

A Self Proclaimed Study on Tamil Culture Religion Language and Society in Today's Times

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Abstract

Looking at the title may baffle the reader and the listener as what can one say in self study about a particular state, but in this paper I am not going to be biased or against any state its culture language or society. In fact it is the truth and fact as experienced by me, I am presenting in this paper. Being a literary person it gives me immense pleasure to portray the truth about the culture, religion and society. Any coin has two sides so has life good as well as bad side, being a literary and, a critical person would love to showcase both the effects, I apologise to my readers as well as listeners for it. Coming from the western region where people of any place is accepted, as we even have a saying we add sugar to all our dishes our speech is also sweet. Therefore anyone coming to us gets mingled with us in a very homely atmosphere then whatever is the intention. This may not be the truth about all states that is what I want to convey in a straight forward manner with positive attitude. Any culture, religion and society have its own aspects which should be respected in its way without going against it or trying to boast about our own religion culture and society.

KEYWORDS:Tamil Culture, religion and Society.

Introduction:

As the topic of the seminar says Tamhizian Literature it really confuses us though I am an academician a literary person. At one stroke I even had to get confirmed from Regin sir what does Tamhizian mean or say, later on after his explanation I could connect it to literature written by Tamilians staying away from home land like the Diaspora literature. It could be through people who miss their homeland or it could be anything about society, culture, religion and to remember about Tamilnadu as homeland. Then after discussing with our organizer I could conclude that why can't I express my feelings for this land, no doubt it had been a very short stay yet it has taught a lot to us that is me, my daughter and family. Therefore I take this opportunity to present a paper and also I have titled as a self proclaimed study on Tamil culture, religion, language and society. Whatever I have written down here is from my daughter's experiences as she has lived here in Tamil Nadu for her higher education and it has lot of impact on her mind. Whatever I am going to narrate in this paper is all very real and experienced, being connected with literature being a lecturer of English I have related things in literary manner and penned down.

Society and language:

As the word Tamhizian goes, **Tam** means **self spokenhizian is unfolding the sound** that as per my understanding, it speaks like Diasporians, as the diaspora writers same is Tamhizian many people from Tamilnadu have moved from here educated themselves from other states and returned to their states, this is to bring awareness in their state and give something to their people. This giving can be in both senses good

as well as bad. The society is such it always takes the opportunity, whoever it be the rich or the poor anywhere we go may be it is our own country or a foreign land the west. The rich become richer and poor reaches to poverty it is only the middle class who suffers. I would say the people in south wherever you travel in the southern states are very intrinsic the society is such they won't mingle with the northern states. Not only northern anywhere than it is eastern or western states. First comes the language they will not say any other language even if they know, except their state language. This is the first part to show their belongingness irrespective of religion either the person is a Hindu, a Muslim or Christian that is the best part of them as per language he is treated as brethren. Even if a person knows English however much highly qualified he is, he will never answer you. Why I have pointed first at the language because that is the first thing a person needs to communicate as soon as one enters any state. This is the basic amenity for any person to survive in that country, this is the fact happened with my daughter it was her hospital where she got admission through Delhi National Board. The Great Minakshi Mission hospital, where she had gone for her higher education, she needed to learn the language first. As her patients from very elite class to very lower class would come, she had to communicate with them therefore if she wanted to survive and become something she needed the language first. No doubt it was a very difficult task but one very old gentleman highly qualified man in spite of his knowing different languages, did teach her the language and on the day of his being discharged spoke to my daughter in Hindi as well as English. She asked him why you did so with me, to this he replied I wanted you to survive in this society for it is a very different and difficult society that was his answer.

Every society has different outlook towards females even though we are living in the twenty-first century we call our self liberal, however much we might be qualified having lots of degrees moved around the world. Even having educated our wives and daughters in fact we might be wanting educated girls as brides for our sons, but when it comes to girls from other states and someone else's daughter the look and the attitude changes. This is what had happened with my daughter, the doctors society were also not ready to accept her in the department. As the branch in which she took admission was general surgery which is a male dominated branch, the first question asked to her by the head of the department was **"Is the branch taken by you is by choice or by force"** to which her reply was **choice** yet the doctors didn't take her with a positive attitude. Being a very firm and adamant student she also didn't move back, remaining firm with her choice being it her interest she slowly and steadily started working. Learning the language with the help of the patients and she got absorbed into her branch, after completing her three years she got all praises. So here it compels me to say that today also in the twenty-first century we have states where women are not treated as equal. There still remains a question of biasness among certain classes, we say we are giving freedom to women allowing them to do what they like but this is the society. Had it been some girl from the same state she wouldn't have been treated in such a manner, it is all because of language and coming from different state the treatment was meted. Besides this she had some very good experiences also as she worked with the hospital, she was studying she needed to attend conferences as a part of her study. Her teachers also taught her that she should not stay out for long along with her colleagues, after the completion of her conference if they would have dinner she should take dinner and immediately leave. This was for her self defence as in south there is no ban for drinking, also her teacher guided her she should not drink with her elders. Even if she was offered that was again for her security, for that was

