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Karuppasamy As a Kuladeivam: A Study of Folk Beliefs and Ritual Practices

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***Abstract*—As a guardian deity, Karuppasamy is worshipped across rural and semi-urban Tamil Nadu. In fact, he is an important guardian deity and ancestral deity for many. Beliefs and practices associated with Karuppasamy offer insights on the traditional and folk aspects of the religion of the people of Tamil Nadu, especially in relation to family, ancestry, tribe, social relations, area and agriculture. The worship of Karuppasamy often takes the form of sacrifice, oath taking, offerings, vows and rituals performed by the community. In many parts of Tamil Nadu, he is the only guardian deity to whom people turn to for relief from troubles and threats brought about by supernatural forces. Beliefs and practices associated with the deity are a rich source of information on the yearnings of the people for security and welfare. In this study, I analyse beliefs and practices associated with the worship of Karuppasamy as a tribal deity. I review and analyse oral traditions and literary works based on village matters, and explain the role of the deity in safeguarding the interests of the community, including relief from various diseases and threats. I review and analyse rituals associated with the deity including annual animal and other offerings, drumming, the carrying of offerings, divine possession, oath taking and the fulfilment of vows. The study analyses the effects of the religious belief and practice on collective memory of a community.**

***Index Terms*—Karuppasamy, Kuladeivam, Folk Religion, Tamil Nadu, Guardian Deity, Ritual Practices, Folk Beliefs, Village Worship, Oral Tradition.**

I. INTRODUCTION

Tamil tradition incorporates organized temple traditions with unstructured village and folk traditions. Folk and village deities are often intertwined with the social and economic lives of the people, ancestral customs, and agricultural cycle. Moreover, they play a protective role over the community. Within the extensive framework of folk deities of Tamil Nadu, Karuppasamy occupies an important position. The literal meaning of the term kuladeivam is the deity of the family. The worship of kuladeivams is restricted to and practiced by only certain families. Often, families visit the abode of their clan deity in the ancient village or the family shrine to worship and offer thanks or to seek the deity's blessings and protection. Therefore, in many respects, Karuppasamy epitomizes a village and a clan deity. The distinction of kuladeivam from two

related concepts, gramadevata and ishtadevata, needs to be made. Associated with the defense of the limits of a settlement and the protection of the fertility of the soil of the agricultural lands of a locality is the gramadevata, who is venerated by the whole village. On the other hand, an ishtadevata is a personal family tutelary deity, chosen by an individual and whose worship is not carried on by his descendants. The devotion to a kuladeivam is primarily confined to a family or clan. As karula is a feeling primarily of a family or clan, so karuppasamy may be called a kuladeivam, and it is as such that he is of interest here. The Kallars are the principal people among the different clans and families, who have adopted karuppasamy as their kuladeivam. Ślączka (2016, p. 67), states that the Kallars give karuppasamy the place of their clan god, and further states that the earliest mention of this cult is found in the Nayaka period, and a prior record of it is not available. Other farming and artisan clans and families of Tamil Nadu also have sects in which they give the place of their family or clan gods to karuppasamy. Varieties of folk worship often include the depiction of regional and community-based variations of a deity. For example, in several communities, Karuppasamy is depicted as an ardh-netra (half-faced) devamanthri (female) and is often also associated with the weapons of a sickle or staff. Images of Karuppasamy often vary from region to region. In several communities, he is shown protecting the village shrine and boundary of the settlement. Folk religion often presupposes that evil and harmful forces are rampant in the world and in order to ward off evil and protect the community, a deity is invoked. Oral traditions and folklore often articulate and record the belief systems of various communities. Beliefs, powers and miracles of various folk deities often remain recorded in folksongs, narratives, and folklore. Community fairs and festivals are also important forum to represent and articulate community beliefs. Different villages and regions often maintain their distinctive variations in rituals and beliefs. Such variability often help historians comprehend the pragmatic aspects of folk and popular religion. There is a clear synergy between belief and ritual in the worship of Karuppasamy. A devotee approaches the deity with a petition and gives a promise to worship the deity should the petition be granted. The devotee believes that if the petition has been granted, he has an obligation to return to the shrine to worship the deity as he promised. Worship, therefore, comprises a two way traffic, devotees worship and are worshipped. The consideration of Karuppasamy as a family deity (Kuladevata) embodies the folk culture of the Tamil region. It illustrates how the religious tradition gives thanks to the ancestors, nourishes the family, harmonizes the social order and integrates the community. The tradition expresses the social longing of a community that is in need of God. This allows an analysis of indigenous religion and its accommodation of aspects of modern social and religious change, especially the eclectic nature of Hinduism.

