

Kuravanji Dramas – A Perspective view

Prof.S.Subbulakshmi.

Director, School of Music and Fine-Arts,
Vels University (VISTAS) , Chennai – 600 117

E-Mail Id: director.music@velsuniv.ac.in

kavinthree@gmail.com



Abstract :

The Kuravanji Dramas takes its name from Kurati the fortune-teller, though the Kuravanji drama portrays the love of an aristocratic woman for a Prince or Deity. The authors extraordinary poetic excellence and multifaceted personality are portrayed through the Kurati Character. The origin of kuravanji is derived from Sangam literature. Though Kuravanjis belong to Sitrilakkiyam , one of the 96 genres of Sitrilakkiam it has the influence of Ulā , concept of Tūtu (messenger)and Kuram .Kuravanji dramas have evolved as an independent genre of dance dramas. Most of the kuravanji Dramas are in the name of deities of that place like Thyagesar, Ardhanarishwarar,Azhagar, Kumbesar, Some on kings or patrons name like Sarabendra boopala kuravanji, Sahaji kuravnji , Devendra kuravnji. Some on that place name like Virali malai, Solaimalai, Thirupparankundram, Sivamalai, Chidambaram. Kuravanji Dramas are seen in many languages like Tamil, kannadam , Telugu, Marathi , Gujarati and Sanskrit .

Keywords : Kuravanji ,Kurati , Languages, deity names, Auhors, Publications

Introduction

“ koravanji” refers to nomadic women of a hill tribe born in a Kuravā family. The Kurati plays an important role as a fortune teller in all Kuravanji Dramas. The main theme of kuravanji Drama is human love towards God or another human like King or Prince. The Kuravanji takes its name from Kurati the fortune-teller, though the Kuravanji drama portrays the love of an aristocratic woman for a Prince or Deity. Dance and music are the two main streams of all Kuravanji plays. The authors extraordinary poetic excellence and multifaceted personality are portrayed through the Kurati Character . However the kuravanji dramas glorify the Deity or the patron or the King of that town, the main character in the kuravanji genre is the Eponymous Kurati, a roaming fortune teller from the mountain side.

Origin of Kuravanji

The origin of kuravanji is derived from Sangam literature. The Kurati fortune teller's first arrival in Tamil literature as a brief portrayal in 17th century in one of the 96 minor literary genres collectively known as “Sitrilakkiyam” called Kalambagam (mixed Poems). This later became focused as a separate short genre called Kuram and in Telugu collected literary forms called Yakshagāna which arose in Telugu during Vijaya nagara Period. Kuramu was also one of a main Telugu dance form of kurati during Nāyaka and Marata period in Tanjore. Only in 1700 the Tamil kuravanji dramas come to light where the kurati plays a vital role which was focusing mainly on the life style of kuravā's . The appearance of kurati with the wand must have been originated from the stick carried by the Agavan magal, the female drummer also called Agavunar in Sangam Literature. Many examples can be had from Agananūru (208) Ainkurunūru (251 – 260 and 281 – 290) and in Kuruntogai (82) belonged to Sangam period .



Kurati who was watching over the fields, have used a device in the Murugan–Valli myth. The Agavanmagal's staff is also called the "Pirapunarthum kōl (a stick which explains about the birth of a child)

Structure of Kuravanji:

This Kuravanji dramas consists of three segments

1. On seeing the deity or Prince on a procession the aristocratic women falls on love .
2. The kurati, a roaming female of the Kuravā family appears and offers help for the lovelorn lady towards the hero.
3. The kurati's husband sets out in search of kurati and meets her, finally the couple reunited.

