



# MINOR DEITIES WORSHIP AND FOLK CUSTOMS

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## FOREWORD

During the Stone Age, the nomadic man was moving from one place to another for the three basic needs of food, clothing and shelter. He faced many obstacles when he got these three requirements. He learned to grow his own food as he was forced to deal with various situations like weather and animals. Realizing that rain and sun are essential for the yield of crops, man worshiped rain and sun as gods. He worshiped as gods the natural forces like the moon that gives light at night, thunder, lightning that creates fear in animals and the fire that he finds.

At the time when he lived as an individual and started to live in a community, he worshiped the people who sacrificed their lives to save his community as gods. He took the middle stone and worshiped them. This Nadukal worship has changed from being a major deity worship to a minor deity worship. This article is about such minor deities.

## WORSHIP

Deification has gained prominence since people started worshiping nature as a god. The word worship consists of the meanings of worship, worship, and obedience. Worship also means worshiping a deity and by worshiping the deities

humans can definitely acquire certain qualities. The word worship stands for many things like honor, dignity, worship, value.

## ORIGIN OF WORSHIP

People in the world are performing various rituals. Sun, moon, stars, five giants, river, sea, mountain, animal, snake, cancer, vine, etc. Were worshiped in the life of the people in the early period. It is said that the fear of enemies is the reason for the emergence of deity worship. Deity worship arose out of fear, struggle, and gratitude.

## RELIGIOUS VIEWS NATURE VIEWS

On that day, the Tamils' worship did not involve the distinction of big deity and minor deity. Shiva, Thirumal, Murugan, Indra with the principle of religious orientation and equality. Varuna, the great deity, and traditional elements of minor deity worship such as nature worship, Koratavai worship, Nadukal Veeravanaka worship, Kaval deity worship etc.

## HINDUISM IS A BANYAN TREE

Hinduism is a banyan tree. Its tentacles are six segments.

1. **Saivism** – Worship of Shiva as the supreme deity
2. **Vaishnavism** – the religion where Tirumala is worshiped as the pantheon.
3. **Saktam** – the time of worshipping You as the Supreme Lord
4. **Ganapathiyam** – the time to worship Lord Ganesha as the supreme deity.
5. **Kaumaram** – the time when Lord Murugan is worshiped as the supreme deity.
6. **Sauram** – the time of worshipping the Sun as the supreme deity.

The sally roots of these six tentacles are minor deity worship.

## MINORITY WORSHIP

Our belief is not to live in a town without a temple. Folk deities occupy a special place in our country. These minor deities are the primordial symbols of Tamil culture. He who first worshiped nature also worshiped spirit as an extension of it. Spirit worship refers to the practice of worshipping dead ancestors. They took the animals that helped them as their clan symbols and started worshipping them as deities.

He took the middle stone between animals and man and worshiped him. Ancestor worship eventually became clan deity worship. Cult deity worship is a component of minor deity worship. A large number of people have been able to worship their ancestral deities.

Minor deities have birth and death. Which have specific energy. Minor deity temples are often presided over by non-Brahmin priests and in temples where only lay people can worship, there is definitely life sacrifice. There is no distinction between Saiva and Vaishnava among minor deities. Non-vegetable materials are used for bridging. Idols are created by people and maintained by people. The small deities who are enshrined in roofs, stone, wood and cancer have a monstrous form. Minor deities are considered to live in this world. It depends on Little Tradition and is related to village life.(2007:325-327)

### **NADUKAL WORSHIP ( HERO STONE WORSHIP)**

For the soldiers who died in the war, Kalnuttu worship was done in their memory.

**“kāṭci kālkōḷ nīrppaṭai naṭukal  
Cīāttaku marapiṇ perumpaṭai vāḷttaleṇru  
Iru mūṇru marapiṇ kalloṭu puṇara”** (purattinaiyiyal,5)  
**Eṇru tolkāppiyam veṭcit tinaippāṭal veḷippaṭuttukiratu.**

The soldiers who came in his way praised and sacrificed an ancient Munnon who saved the cow herds and composed a worship.

**nuḷainuti neṭuvēḷ kuṇumpaṭai maḷavā  
Muṇai āttantu murampiṇ vīḷtta  
Villō vāḷkkai viḷuttoṭai maṇavā  
Vallāṇ patukkaik kaṭavuṭ pēṇmār  
Naṭukal pīlicūṭṭit tuṭipaṭuttu  
Tōppik cuṇḷōṭu turū uppili koṭukkum  
Pōkkum kavalaiyai pulavanāru arum karam”** (akam.35:4-10)

Says Akhananuru. Kalnuttu is worshiped for mighty warriors in ancient Tamil tradition. There was a letter in the middle where the names of the heroes and their merits were engraved on the veerakall.