Method statement: This research primarily uses published ethnographic and art-historical sources on Tamil folk religion to inform this research, and, in particular, Ślączka (2016), Masilamani-Meyer (2004/2018), Dumont (1959), Yamashita (1993), Mines (2005), and Dhas (2019). The study analyzes the many worship rituals of Karuppasamy and references the scholars who have documented them. In particular, the study references Karuppasamy worship among the Kallar community as a case of kuladeivam worship. Other scholarly work, both published and

unpublished, inform this research. Where the case studies referenced in this research are geographically specific, that is noted.

II. ETYMOLOGY AND NAMES

Karuppasamy is a Tamil name made up of elements from both Tamil and Sanskrit. The Tamil element karuppu means ‘black’ or ‘dark’. The Sanskrit element sami means ‘lord’ or ‘master’. Thus the name means ‘Lord Karuppan’. The Tamil personal name Karuppan is made up of the element Karuppan combined with the Sanskrit honorific sami. In Tamil Folk Cosmology, blackness (karumai) symbolizes military might, power, and fearlessness. It also represents the terrifying face of the ancient judge who dispensed punishment to law breakers. Because of this, the symbolism of blackness is completely the opposite of negativity. Based on this, Lord Karuppan is the personification of power, military might, and fearlessness, and punishes wrong doers. The Nadukal tradition of replacing fallen warrior memorial stones is associated by some historians with the earliest stratum of worship of Lord Karuppan. Documented in the Purananuru and Tolkappiyam, this tradition is also associated with the Sangam and early historic periods. Among the earliest archeological evidence of this tradition, is the Hero Stone (Circular Bhomma) dating back to the second or third century B.C. In later periods, this tradition continued, and over time, the abstract memorial stones transformed with the addition of humanlike features, various weapons, mythology and name.

There are several characteristics common to both traditions. For example, the presence of boundary shrines (ellai); a non-Brahmin hereditary priesthood (the exception being at Alagar Koyil); offerings of non-vegetarian food; and a memorial stone as the seat of community oaths. The ancient nadukal tradition and the historical Tamil cult of Karuppasamy are distinct, and the relationship between the two traditions should not be exaggerated. According to Ślączka (2016, p. 67) the earliest records of the Karuppasamy cult are unrecorded, and the earliest records attributable to the cult date to the Nayaka period (16th-18th centuries). Thus the earliest documented records of the cult, from an academic perspective, date to the Nayaka period. During this time, the deity was said to protect the village from spirit possession by enforcing a curse on those who broke a vow. The Kāruppāsamī ritual tradition is primarily Agamic and Sanskritic. Unlike Saiva and Vaisnava Tīrtham, shrines dedicated to Karuppasamy do not normally have Brahminic priests. In all likelihood the ritual traditions of Saiva and Vaisnava Tīrthamants are Sanskritic, and Kāruppāsamī rituals predominantly Agamic. In any case the ritual order in Kāruppāsamī Tīrtham presents a unique blend of Agamic and Sanskritic elements. Priestly caste is not as important as ancestral lineage in the case of Kāruppāsamī priests. According to Ślączka (2016, p. 67), other village deities also have priests belonging to all castes. Traditional offerings to Kāruppāsamī are rice cooked with sambar, fish and meat, and – regarded as sacro-profane offerings – betel leaves and talāyari (toddy). Sacred days include Saturdays, Kārtigai, and Amāvasai. Swearing by his name to settle disputes is common, especially in North Tamil Nadu.