Influence of many Genres : Though Kuravanjis belong to Sitrilakkiyam , one of the 96 genres of Sitrilakkiyam it has the influence of many genres like Ulā , concept of Tūtu (messenger)and Kuram and many. Kuravanji dramas have evolved as an independent genre of dance dramas . In all Kuravanji dramas the hero will come on a procession through which the princess saw him and loved him and later will face the burden of separation which will be the main theme of Kuravanji dramas . During separation the heroine will send messengers to express her love. Here the procession of the Hero can be compared to the genre Ulā and the messengers can be compared to another genre Tūtu. Thus the kuravanjis has the influence of many genres

General Analysation of Kuravanji dramas :

- 1.The poetic and musical forms seen in are Darus, Padas, kirthanas, kannis, Dwipadas, Padyas, and Mangalam other than Vachanam.
- 2.Folk aspects are perceived through Kurati's life style and classical aspects through hero heroine's life .
- 3.Musical aspects and rhythmic aspects are perceived through padam ,Daru and kirthanas
4. Messengers like Moon, Breeze, Birds (Parrot, Cuckoo, Swan, Dragonfly) and so many are seen
- 5., Global histories, livelihoods and geographies are viewed through kurati's long journey all over the country.
- 6.The authors extraordinary poetic excellence and multifaceted personality are portrayed through the Kurati in Kuravanji Dramas..

Kuravanji dramas : Many kuravanji dramas have been collected and analysed generally. The kuravanji are gathered from many Libraries with Author's name , publisher's name , published date , Hero's name . Heroine's name, Language and its century.

1.Azhagar Kuravanji :

The Author of this Azhagar Kuravanji is Kavikunjara Bharathi . It was Published through Scottish Printing Press in the year 1916, The Hero of this Azhagar Kuravanji is Lord Kallalagar , Vishnu. The Heroine of this kuravanji is Princess Mohanavalli. It is a Tamil Kuravanji belonged to 20th Century

2. Ardanarisvarar Kuravanji

This is only Kuravanji written by a female poet Poonkodhai. It is a U.V.S.L. Publication. It belonged to 17th century. The Hero of this kuravanji is Lord Ardhanarisvarar of



Tiruchengodu. The Heroine is Mohini. It is a Tamil Kuravanji written in Tamil language.

3. Bharata Svatantira Kuravanji

The Author of Bharata Svatantira Kuravanji is Prunta Varatarajan . It was Publication of Prunta Varatarajan belonged to 20th century. The Hero of this kuravanji is Svatantira Devan and the Heroine is Bharata Devi. It is written in Tamil Language.

4. Bethlehem Kuravanji

The Author of Bethlehem Kuravanji is Te.Vedanayagam Shastriar. The Period of Te.Vedanayagam Shastriar is 1774-1864. It was Published in Lawley Electric Printing Press in the year 1938. The hero of this Kuravanji is Jesus and the heroine is Devamohini. It is a Tamil Kuravanji.

5. Civamalaik Kuravanji

The Author of Civamalaik Kuravanji is Lakshmana Bharatiyar whose Period is from 1769 – 1859. The Hero of this kuravanji is Lord Muruga and the Heroine is Deyva mohini. It is a Tamil Kuravanji

6. Cikkal Navaneetha Isvara Kuravanji:

The Author of Cikkal Navaneetha Isvara Kuravanji is Su . Chokkalingam Pillai. This kuravanji was published by Tamil Music Association in the year 1974. The Hero of this kuravanji is Lord Cikkal Navaneetha Isvarar.

7. Chidambara Kuravanji

The Author of Chidambara Kuravanji is Thirumalai Nayakkar .This kuravanji was published by Tamil Library in the year 1949. This is a kuravanji of 18th century. The Hero of this kuravanji is Lord Chidambara Nathar and the Heroine is Valli. It is a Tamil Kuravanji .

8. Chittampalak Kuravanji:

The Author of this Chittampalak Kuravanji is Dandayuthapani Pillai, K. N. It is Published by South Indian Bharatanatyam Gallery in the year 1900.

9. Citamparak Kuravanji

The Author of Citamparak Kuravanji and the period is not known. It was published in Tamil Nulagam, T.Nagar, Chennai in the year 1949 . The Hero of this kuravanji is Lord Nataraja.

