CHAPTER - I
INTRODUCTION

History, being an unending dialogue between the part and present is of great help to know about the socio-cultural life of a particular society. In this regard it will be apt to note down the role of literature in a society. Literature both indigenous and foreign, religious and secular had served as source materials for writing the history of any region. For instance the Sangam literature serves as a primary source for writing the history of the period between 3rd century B.C. and 3rd century A.D.

The Indika of Megasthanes, the Fo-Kow-Ki of Fahien, Syuki of Hiuen Tsang etc. are also the foreign literary sources. The literature may be of any nature such as classical, religious, folk etc., Anyhow majority of the literary pieces are written without any historical perspective. Though they are written with some specific purposes it is worth to note that they contain certain historical facts sprinkled at different forms. With regard to Tamil literature, the Sangam classics, which contain details about the inner and outer i.e., aham and puram elements of life they, are treated as important source materials for estimating the renowned social and cultural aspects of the Tamils of that Augsutan Age. Even among them the works such as Maduraikkanchi and Pattinappalai throw much light on having the estimate of Madurai, the Pandya capital and Chola’s Kaverippumpattinam respectively. Padirrupattu assists in
the study of Malai Nadu. In the same way Tirumurugarruppadai of Nakkirar is a significant source material to know about the various aspects pertaining to the Murugan cult in Tamil Nadu. It throws light on the commingling of the Tamil as well as the Northern traditions.

Cilappatikaram by Elango Adigal comprises of the social, political and cultural life of the Tamils of its contemporary period. Subsequently during the succeeding period i.e., after the 7th century when the Bhakti literature such as the Devaram hymns of the Saiva Nayanmars and the Pasurams of the Vaishnava Alvars emerged. Even though they are religious works they are of immense value to have an analysis of the Bhakti Movement and also the religious pursuits of the Saivites and Vaishnavites. They also throw light on the steps taken by Nayanmars and Alvars in promoting their respective religious orders and the development of devotional centres and temples. The later works such as the Nandhikkalambagam of an anonymous author of the Pallava period, Jayankon dar’s Kalingattupparani of the Chola period are valuable sources for having an estimate of the political history of the respective ages. In the same way Kandapuranam, a work on Murugan based on the northern Sanskrit work Skandam, by Kachchhiyappar of Kanchi in epic form is a work on the Tamil deity Murugan, who was known by different names such Kandan, Seyon, Kadamban, Kumaran, Subrahmanya, Karthikeyan and so on. This work Kandapuranam which had came up after a longer gap after the decline of
Murugan cult in Tamil Nadu, was an endeavour made to elevate the status of Murugan, the pure Tamil deity. Though it is a religious work it consists of many historical details about the culture of the Tamils of the 12th and 13th centuries A.D.

Under such circumstances it will be appropriate to have a thorough and detailed study of that work to have the historical details about the Tamils of the contemporary period. As it will be beneficial for having a history based on a devotional work a detailed and critical study will be made on that line under the title Kandapurnam of Kachchiyappar in its Historical Setting. Along with the study of the facts about Murugan cult the various socio, cultural and historical facts available in Kandapuranam, also will be discussed by the dissertationist.

The works like “Manimegalai is its historical setting” by S. Krishnasamy Iyengar, “Ahananuru in its historical setting” by C.E. Ramachandran and the study of the work, such as ‘Cilappatikaram in its historical setting” by G. Maniskumar etc., compelled the dissertationist to analyse Kandapuranam by Kachchiyappar Sivachariyar in a historical background. Murugan, as depicted in the earlier Sangam classics was out and out a Tamil deity. His calling as Kadamban in association with Kadamba tree and flower, his names such as Sevvel, Seyon attest his association with red colour and the frenzied dance called Velanadal or Velan Veriyadal etc. will testify to his native origin.
The deity’s indigenous traits gradually got mixed up with the Skanda Karthikeya, the war god of the north. Due to the outcome of the Kalabhra interregnum the Murugan cult lost its significance. Due to the growth of Jainism moral literature also emerged in the Tamil country after the dismemberment of the Sangam age.