Historical Development of Karuppasamy

The evolution of Karuppasamy worship can be studied as part of the evolution of Tamil folk religion. The religious traditions of the Tamils have included tree-spirit worship, worship of ancient heroes, the spirits of the soil, ancestors and the various other forces of nature. Worship of these spirits has taken place at various sites of natural beauty. The early Tamil writings and literature have referred to many of these practices and provide evidence to many memorial worships and protective deities of various regions. The early literature should be of great help in understanding the various protective deities of Tamil region and the worship practices of that time. The worship of protective deities or guardian spirits is one of the latest additions to Tamil folk religion. Different settlements have different protective deities. The protective deities of an area are normally located at the borders of the settlement. Guardian spirits often protect the interests of the community including crops, livestock and other resources. Myths and rituals associated with guardian spirits vary from place to place. Karuppasamy is one of the protective deities of the Tamil region. His name and form vary in different parts of Tamil region. He is associated with the protective spirit of the edge of the community, and also with the controlling spirit for social order and justice. He is considered the guardian spirit of the land, and particularly the protective spirit of children.

The historical development of worship of Karuppasamy reflects interaction between folk traditions and temple-based Hindu traditions. In some areas, Karuppasamy is represented as an independent village deity, while in other cases, he is subsidiary to other temple deities. In still other cases, he is an attendant or subordinate deity to a temple presiding deity. While in some areas, Karuppasamy has an independent temple tradition, in other areas, he is an attendant or subordinate deity to a presiding deity of the temple. It may be remarked that the presence of the worship of Karuppasamy shows the variety of religious practices of Tamil populace. Worship of Karuppasamy is closely connected with the lineage and ancestry of the families. Some families believe that they belong to a particular Karuppasamy shrine and acknowledge it as their ancestral shrine. Such a shrine may become a focus of the family's social cohesion and memory. Even if families move from their ancestral village to a town or city, they retain their link with the ancestral shrine. An important historical factor is the absence of a complete literacy tradition. Many of the traditions connected to Karuppasamy have been preserved by people in the form of oral traditions and performances. Because of the absence of a literate tradition, historical memory merged with the people's religious belief. A community may narrate the historical tradition of establishing their Karuppasamy shrine, with a merger of local tradition, lineage, and historical mythology.

Moreover, colonial records, ethnography, and other studies provided historians with additional insights regarding deities and village religions. These records illustrate the ways in which religious practices and beliefs structured village social and economic systems. Historians must view interpreters of village customs and traditions critically since they often explain customs and practices using terminology which, for them, may seem most appropriate and complete, yet often deviates from local concepts and may bear little relation to the traditions. Rituals and practices associated with the worship of Karuppasamy have undergone little change, even in the face of

rapidly urbanizing and modernizing society. However, places of worship have undergone renovation, and rituals and festivals have been adapted to bring together members of the community who have migrated to distant locations. The worship of Karuppasamy reflects the many layers of South Indian society and extends beyond the history of this particular deity to encompass other historical dimensions of South Indian (Tamil) folk and popular religion.

III. KARUPPASAMY AS A GUARDIAN DEITY

Traditionally, Karuppasamy has been worshiped as a protector in several regions of Tamil Nadu and in other Tamil regions as well. In religious thinking, he is concerned with the limits and territories of a place. Because of this, protective deity shrines are usually found at the limits of a village or in conjunction with other protective deities. Like other protective deities, a guardian deity of a Tamil village is generally associated with the land and people of that village and with the behavioral norms and customs of the village. Thus, a protector deity may be associated with more than one temple. The name Karuppasamy is commonly understood from the Tamil words karuppu and samy. Karuppu refers to black or dark, while samy is a respectful term used for a deity or lord. The name is closely connected with the way Karuppasamy is traditionally represented in many places. However, the meaning of a deity's name should not be taken as a complete explanation of the deity's history because local traditions contain their own stories and interpretations.

Karuppasamy as a Village Guardian Deity

One of the most important aspects of Karuppasamy worship is his role as a guardian deity. In traditional Tamil village settings, the boundary of a settlement has an important cultural and religious meaning. Guardian deities may be worshipped at these boundaries as protectors of the community. Karuppasamy is therefore often associated with protection, courage, justice and the safeguarding of the village. The exact beliefs connected with his protective role vary between temples and communities. Some traditions place particular emphasis on justice and truth, while others focus more strongly on the protection of the village and its people.