10. Courtalak Kuravanji:

The Author of Courtalak Kuravanji is Thirumalai Nayakkar. It was published by S. Rajam in the year 1960. The Hero of this kuravanji is Lord Courtala Nathar and the heroine is Valli . It is a tamil kuravanji belonged to 18th century

11. Devendra Kuravanji

The Author of Devendra Kuravanji is the king Sarabhoji II. It was Published by Saraswathi



Mahal Library, Tanjore. This belonged to a period of 19th century. The Hero of this kuravanji is not mentioned and the Heroine is Indrani. This is written in the language Marathi.

12. Gaulai Kuravanji

The Author of this Gaulai Kuravanji and the period is not found. It was published in the University of Madras. The Hero of this kuravanji is Lord Kāsi Viswesvarar and the Heroine is Surata mohini. It is a Tamil Kuravanji.

13. Gnanaratna Kuravanji

The Author of Gnanaratna Kuravanji is Bhīru Muhammed Sahibu, a muslim. It was published Adakalai Publication- itta Parthasarathy Naidu sons in the year 1966.

14. Ilakshanak Kuravanji

The Author of Lakshanak Kuravanji is Muniyappa Mudaliyar. It was Published under Manonmani Vilasa Accukkudam and the period is unknown. The Hero of this kuravanji is Shiva and the Heroine is Gangai. It is a Tamil kuravanji.

15. Idaiyalak Kuravanji

The Author of Idaiyalak Kuravanji is Gnanasagarar. It was Published in Jaina Ilaigar Mandram, Chennai which belonged to the Period 18th century. The Hero of this kuravanji is Sattanar and the Heroine is Sundari written in the Language Tamil.

16. Ilayaperumal Kuravanji

The Author of this Ilayaperumal Kuravanji is Muttuveera Pulavar. The Publication is not found. It belonged to the Period 19th century. The Hero of this kuravanji is Ilayaperumal and the Heroine is Viragavalli written in the Language Tamil.

17. Kandasamy Peril Kuravanji

The Author of this Kandasamy Peril Kuravanji is Vaithiyanathan. The period and Publication is not found. The Hero of this kuravanji is Murugar of Pazhani and the Heroine is Surata mohini. It is a Tamil Kuravanji.

18. Kangeyan Kuravanji

The Author of Kangeyan Kuravanji is Ponmani Cellappan. It was Published by Tamilnadu Text book Corporation in the year 1980. It belonged to Period of early 18th century. The Hero of this kuravanji is Narayana Kangeyan who is a devotee of Siraiyilinathar and the Heroine is Mohini written in Tamil Language.

19. Krisnamari Kuravanji

The Author of Krisnamari Kuravanji is Sri Devi Karumari Dasar. Publication is not found. The Hero of this kuravanji is Lord Vedapurisar and the Heroine is Madanavalli. It is a Tamil Kuravanji belonged to 20th Century



20. Kunrakkutik Kuravanji

The Author of Kunrakkutik Kuravanji is Virapattirak Kavirayar whose period is around 1760 AD. It was Published in Sri Haya vadana Vilasa Press. The Hero of this kuravanji is Muruga and the Heroine is Atirupa mohini. It is a Tamil Kuravanji

21. Kutturavu Kuravanji

The Author of Kutturavu Kuravanji is Kavignar Tanjai Vānan (Durai Sinivasan) It was Published by Muttamil Mandram Publication, Chennai in the year 1968. The Hero of this kuravanji is Nattaraiyan symbolises Democracy and the Heroine is Kutturavai also called as Komalam written in LanguageTamil.

22. Kundrakudiyil Sivasubramanya kuravanji:

The Author of Kundrakudiyil Sivasubramanya kuravanji is Veerabhadra Kavirayar. It was published by Sri Haya vatana Vilasa Press in the year 1914. The Hero of this Kundrakudiyil Sivasubramanya kuravanji is Lord Kundrakudi Sivasubramanya. This is Tamil Kuravanji belonged to 20th Century.