The fall of the Murugan cult in Tamil Nadu after the termination of the Sangam, the growth of Saivism and Vaishnavism due to the Bhakthi movement encouraged by the Nayanmars and Alvars pushed the worship of Murugan to the background. Murugan was relegated back to a secondary position as Parivaradevata and Gopuradevata during the imperial Chola period and Murugan was also made as the son of the Siva and son in law of Vishnu. After a lapse of nearly ten centuries after the Sangam age Kachchiyappar attempted to review the part glories of that deity, as well as the worship of Murugan by pointing out his different aspects. For achieving his ends Kachchiyappar brought out a devotional work called Kandapuranam on Murugan who was called as Kandan on par with the northern counterpart Skanda Karthikeya.

As Kandapuranam was a work written on Murugan it attained significance in exposing the Tamil society of that contemporary period along with distinctive features of Kandan. This work widens the scopes of estimating the facts about the Murugan cult along with the explication of the social, political, economic and religious aspects of the then Tamil society. Further by
the historical analysis of Kandapuranam by Kachchiyappar one can acknowledge the utilisation of a literary places as a historical source material. A critical and analytical study of a specific work on the worship of Murugan will enrich the scope in attaining historical facts.

The first introductory chapter will introduce the subject by way of explaining the aims and objectives of the study. It will also discuss the placement of the different chapters. The methodology adopted and the sources taken up for study will also be explained in it.

Kandapuranam, a bird’s eye view is the title of the second chapter Kandapuranam is a work by Kachchiyappar on Murugan, who had attained the status of Skanda and Subramanya during the period of the imperial Cholas and Pandya supremacy and demise of the Pallavas from the scene of the history of Tamil Nadu. So it is vital to have an analysis of the political condition as revealed by that work. Further this devotional work deals with the different aspects relating to a local deity.

By the historical analysis, it will be worth in adding fresh facts to the history of Tamil Nadu as depicted in Kandapuranam. Kachchiyappar who hailed form Kanchipuram, the renowned capital of the Pallavas, assigned importance to his birth place and to his mother tongue Tamil. Further as the capital city Kanchi was a popular Sanskrit centre he was able to have a unison between Tamil and Sanskrit. As such a critical analysis of Kandapuranam of
Kachchiyappar will be of great benefit in having the political ideas which prevailed then. The historical development of the deity Murugan and a cult of that deity could also be traced from that Tamil work which is in the form of Sanskrit Skandam. This Tamil work was the only work emerged then during that period.

The study of regional history has gained prominence nowadays and that in turn compelled the scholar to devote such attention to have a history of the Tamil country of the contemporary period of Kachchiyappar. Kandapuranam, which is in epic form throws much light on the historical facts with elaborate descriptions and contains different social, political, economic and religious elements in it. A scrupulous and analytical study will highlight such aspects.

Since Kachchiyappar, so particular in rejuvenating and reviving the glories of the Tamil deity Murugan, adopted various ways and means in eulogising the deity. It will be apt to have analysis of the Murugan worship as a socio-cultural analysis. For estimating the continuation of the traditional and customary practices included in the social, political, and religious aspects an analysis on that line is also warranted. So with the view to have the socio, political and religious ideas as depicted in Kandapuranam an attempt will be made in the subsequent pages.
Since each and every piece of work in any language is brought out with a specific purpose, Kandapuranam of Kachchiyappar too has its own purpose and endeavours to make the worship of Murugan, to regain its respectable status of the past. In this regard one has to notice the condition of that cult and its condition as a socio-cultural study.

The evolution and treatment of Murugan worship, the continuation of the customary practices, the various ways and means as related to life will be historical in character. Kachchiyappar, being a Tamil scholar, was capable of bring out his view points authentically on the basis of the northern Sanskrit. Under such a pretext Kachchiyappar had exhibited the various features of the facts relating to the Murugan worship. This work in the form of an epic discloses his superior wisdom and religious knowledge. It also exposes the wide horizon of knowledge of Kachchiyappar’s Sanskrit traditions. One should note the historicity of the work based on the age of Kachchiyappar and his work. The second chapter entitled Kachchiyappar’s Kandapuranam will highlight the historicity and the historical nature of this work which will widen the possibility to proceed in achieving the objective of the dissertation. This chapter will explicate the facts about the period and also the method employed in that work.