Karuppasamy and Ayyanar

Karuppasamy is frequently associated with Ayyanar in Tamil village deity traditions. In some traditions, Karuppasamy is described as an attendant or guardian associated with Ayyanar. In other places, Karuppasamy is worshipped independently as the principal guardian deity of a particular shrine or village. Because village traditions differ from one region to another, the relationship between Ayyanar and Karuppasamy should be understood according to the customs of the particular temple. Masilamani-Meyer (2004, as cited in Ślączka 2016, n. 28) describes Karuppar as Aiyanar's chief general (senapati). Dumont (1959) and Yamashita (1993) provide further documentation of the Aiyanar temple complex and its attendant deities. Karuppasamy is commonly represented as a strong and alert guardian. Traditional representations may include a

large moustache and weapons such as an aruval, spear or staff. These features are generally understood within the context of his guardian role. Depending on the region and the temple, many differing types of designs and architectural styles for temples are seen. Various representations of gods and goddesses are also seen. In addition to the main shrine, some temples have guardian deities and other traditional signs and symbols.

Karuppasamy and the Village Boundary

In Tamil traditions of guardian deities, boundaries of villages are important. Some of the shrines of Karuppasamy are on the edges of villages. Such shrines are of a guardian deity who is of the threshold and watching over the people of the village. Generally such a shrine is of a guardian deity who is of the protective spirit of the village. Such a shrine is part of the sacred scene of the village and is not part of a temple complex.

Tamil traditional religion has many guardian deities and village deities. Several festivals and religious practices are restricted to a particular place, village or region.

Different Names of Karuppasamy

Karuppasamy is known by different names and forms in different regions. The names used by devotees may depend on the local temple and community tradition. Some common names include: Karuppar, Karuppannasamy, Karuppaswamy, Periya Karuppar, Chinna Karuppar, Sangili Karuppar, Vettai Karuppar.

Karuppasamy as a Kaval Deivam

Karuppasamy occupies an important position among the kaval deivam (guardian deities) of Tamil folk religion. The word kaval refers to protection and deivam refers to deity, so kaval deivam refers to a deity who protects a particular area from negative influences. Such a deity is generally belief to be the guardian of a village or community. In Tamil Nadu, the rural folk rever decentralise such a deity by the name of Karuppasamy. Karuppasamy is a guardian deity who controls the supernatural forces that inhabit the wild, which surrounds and threatens a community. Traditionally, such a deity is believed to be the protector of the village boundaries. Hence a village shrine is generally located at the outskirts of the village. Karuppasamy is thus the guardian of the supernatural forces of the wild, which threatens the community. Karuppasamy has also been associated with the protection of social and moral order. It is generally believed that such a deity is the guardian of social and moral order of the community and is able to identiy and punish those who violate moral and social edicts. Therefore, people take oaths in the presence of the deity and seek his protection from evil and unfair social practices.

Ichnographically, Karuppasamy is depicted as an adult male figure with a staff, sickle, or sword. In iconology, staffs and swords represent defensive power, and a sickle denotes offense. Folk interpreters consider these implements as means through which the deity defends his devotees. Flower offerings, food offerings, and lamps are some of the offerings made to the deity. Of all these offerings, goat's sacrifice, accompanied by cigars and betel leaves, is peculiar to the deity.

Generally, Karuppasamy temples house a drum and cymbals, which are regularly played. Each devotee of the temple has the privilege of offering a vow (nerthi kadan) to the deity. It is believed that upon the fulfillment of the vow, the devotee returns thanks to the deity. Karuppasamy's temple festival is celebrated with much pomp and show. The worship of Karuppasamy is not complete without belief in and experience of the deity's divine presence and possession. It is reported that at such times, the inhabitants of the shrine, over whom divine presence is perceived, have spiritual and mental contact with the deity and are able to respond to individual questions from the members of the community and offer spiritual guidance. In this regard, communication and personal relationship of the Tamil folk religion devotee with the deity is appreciateable.

Kuladeivam is a divine protector. In this role, Karuppasamy facilitates the worship of family members' ancestral spirits and enables family members, who may have emigrated from the area, to maintain their connections with their ancestral spirits and the place of their ancestors' worship. In this way, the divine protector provides continuity in a family and a community. Karuppasamy also provides protection to communities in many other ways. For example, the protections that he gives extends to communities' fields and other possessions. He may protect communities from a variety of calamities and misfortunes, accidents and evil acts. Thus, because of the importance of his protection, the deity is part of daily life in the community. Cultivating Karuppasamy as kaval deivam provides folk communities the opportunity to express a variety of concerns they have in their daily living such as protecting crops, domestic animals and other possessions. Community members may feel that his protection gives them moral and legal security and preserves their identity as a community. Because of the differences that exist from one locality to another, a variety of local beliefs and rituals have been founded to worship and express concern for protection from Karuppasamy.