23. Kumaralingar Kuravanji:

The Author of Kumaralingar Kuravanji is Thirikoodarasappar. It was published in Mahamagopadhyay U. V. Swaminathaiyar Library in the year 1982. The Hero of this Kumaralingar Kuravanji is Lord Kutralanathar and the Heroine is Vasanthavalli . It is a tamil Kuravanji belonged to 20th Century.

24. Kumbesar Kuravanji :

The Author of Kumbesar Kuravanji is Papanasa Mudaliar. It was Published in Vasantha Printing Press in the year 1944. The Hero of the Kumbesar Kuravanji is Lord Kumbesa nathar and the Heroine is Mangalambikai. It is a tamil Kuravanji belonged to 20th Century.

25. Mannippadikkarai Nilakantar Kuravanji:

The Author Mannippadikkarai Nilakantar Kuravanji of is Saminataiyyer. It was Published by Tamil Nadu Textbook Corporation which belong to 18th century. The Hero of this kuravanji is Nilakantar of Mannipadikkarai and the Heroine is Viraga mohini. It is a Tamil Kuravanji

26. Meignana Ragasiya Kuravanji

The Author of Meignana ragasiya Kuravanji is Rathinananda Swamigal. It was Published in Mutta Tamil Vilasa Accukoodam, in the year 1985. The Hero of this kuravanji is Guru and the Heroine is Siddhadisisan . It is a Tamil Kuravanji written in Language Tamil.

27. Mohini Vilasa Kuravanji:

The Author of this Mohini Vilasa Kuravanji is Mahakavi Saptarshi, a court poet of Tanjore kingdom under King Sahaji II. It belonged to the Period - 1684 – 1710. It was published in Saraswathi Mahal Library, Tanjore . The Hero of this kuravanji is King Sahaji II and the heroine is Kamalavathi. It was written in manipravalam language both in Tamil and Sanskrit.



28. Morurk Kannan Pampana Kankeyan Kuravanji

The Author of Morurk Kannan Pampana Kankeyan Kuravanji is Balabarati Muttusami Aiyar. It was Published in Viveka Divakaran AccuKoodam in the year 1917. This kuravanji belonged to 19th century. The Hero of this kuravanji is Pampanentiran and the Heroine is Muttumoganangi. It is a Tamil Kuravanji

29. Muttanandar Nyana Kuravanji

The Author of Muttanandar Nyana Kuravanji is Muttanandar. It was Published in Tamilnadu State Department of Archeology and the period of this kuravanji is unknown. The Hero of this kuravanji is Sadasiva Guru and the Heroine is Muttanandar written in the Language Tamil.

30. Muttu Vaduganatar Peril Kuravanji

The Author of Muttu Vaduganatar Peril Kuravanji is Nallandaswamy . It belonged to 17th century. It is a Kavya Publication. The Hero of this kuravanji is Muttu Virappa Nayakkar and the Heroine is Ranjita sugamohana Vanji written in the Language Tamil.

31. Muttayendirar Kuravanji

The Author of Muttayendirar Kuravanji is Mambazhakavisinga Navalar. It was Published under G.O.M.L. Publication. The Hero of this kuravanji is Zamindar of Kadavur Muttayendirar and the Heroine is Sarasavalli. It is a Tamil Kuravanji belonged to 19th Century.

32. Narada Koravanji

This is assumed to be the first kuravanji which belonged to 15th century .The Author of this Narada Koravanji is Saint Vadiraja. It was published by Kannada Study Centre, University of Mysore in the year 1980. The Hero of this kuravanji is Krishna and the heroine is Rukmini. This kuravanji is written in Kannada language .

33. Rajamohana Koravanji

The Author of Rajamohana Koravanji is Giriraja Kavi belonged to a Period of 1684 - 1710, a court poet of Tanjore Kingdom under King Sahaji II. It was Published by Saraswathi Mahal Library, Tanjore. The Hero of this kuravanji is King Sahaji II and the Heroine is Rajakanyaka . It is a Kuravanji written in Telugu language .