A proper critical and analytical approach of any literature will be beneficial for having an estimate of the different aspects of the contemporary society. As no endeavour has been hitherto made to analyse Kandapuranam as a
historical source material it is must to note how Kachchiyappar had brought out the Tamil culture of his contemporary period based on a Tamil literary tradition. The author, instead of deviating from the traditional approach, had poured all his thoughts and ideas with the harmonious blending of different sociological aspects.

The social life of not only of the Tamils but also of every developed and undeveloped society will centre on traditions, customary practices and the transformations and transitions introduced through the ages. The attachment of the people over the concepts, such as Karma, rebirth, philanthropic and generous attitude towards others, their aesthetic qualities, maintenances of moral standards etc., are the major traits of all the societies. On that line the Tamil society depicted by Kandapuranam should be analysed. The ideas of renunciation, conduct of penance, undertaking fasting, showing deep devotion towards all deities and adherence of the principles of Dharma are the other aspects of life in this world. Beyond the above mentioned facts it is a must to estimate the society on the basis of the status and position of women available in a society because that too will highlight its moral as well as general standard. The matrimonial customs, the reverence attached to married women and to widows, the importance assigned to chastity and morality too will speak for the enlightened way of life in a society.
The knowledge and wisdom of the people and the importance and significance, along with the attachment and affinity, shown towards their mother-tongue will pin point the values and exalted position of the mass of particular region. The multifaceted activities also will testify to their elite nature. Their wide horizon of knowledge and the utility value of multidimensional approaches will be beneficial for estimating their life. This will be applicable even to the use of different kinds of metals for various purposes in their life.

The literature contain details about the customary practices such as the food habits adopted, food stuffs consumed and the habit of dress and the materials used for making different varieties of dresses. Since the Tamil society was a tradition oriented and customary one even from the immemorial such an analysis is warranted. Every society is having its own invariable customs and beliefs and the Tamil country is not an exception because the Sangam classics contain lot of details and ways of life. For instance Thirumurugarruppadai of Nakkirar included the ten idylls i.e., Pathupattu reveals the facts about the worship of Murugan, a Tamil deity.

Likewise Pattinappalai and Maduraiakkanchi along with the works such as Ahananuru too consist of the different ways of life of the Tamils. They testify to facts which are available in each and every aspect of life of the Tamils who had their own individualistic and customary practices. The different
customary practices associated with the marriages, which were mostly ritualistic and conducted in a traditional way will highlight the nature of the Tamil society.

The Tamils adopted different kinds of sacrifices and executed funerary rites in their own way. The personal traits and qualities are part and parcel of the life of Tamils. The Tamil women had concentrated in beautifying themselves by the use of different cosmetics and eye-tex. The Tamils as a traditional approach had not only their own attachment towards beautification, charity, beliefs and superstitions as their personal qualities. They had their own affinities and attachments towards the one at all times. In general the Tamil society was a tradition oriented society.

The Tamils never neglected the use of different varieties of ornaments made of both costlier metals and beads. They had even used conches and cowrieshells for making their ornaments. No Tamil man or woman was exempted from wearing different types of ornaments. Under such a pretext the work Kandapuranam of Kachchiyappar will be discussed separately in the third chapter entitled Socio-Political Ideas in Kandapurnam.

The Tamil society was a renowned one thorough the ages and was known for its superiority during the various periods due to its individualistic and indigenous qualities along with its natural prosperity. The society maintained its
own unique social structure. It comprised of various sets of people based on many religion, professions and occupations. The Tamil Brahmi inscriptions available at Algarmalai, datable to the early centuries of the Christian era (2nd century B.C. to 3rd century A.D.) also will reveal economic condition of the contemporary Tamil society.

For instance, the people like Uppu Vanigar, Panitha Vanigar, Aruvai Vanigar, Kolu Vanigar, etc., are mentioned in by those Brahmi inscriptions. The terms such as andhanar, aralai kalvar, eyinar, parathavar, ulavar, kanigayar, parathayar etc. are repeatedly mentioned in various literary works included in Patthupattu, Ettuthogai, Cilappatikaram, etc., of the Sangam age. The Tamils were always proud of their own economic prosperity because that assisted them to lead a happy and comfortable life. As such facts are important features of social the history, it enabled the dissertationist to proceed on that line to cull out various social, political and economic facts as depicted in Kandapuranam.

