13.	Muduvan Dance. (Photograph)
Fig. 14.	Muduvan settlements- a view of Nellipatti. (Photograph)
Fig. 15.	A view from Nellipatti. (Photograph)

Figure 1. India- Kerala map.
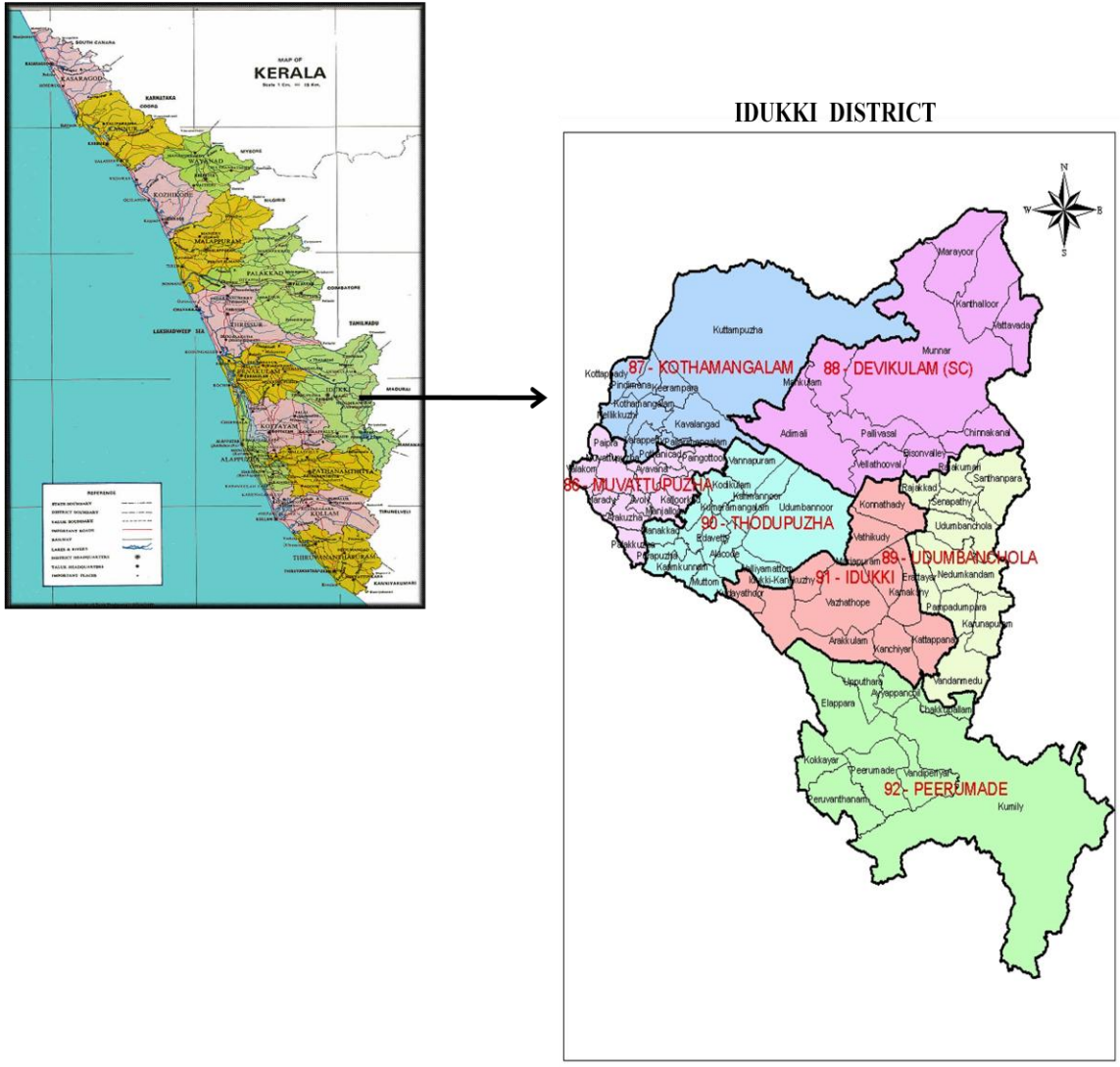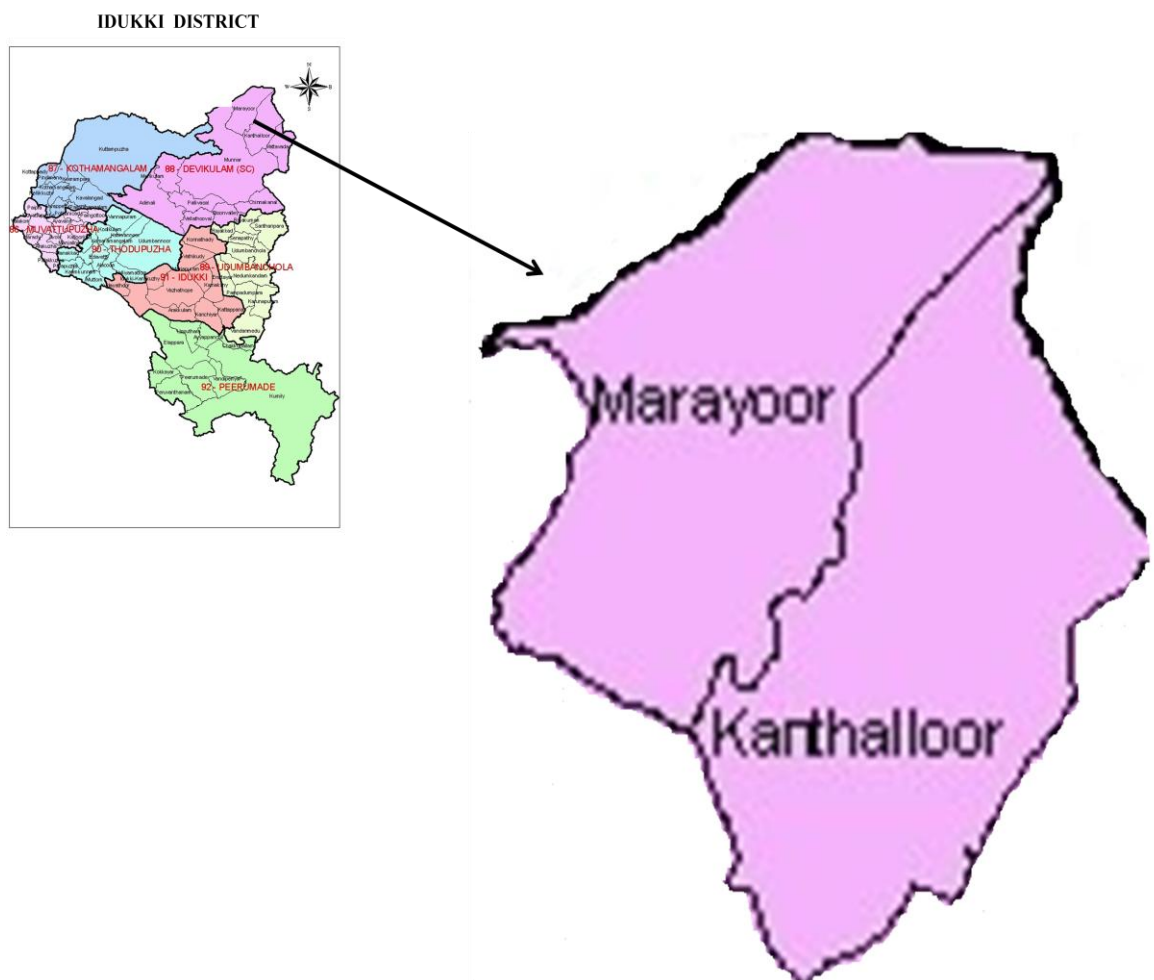
Figure 2. Kerala- Idukki District map.