34. Risvintam Kuravanji

The Author of Risvintam Kuravanji is Rasappa Upadhyay belonged to a period of 19th century (1896) It was Published in the Institute of Asian Studies in the year 2005. The Hero of this Kuravanji is Lord Ardhanarisvarar and the Heroine is Vasantamohini. It is a Tamil Kuravanji

35. Sahaji Mannan Mitu Kuravanji

The Author of Sahaji Mannan Mitu Kuravanji is Muttu Kavignar who belonged to a Period of 1684 – 1710. It was Published by Saraswathi Mahal Library, Tanjore. The Hero of this kuravanji is King Sahaji II and the Heroine is Rajakannigai. It is a Tamil Kuravanji



36. Sarabhendra Bhupala Kuravanji

The Author of Sarabhendra Bhupala Kuravanji is Kottaiyur Civakkoluntu Desikar. This kuravanji has many publications and it belonged to 19th century. The Hero of this kuravanji is the king Sarabhoji -II and the Heroine is Madanavalli. It is a Tamil Kuravanji

37. Sikkal Navanithesuvara Swamy Kuravanji

The Author of Sikkal Navanithesuvara Swamy Kuravanji is Cokkalingam Pillai. It was Published by Tamilnadu Textbook Corporation in the year 1980. The Hero of this kuravanji is Sikkal Navanithesuvaram and the Heroine is Turita Mohini written in Tamil Language

38. Solaimalaik Kuravanji

The Author of Solaimalaik Kuravanji is Jampuli Puttur Krishnayyengar Swami his period is not clearly known. It was Published in Srinivasam Press, Puttur Agraharam, Trichy. The Hero of this kuravanji is Solaimalai Alagar and the Heroine is Sundaravalli written in Tamil Language.

39. Talayanallur Kuravanji:

The Author of this Talayanallur Kuravanji is Balabharati Muttusami Aiyar. It is one of the kuravanji written on the name of a place Talayanallur and the hero also mentioned as Nattamaikkarar Kaliyannan not a god . The heroine of this kuravanji is Mamohini. This is Published by Sivagiri Atina Arakkattalai, Sivagiri, Erode in the year 2015. It belonged to end of 17th century.

40. Tamilarasi Kuravanji

The Author of this Tamilarasi Kuravanji is Varadananjaya Pillai who belonged to the period 1951. It was published by Tanjai Kootturavu Pathippagam, Tanjore. The Hero of this kuravanji is Murugar and the Heroine is Tamilarasi. It is a Tamil Kuravanji

41. Thyagesar Kuravanji

The Author of Thyagesar Kuravanji is Muthukavirayar. It belonged to 17th century It was Published at Thanjavur Maharaja Sarboji's Saraswati Mahal Library, in the year 1970. The Hero of this Thyagesar Kuravanji is Lord Thyagesar of Thiruvavur and the heroine is Valli. It is a Tamil Kuravanji .

42. Thirukkurrālak kuravanji

The Author of this Thirukkurrālak kuravanji is Trikoottarasappa Kavirayar . It belonged to 18th century. It was published at Meenambigai Press in the year 1926. The Hero of this kuravanji is Lord Kutralanathar and the Heroine is Vasantha Valli. It is a Tamil Kuravanji

43. Thirumalaiyāndavar Kuravanji

The Editor of this Thirumalaiyāndavar Kuravanji is U Ve Saminathayyar. It was published in Law Journal Press in the year 1938. The Hero of this kuravanji is Lord Thirumalaiyāndavar and the heroine is Valli . It is a Tamil Kuravanji



44. Thirumalai Andavar Kuravanji

The Author and period of this Tirumalai Andavar Kuravanji is Unknown It is a Publication of U.V.S.L . The Hero of this kuravanji is Muruga of Tirumalai and the Heroine is Kamavalli written in Tamil Language.