Hereditary monarchy was the general political order even from the dawn of the Sangam age in Tamil Nadu. Among the various dynasties such as Pallavas, Pandyas, Cholas, Cheras, Vijayanagar rulers and Nayaks such traditions survived continuously till the transfer of political power from the hands of the natives to the alien British rule. The political condition was

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controlled by different monarchs belonging to various dynasties through the ages in Tamil Nadu. The kings enjoyed lot of privileges and high reputation and were called as Iraivan on par with God. They were so particular in maintaining their own routine duties and regular responsibilities. Importance was assigned to the advices offered by the ministers, spies and envoys. They were pious and religious tolerants. They never allowed their personal religion to meddle with the society.

The royal paraphernalia and regalia were considered as venerable objects. The throne, the umbrella, the crest, the elephant, the murasu, the garland etc., were included among them. Because of their individual qualities and carlibre the Tamils unhesitatingly imposed divinity on them and venerated as Iraivain. Even the Alvars mentioned that they were able to see God in king. The kings lived in the capitals and were ever prepared to listen to the public whether he was in his court or undertaking processions and tours. As eminent warriors they concentrated on wars of protection, expansions and consolidation. Various weapons were also employed by them. Such common factors of the Tamil monarchy will be analysed as made available by Kachiyappar in his work. Such an analysis will be of immense use to have a portrayal of the political conditions of that period in a separate chapter. Though it is not the aim and objective of the dissertationist to estimate the individual qualities of any rulers it is mainly to have an estimate of the general political ideas as pronounced by
Kachchiyappar in his work. It will also be beneficial for having an estimate of the political ideas and conditions of that contemporary period. This study will form a part and parcel of the study of the Tamil Socio-Political ideas and Kandapurnam.

As the work Kandapuranam centres on the Tamil deity Murugan, who was called as Kandan only after Sundarar, it becomes a must to know about the condition of Murugan worship in separate chapter entitled Murugan Worship.

Murugan, the indigenous Tamil deity was a deity of the Kurinji region during the Sangam age. He had his own individualistic qualities. He was the God of natural beauty associated with red colour, vengai and kadamba trees. Tirumurugarruppadai of Nakkirar, the only work on Murugan emerged as a Sangam classic stands testimony to the availability of Murugan Cult in Tamil Nadu. Though it contains many details regarding that deity from that time onwards no other individual work on Murugan emerged till the outcome of Kandapuranam written by Kachchiyappar in the 12th century. In the interim period of these two works Murugan cult met with a retrogression. But the treatment of Murugan as Somaskandan by Pallavas and Kandan, Karthikeyan and Subrahmanyan etc. by Cholas did not allow Murugan to continue as a primary deity. Such facts expose the northern impact and influence over the Murugan cult of Tamil Nadu. His secondary position as the second son of Siva and Parvathi and also the younger brother of Vinayaka is the other development
which occurred during the interim period. The iconographic features of Murugan also developed subsequently. For instance the Somaskanda (Saha + Uma + Skanda) panel emerged during the Pallava period and in all the Pallava Siva temples one could see the image of Muruga sitting on the thigh of his father along with his mother. Even such facts did not permit Murugan to regain his position which he enjoyed during the Sangam age. It also cannot be denied that there was an amalgamation of a Tamil deity Murugan with his counterpart in the north India with the name Skanda Karthikeya. There are ample references about the adoption of the northern traditions by the Murugan worshippers of the later period. Their distinctive nature suggest that they were different from the aspects adopted by the Tamils of the Sangam age. Both Tirumurgarruppadai and few songs in Pariapadal will attest the above facts.

After a lapse of nearly thousand years after the Sangam age in the 12th century Kachchiyappar wrote his Kandapuranam mainly revive the Murugan worship and to enhance the status and prestige of the Tamil deity Murugan. That work emerged in an epic from. An analysis of that work will certainly widen the scope in knowing the treatment of that deity by Kachchiyappar. The facts relating to the worship of Murugan, as narrated by Kachchiyappar, if brought to light that will be a new light focused on the history of Murugan worship. So a separate chapter under the title Murugan worship in Kandapuranam is given on that line. For the sake of making the
scholars to have a detailed account about the distinctive features of the deity Murugan and to have an idea about the techniques followed by Kachchiyappar in promoting the cult of Murugan, a separate chapter on Murugan worship is included. That will highlight the condition of the Murugan cult as portrayed in Kandapuranam.