IV. RITUAL PRACTICES AND WORSHIP

Karuppasamy worship includes a variety of ritual practices that differ according to locality, community and shrine tradition. These practices provide an important means through which religious beliefs are expressed collectively. Devotees traditionally make various offerings to the deity. The nature of offerings differs according to local customs and family traditions. Food offerings, flowers, fruits and other ritual objects may form part of worship. In many communities, offerings of toddy, cigars, and betel leaves are also made, and animal sacrifice—particularly of goats and chickens—continues in numerous shrines. Vows constitute an important element of folk worship. Devotees may make a vow when seeking protection or assistance and perform a particular offering after believing that their prayer has been fulfilled. Many Karuppasamy shrines conduct annual festivals. These festivals bring together family members, relatives and members of the wider community. They therefore have both religious and social functions.

Various performances such as music, dancing, and others, can be found during and after a festival. Songs help in the transmission of oral traditions. Performance are means for expression of cultural identity. There are certain local practices where certain deities and other sacred objects are taken out in a procession. This extended the deity's protection to other areas of the settlement. Depending on the practice and customs of the community, certain persons, such as traditional priest or others, perform rituals and ceremonies. They are the custodians of the traditions. Although the practices are changing because of modernization, some rituals continue and some are modified. This is evidence that practices of folk religion helps peoples' cope and adapt to changing social circumstances.

V. SOCIAL AND CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

In Tamil folk religion, Karuppasamy is a blood-thirsty, spirit guardian of the wild, and has an affinity with the borders of a village. Many of these shrines are found in the wild and are relatively small when compared to the large temple complexes found in southern India. The shrines also do not have large gateway towers (gopurams). The spirit of Karuppasamy is depicted like other South Indian guardian spirits with a sword and/or mace. The sickle is also shown in his hands to represent that he trims away evil. Karuppasamy also has similarities to the Sri Lankan god Kambili Deviyo. Kambili Deviyo, like Karuppasamy, is also found in the Wanni Hatpattuwa (Kurunegala) and Nuwara Kalaviya (Anuradhapura) districts of Sri Lanka, and like Karuppasamy, is associated with the tools of the farming trade. Kambili is the Sinhala name for the deity associated with the woollen blanket (kambali). As such, there are Sinhala texts that provide historical accounts of the migration of deities from the Tamil Nadu region. It is also stated that, similar to Karuppasamy's role as the vanguard for Ayyanar, the Sinhalese deity, in the guardianship of village and reservoir boundaries, Kambili, as an attendant deity, plays a similar role. Additionally, there are several Tamil families in Sri Lanka, who consider Karuppasamy as their family deity (kuladevata). Karuppasamy is the chief military attendant of Ayyanar and in his divya karppori, is the dark lord (dark guardian) who protects and enforces villages boundaries and borders. Swearing "by Karuppasamy" is one of the strongest oaths in Tamil Nadu.

VI. LEGENDS AND ORAL TRADITIONS OF KARUPPASAMY

In Tamil Nadu, oral religious traditions place Karuppasamy in high esteem. Most deities of repute in other parts of the world have literary traditions that describe and elaborate on their deeds and events of their lives. In the absence of systematic and/or continuous literary traditions relating to Karuppasamy, the events and traditions associated with him have been preserved in different ways. Some are memorialized in songs and other performances; some traditions are preserved in families and passed on by elders. Thus, literary, and other scholarly, work on Karuppasamy have to contend with several incongruent and often conflicting accounts about his

life, service and deeds. Many accounts agree that he emerged as a protector to a specific place, family or community. Accounts differ and sometimes there are several versions of why he became protector of a specific place, family or community. Some accounts suggest that the community came to recognize the existence of a supernatural power, which if protected, reassured safety and well being of the community.

VII. KARUPPASAMY AS A HEROIC PROTECTOR

In the traditions of folk literature,Karuppasamy is depicted as a courageous and powerful being. In folk tales, he is usually shown as a strong and courageous being who fights evil and protects the innocent. He is also the village guardian. To fight evil and protect the village, he is usually depicted as wielding a sword (Aruval), and other weapons. In folk literature, other accompanying objects that he is shown wielding provide similar meanings. Thus, the main concern of these folklore is to instill a feeling of security and protection among village folk.