45.- Thomas Malaik Kuravanji

The Author of Thomas Malaik Kuravanji is Ponnu. A. Satyasatci It was a publication of St. Thomas Literati Fraternity in the year 1999. It belonged to the Period of 20th century. The Hero of this kuravanji is Jesus and the Heroine is Metini written in the Language Tamil.

46. Thirupparankundrak Kuravanji

The Author and period of this Thirupparankundrak Kuravanji is unknown. This is Published by Department of Tamil Literature, University of Madras. The Hero of this kuravanji is Murugar of Tirupparamkunram and the Heroine is Manonmani which is written in Tamil Language.

Conclusion :

According to the above said kuravanjis- a conclusion arrived are

- 1.The first kuravanji seems to be the Narada kuravanji belongs to 15th century which was written in kannadam..
- 2.Most of the kuravanjis are in the name of deities of that place like Thyagesar, Ardhanarishwarar,Azhagar, Kumbesar . Some on kings or patrons name like Sarabendra boopala kuravanji, Sahaji kuravnji , Devendra kuravnji. Some on that place name like Virali malai, Solaimalai, Thirupparankundram, Sivamalai, Chidambaram .
3. The kuravanjis are mostly in the male names very rarely in female name .Example- Rajamohana kuravanji of Giriraja kavi .
4. All most all kuravanjis are written by male Authors except Ardhanarishwarar kuravanji which was written by Poonkodhai, a female poet
5. Kuravanjis are seen in many languages like 1.Kannadam (Narada kuravanji) 2. Telugu (Raja mohana Kuravanji) 3.Marati (Devendra kuravanji), 4.Gujarati (Chandra maulishwara kuravanji) 5.Sanskrit (Mohini vilasa kuravanji) 6.Tamil many kuravanjis .
6. The name of the heroine in most of the kuravanjis are in the form of “Mohini “ like Mamohini, Mohini, Mohanangi, Viraha mohini. Athirupa mohini, Surata mohini, Suha mohana ,Deiva mohini, Deva mohini, Vasantha mohini .
- 7.There are Kuravanjis showing Patriotism like Bharata Svathantira kuravanji.
8. There are kuravanjis belonged to other religions like Christians (Bethlahem kuravanji) and Muslims (Gnanaratna Kuravanji)

Reference Books :



தமிழ்நாடு திறந்தநிலைப் பல்கலைக்கழகம் இதழியல் (ம)
உடகப் பன்னி நாடகம் (ம)அரங்க கலைத்துறை மற்றும்
பிரணவ நுண்கலை ஆய்விதழ்
(மதிப்பீடு செய்யப்பட்ட சர்வதேச மின்னியல் ஆய்விதழ்)
இணைந்து நடத்திய பன்னாட்டுக் கருத்தரங்கம்
“இந்திய நாடக மரபு”
Special Volume 3 Issue 1



1. History of Indian Music – Sambamoorthy.p –The Indian Music Publishing House- Madras- 1960 .
2. The Nayakas of Tanjore – Vriddhagirisan.V- Acian Educational Service- NewDelhi – 1995.
3. Devendra kurvanji – Raj Serfoji –Tanjore Saraswathi Mahal Libraary -1950.
4. Thyagesar Kuravanji - Muthukavirayar. - Tanjore Maharaja Sarboji's Saraswati Mahal Library- 1970.
5. Mohini Vilasa Kuravanji - Mahakavi Saptarshi – Tanjore Saraswathi Mahal Library, Tanjore- 1960.
6. Chittampalak Kuravanji - Dandayuthapani Pillai, K. N. - South Indian Bharatanatyam Gallery - 1900.
7. Azhagar Kuravanji - Kavikunjara Bharathi - Scottish Printing Press – 1916.
8. Raja mohana Koravanji natakamu – Giri raja kavi – Saraswathi mahal Library – Tanjore . 2000.
9. Sambamurthy .P. –South Indian Music – book II &.III – The Indian Music Publishing House .- 1994.
10. P.T.Chelladurai - The splendor of Music - Vaigarai Publishers – Dindugal - 2000