Like the people of the other regions of India the Tamils were always pious and devotional in their attitude and outlook. The rulers also did not meddle with the religious pursuits and temperament of the ruled. While Murugan worship was a familiar one during the Sangam age, the deity’s popularity began to degenerate in the post Sangam age. The Saiva Nayanmars by using the familiarity of Murgan, the indigenous deity, made all constant efforts to popularise Saivism by calling Siva as the father of Murugan (Koli Kodiyon Tadai, Nal Velan Tadai etc.). In the same way, during the period of the Bhakthi movement, which lasted between the sixth and tenth centuries, the twelve Vaishnava Alvars with zeal and enthusiasm made their head way to promote Vaishnavism. Though both Saivism and Vaishnavism along with Jainism and Buddhism were encouraged by the Tamil rulers, due to their policy of religious toleration, Saivism gained a superior position over its rivals. The codification of the Saiva canonical works by the efforts of Raja Raja, the great, by using Nambiandar Nambi also led the Murugan cult to go back to a secondary position.
Simultaneously, the efforts of Pasupathas, Kalamuhas, Kapalikas, Lingayatas etc. enabled Saivism to have an upper hand. Saivism got the impetus through the outcome of its own individual philosophy. The Vedic scriptures and Sanskritic approaches also attained significance. So at that ripened period of Saivism and Vaishnavism the glories of Murugan, the Tamil deity had to be revived and rejuvenated. He had attained the status of a secondary nature of Parivara devata. The Bhakthi movement also started yielding its fruit. In the light of the above facts one has to concentrate on the religious condition of Tamil Nadu during the days of Kachchiyappar and that will be studied in the fifth chapter under the title Religion in Kandapuranam.

The impact of the widespread Vedic wisdom, the ways and means to avoid rebirth and the results of Karma along with the then existed value system will be analysed in this chapter. As it was a period which had already reached the developed stage of sculpture and iconography a study on that line also will be attempted. Since icons are the outcomes of man’s thinking about the image of different deities the devotees had unhesitatingly given human forms to their deities. By the analysis of the work Kandapuranam, if one is able to gain the knowledge about the evolution of iconographic feature, it will be beneficial to add fresh informations to the socio-cultural history of Tamil Nadu.
Since religion was attaining importance due to the faiths and beliefs of human beings over deities, people of various periods adhered to the adoption of distinctive forms of worship. For their own faith and belief they were executing a specific kind of worship. There were the customary practices such as undergoing fastings, conducting the sacrifices and execution of rituals.

The tradition of circumambulation of the deities, the conduct of rituals with use of flowers, the chanting of the mantras the offering of neyvedhyams, the application of the upacharas etc., were the traditional features associated with worship even from the early period onwards. Such aspects compel one to notice the tradition prevailed during the period of Kachchiyappar. Since Saivism was attaining prominence it is essential to know the relation between Siva and Muruga as depicted in the work Kandapuranam. The method employed by Kachchiyappar in making divinity as a perpetual feature will be analysed in the chapter entitled Religious Ideas in Kandapuranam. It will highlight the religious bent of mind of Kachchiyappar also.

The Chola, Pandya and Pallava rulers devoted themselves to the construction of temples of eminence for different deities to attract people to show their allegiance and devotion to God with concentrated mind. The temples stand as evidences for the promotion of religious pursuits and development of temple architecture, sculpture, rituals, fairs and festivals. They assisted unity and social cohesion among people.
Such facts will assist stressed the dissertationist to probe into the study of religious condition as revealed by Kandapuranam in the same chapter. With the development of Bhakthi and devotion people began to concentrate on the folk and minor deity worships. But it was not a new feature to the Tamils who were worshippers of mind deities. Deities such as Vinayaga and female deities such as Kali, Korravai, Parvathi and their worship continued. Such facts available in the work taken up for study will also be discussed.