VIII. KARUPPASAMY AND JUSTICE

The theme of justice is particularly notable in the folklore of Karuppasamy. Often in popular belief, Karuppasamy is regarded as the protector of truth and God of justice. People approach this deity when they think an injustice is done to them. Therefore, in folklores, instances of false statements, breaking of promises, and cheating are seen in connection to worship of Karuppasamy. People believe that this deity can discern and know the truth and falsehood. Hence, in the moral sense, the temple acquires great importance.

IX. KARUPPASAMY AND AYYANAR TRADITIONS

Karpupasamy is related to Ayyanar, another important village guardian deity, in several Tamil folklore traditions. How exactly they are related varies from place to place. In some cases, Karpupasamy is explained as a guardian of Ayyanar, while in others, he is explained as an independent guardian deity. Protection and service to other deities are the themes that unite Ayyanar and Karpupasamy. Like other folklore traditions of Tamilnadu, these traditions also point to the interrelated nature of village deity traditions. So, instead of viewing the differences as variations, the similarities in relations of Ayyanar and Karpupasamy should be historically described. Stories related to Karpupasamy also focus on places like the edge of the village and fields, paths, forests and other areas of religious importance. The reason for the religious importance of a place may have been historically preserved in oral traditions of the village. Over time, numerous stories transform ordinary locations of a village into the sacred sites of the religious traditions of the village.

When worshipped as a Kuladeivam, several family specific stories get associated with Karuppasamy. Family members may remember the stories about their ancestors and the

relationship that their ancestors had with the deity and why they began the worship. Stories may also describe why the family worships at a particular Karuppasamy temple, the location of the ancestral deity, why the family offers particular kinds of naivelyittam, the mode and manner of worship and family rituals. In the absence of a proper family history, oral traditions and family stories linked with Karuppasamy may help the younger family members to understand and appreciate their family history. Thus Karuppasamy oral traditions help the members of the family, especially the younger members, to identify with their families and understand their family history. While oral traditions may describe family stories in the same way, in practice family stories may differ across families and also differ across communities. New events may be added to family stories over time. Oral traditions related to Karuppasamy help histrionics excavate community memory, social customs, sacred places and social relations. Legendary traditions are also evidence of social memory. However, care must be taken while treating oral traditions as historic records. There are other relevant records to consult. Ethnography and field research are important sources of evidence in historic research. It is indeed right to say that if an event did not occur as stated in an oral tradition, the tradition has no historic worth. The event may have occurred in a different manner. It is important to analyse oral traditions to decipher what the community wants to tell or demonstrate. Urban migration has not halted the telling of Karuppasamy legends. People visiting their ancestral home during a festival is a reminder of their history and legends. Today, the family members of the Kuladevata, scattered over different locations, come together to commemorate their social memory. There is constant interaction over the social media and other communication channels. The oral traditions of Karuppasamy are comfortable moulding themselves with changing social realities.

X. CONCLUSION

An analysis of Karuppasamy as a Kuladeivam shows how different strands of Tamil tradition are combined to give expression to the everyday needs of the people. It also shows how other strands of tradition, for example the historical, have influenced and shaped popular belief. Local conditions created a felt need for a tutelary deity, and the ensuing centuries witnessed the slow evolution of a peculiar type of guardian deity. Among other village guardian deities, the worship of Ayyanar is allied to that of Karuppasamy. But, it must be added that Karuppasamy shrines are usually found at the borders of a village, and signify protective deities of a locality. Legends preserve the values of honor, courage, and welfare of the community and ancestors. These are patriarchal remembrances. These cherished legends are the wealth of Tamil folk heritage. The deity, as Kuladevata, fortifies the religious attachment of people to their family deity and ancestral deity. The communal regular services are bonding practices. Regular communal services preserve social, kinship ties and cultural traditions of the people. In the process of urbanization, some changes were introduced to people's religion; however, worship of Karuppasamy attests to people's attachment to their ancestral religion. Thus worship of Karuppasamy, in addition to being a religion, is also a social and cultural expression of people.

Studies on the various names and titles of Karuppasamy, his relationship with Ayyanar, Kuladeivam, other sacred spaces, as well as folklores, traditions and practices, contribute to the understanding of Tamil folk civilization.

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