**viḷuttoṭai maṇavā villiṭat tolaintōr  
Eḷuttuṭai naṭukalleṇa”** (aiṅkurunūru-352)  
**pīṭum peyarum poṇittu atātorum  
Pīli cūṭṭiya piṇaṅku nilai naṭukal”** (tol.67)

The evidence suggests that minor deity elements of ancestral worship are found in Nadukal worship. This intercessory worship offered to the soldiers evolved into the worship of clan deities in the course of time to worship the ancestors who died in the family.

The people of that time prayed to the rain god to make it stop even if there was no rain, even if it rained heavily,

**malaivāṅ koḷkeṅa uyirppali tū'uy**  
**Māri āṅru maḷaimēkku uyāka eṅak**  
**Kaṭavuḷ pēṅiya kuṛavā mākkaḷ**  
**Peyalkaṅ māriya uvakaiyā" (puṛam.143:1-4)**

You can feel the way of four hundred songs.

Warriors used to worship Koravai, the goddess of the land, for victory.

**Maṛaṅkaṭai kūṭṭiya tuṅinilai ciṛanta**  
**Koṛṛavai nilaiyum attiṅaip puṛaṅē" (tol.Puṛam.62)**

Tolkappiyam says. The highlight of the worship is the celebration of the victory by the victors in the war and the glorification of the victory. The 'Vettuva Vari' contained in Silapathikaram gives a detailed and descriptive account of the characteristics of Koravai worship and the methods of worship.

During Indravizha, women worshiped Kaval Buddha at Poompattinam of Cauvery. On the sacrificial altar of Kaval Buddha, he is created by putting things such as sundals, egg balls, rice mixed with meat, etc. Shout out. Shout out. He danced with divine passion. Chola's country live without hunger, disease and enmity! Elangovadis say elements of folk worship that Bormudi women pray for abundance of rain and wealth.

**Kāval pūtattuk kaṭaikelu pīṭikaip**  
**puḷukkalum nōlaiyum viḷukkuṭai maṭaiyum**  
**pūvum, pukaiyum, poṅkalum corintu**  
**tuṅaṅkaiyā, kuravaiyā, aṅaṅkelun tāṭip**  
**perunila maṅṅaṅ irunilam aṅaṅkalum**  
**paciyum piṅiyum pakaiyum nīṅki**  
**vaiyum vaḷaṅum curakkeṅa vāḷtti" (cilampu. Intira viḷā ūr eṭutta kātai)**

On the fourteenth day after Kannagi burnt Madurai, she came and stood under a banyan tree on a hill. She went to heaven with her husband Govalan in the Budhaga Vimana that came from the sky. Seeing this, the Kuravas stood stunned and worshiped Kannagi as a deity. There are evidences of deities being worshiped in cities, squares, junctions, forum, pothills in ancient times. These are said to represent four junctions, three junctions and five junctions respectively. Pothill is a deity located in the common herds of the town.

Tamils worshiped Durgai, Aiyai and Goddess Kali by offering sacrifices

**Viṭā mukai aṭukkattu viṭalkeḷu cūlikkuk**

**Kaṭaṇum pūṇām kainnūl yāvām” (kuṟuntokai.218:1-2)**

Tamils have sacrificed their lives to Durga and when the ceremony begins, the priest ties the yellow thread around his arm to secure it. Only at the end of the ceremony will they remove the cover. This practice is still present in festivals held for village deities.

## EMINENCE OF IDOLATRY

Minor deity worship is the practice of planting a stone and garlanding it. Footprints of our heritage. We are emotional. Our forefathers have exalted the excellence of human relations and its truthfulness mixed with our divine worship. Many traditional customs and rules have been prescribed for us to worship this deity. They have bound our relations in it.

## CULT DEITY WORSHIP

Our forefathers worshiped family deities and kept family relationships flourishing in them. In addition to binding relationships, they have established rituals to protect our honor, fame, uniqueness, our identity, the heritage of our dynasty. Every Hindu family must have a temple of their clan deity in some corner of the world. An uninhabited wilderness like a forest, mountain, or field would have been created by the ancestors twenty generations ago.

## CONCLUSION

Folk deities are interpreted through many forms of stories, proverbs, songs and beliefs. The story of gods appearing as humans and living and dying, the story of revenge, the story of the deity coming and sitting in the present location, and its extraordinary deeds are full of deity stories. There are no minor gods without stories. All these stories are based on faith and come down through word of mouth. Songs are being provided. Our forefathers did not create rituals and ceremonies without reason. Their prophetic vision and the traditions given to us with far-sightedness are what sustains Hinduism in Tamil land.

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