Figure 3. Idukki district- Marayoor and Kanthaloor region.

I. Periyakudi

II. Kaavakkudi

III. Kulthu Kallu Kudi

IV. Nellippatti

V. Kudakadu

Figure 4. Settlements are spotted based on the map given by the Village office of
Marayoor.

   I. Therthamalakudi

  II. Sembatti

III. Susanikudi

Figure 5. Settlements are spotted based on the map given by the village office of Kanthaloor.

Figure 6. Muduvan with traditional turban

Figure 7. Kāni /Headman of Susanikudi with an old woman

Figure 8. Muduvans inside the Bachelor-hall

Figure 9. Muduvans making hut

Figure 10. A valley where Muduvans offer prayers

Figure 11. Traditional worship offered to the mountains with sacrifice of fowl

Figure 12. Muduvan women gathered for Pongal festival
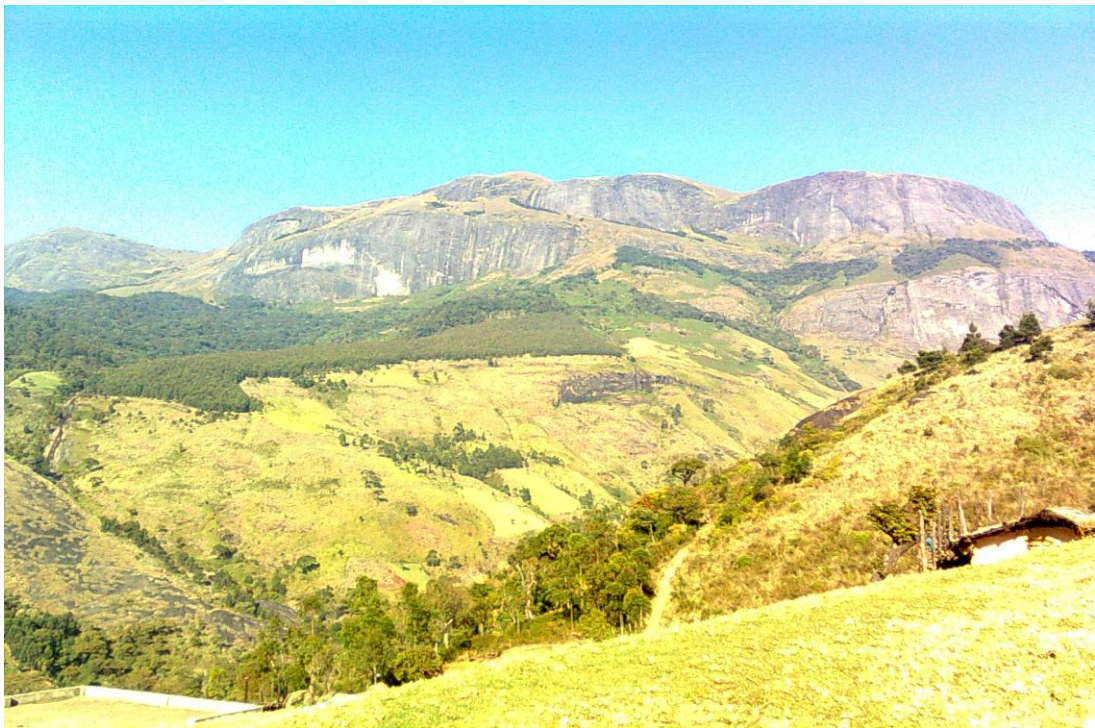

Figure 13. Muduvan Dance

Figure 14. Muduvan settlements- a view of Nellipatti

Figure 15. A view from Nellipatti