The sixth chapter will be a concluding one. All the facts noticed will be summed up comprehensively in this chapter. Authentic history cannot be written without the use of relevant sources which deal with the subject. The sources will make the work a scholarly one. For a critical, analytical, interpretative and comparative and comparative historical analysis different sources are employed. They are both primary and secondary in character. Primarily the work depends upon the available literary sources. The Sangam classics, which include Patupattu, Ettutogai and Pathinenkil Kanakku have all been consulted.

The twin epics Silappatikaram and Manimegalai also assisted the study. The facts available in the 12 Saiva Tirumurais and the Nalayira divya Prabandam of the 12 Alvars compiled by Nathamuni also rendered more facts for a comparative study. The works like Mutoollayiram, Kaligattupparani,
Nandhikkalambagm also were helpful in bringing out this Thesis. Few archaeological sources as well as inscriptions are also consulted. The facts available in the work taken up for study are substantiated by the other sources mentioned. Many published and unpublished works, both in Tamil and English are also consulted, instead of their historical validity.

Kandapuranam of Kachchiyappar published by Kazahgam is treated as the Primary source material. The Sangam classics are also consulted as primary sources. The other Tamil works of the contemporary period and other relevant works of other periods are considered as primary sources. The Devaram hymns of the Saiva Nayanmars, the Nalayira Divya Prabandam of the Vaishnava Alvars, Pathinoram Thirumurai, Thiruvarutpa of St. Ramalinga etc., are consulted as primary sources. In addition to them some of the epigraphic reports are also taken into account.

The required facts from The Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics by James Hastings, John Dowson’s Classical Dictionary of Hindu Mythology and Religion, Geography, History and Literature, Tamil Kalai Kalanjiyam etc., have also been used for descriptive and comparative analysis. The Hindu Mythology and Indian Mythology written respectively by W.J. Wilkins and Veronica Ions, The Cult of Skanda Karthikeya in Ancient India by A.K. Chatterjee, Kandapurana Araichi by N. Ramalingam, Murugan Alladu Alagu by Thiru V. Kalyana Sundaranar, Sangam Polity by Dr. N. Subramanian,
Tamil Polity the research work by R. Rajalakshmi, Puthiya Nokkil Tamil Ilakkiya Varalaru by Tamilannal Tamilgathil Muruga Valipadu by M. Gandhidasan, etc., are few of the secondary sources consulted.

The Tamil Kappiyangal by K.V. Jagannathan, Tamilar Salbu by S. Vidhyananthan etc., assisted as works for cross reference. The journals like Ilakkiya Kolgai, Tamil Studies etc. are also used as source materials for the study. The unpublished but approved Ph.D. Thesis works of the Madurai Kamaraj University such as the Origin and Development of Murugan Cult in Tamil Nadu by M. Gandhi Dasan Cilappatikaram in its Historical Setting by G. Mariskumar, The Socio Political Ideas as revealed in the Nalayira Divya Prabandam by V.A. Vasantha also helped the making of this Thesis. Field visits were undertaken to places like Palayur, Tiruchendur, Tanjore, Tiruvayyaru, etc., for getting first hand information. Certain scholars were also interviewed for getting details regarding the study.

The interpretative, comparative and analytical historical research methodology is adopted. The different sources employed are given in the footnotes in each and every page. A Bibliography is also appended at the end.

Thus the Thesis Kandapuranam of Kachchiyappar in its Historical Setting is brought out on the basis of that facts extracted from the primary and secondary sources. By this socio-cultural study new facts in the history of Tamil
Nadu as gleaned from Kandapuranam of Kachchiyappar will be disclosed. This study will offer the scope in adding a new chapter in the history of Tamil Nadu in a new dimension. That will be mostly centering on the different facts as possessed in the Kandapuranam by Kachchiyappar.

As no attempt has been either to made on that line by utilizing a specific literary work this work is a particular analysis of Kandapuranam of Kachchiyappar, a Murugan devotee, who was particular in reviving and rejuvenating the Murgan Cult in Tamil Nadu, which was relegated back to a secondary position due to the arrival of the major religious sects called Saivism and Vaishnavism to the forefront due to the efforts of the Saiva Nayanmars and Vaishnava Alvars respectively. Thus this work on the cultural history of the Tamils of the medieval period will be beneficial for estimating the condition of Murugan cult in Tamil Nadu during the time of Kandapuranam of Kachchiyappar.