her good. One more incident I want to quote is within that period of three years, there was a conference organized at our state her teacher the head of the hospital later on made a point came and met our family, had food with us and also appreciated my daughter a lot. Once a person was not ready to teach her, but by the end of two years he comes and appreciates that was a very positive attitude of a teacher.

I am not against the people but it is all about the oneness among the people of south, one very good positive attitude about the people of Tamil is what ever be the caste or class all are considered as equal whether they belong to higher or lower community, if you know the language you are treated as one. As coming to great writer of Indian English literature R. K Narayan, who was from South having written so many novels belonging to upper class did get married to a girl from a different class. This is a good approach about all the south Indian states whether it is Chennai, Tamilnadu, or Kerela.

This has also been my plight living among the south Indians in GCC countries, when you meet an Indian and at first they speak to you but slowly and steadily they have their groups and they will not include you in their gatherings. But if he is from their state knowing the language immediately is acceptable whatever be their class or caste. This is how the south Indians have unity among themselves. This is the notion I have about the Tamils and Kerelites no doubt being the oldest clan, however much a person is educated he always has a very down to earth nature. They do not have a habit of bringing down someone by showing his drawbacks nor by de-motivating him. On the contrary they will always try to help others, but one needs to show a longing to learn something.

Society:

Tamil society is a very rigid society if we see, certain people have marriages among their first uncles, as girls are married to their mother's brother or even to father's sister's son. And if they bring from outside they will see to it that they get married as per their rituals. Many different class take dowry also, the girl should bring a lot of gold from parents side otherwise it is difficult for the girl to survive. Also in many places it is something good, like a girl even after she is married she will get equal share from property of her parents. Even if a girl is highly qualified and working at a very good level but she is given importance only if she has brought along with her good gold. It would not matter what is the quality of the gold she carries but the quantity always matters. This again I relate it with my daughter's experience, as a student she would not wear much of gold except a thin chain around her neck. For this also she was criticised by her colleagues, then she asked them what they were wearing whether it was pure gold or what Karat was it? To this the answer she received was it was hardly 8 to 10 karat gold then she had to tell them what she was wearing was 22 karat gold chain at which they were shocked and then nobody bothered her. So one can see the discrimination being a girl you need to be decked in gold all time. Even one of her friends who was belonging to upper class and that class is most respected class they say we don't take dowry, yet if a girl doesn't bring anything along with her, she is not looked upon as complete bride she too needs to carry something with her in the form of dowry, this is the Tamilian society still prevailing in India.

Religion:

The most important topic to be discussed according to me, it is only in south where you will find all people whatever be the religion but celebrate one main festival and that is Pongal. This is the main festival for entire Tamilnadu state whatever the case is, it is celebrated with great pomp and show. It last for four days it starts from 13th of January and ends by 16th of January, it is celebrated as a thanks giving for the harvesting period. As a thanksgiving to sun god, people from all religion begin preparation before a month by cleaning their houses, decorating them by making beautiful designs with the help of powdered rice at the entrances of the houses and buying new clothes for all members. Besides Pongal is also a dish prepared for all the festivities. Every class and caste has its own religious festival but the manner in which this festival is celebrated is a real charm. This shows the people of Tamilnadu have great respect for the harvesting festival, the mother earth called Pongal. No doubt a person from every religion celebrates their religious festival but the manner in which this festival is given importance is totally different.

This was about celebrating festivals now I come to believing in black magic, south Indians believe too much in black magic, they will not go to a doctor until and unless the situation becomes worse, they are specially related to lower class people. No doubt we say that we are in the twenty-first century, we should educate the poor but this is not the case. Instead of trying to make these people aware about medication and its treatment, one could find people still living in the dark. As most of the people still follow the black magic and other medication, until and unless the worst situation doesn't come up they will not come to the doctor. Then when they come it is time where the person is on the last stage for which they will also have to lose their land and everything. Sometime they even have to sell off their land and mortgage their home and belongings. Such things still prevail in the south.

There is a lot of rigidity still prevailing in the south which should be driven out, at least not for achieving something but to make people literate. For these poor people what they are losing is their land and home and the poor are becoming poorer.

Conclusion:

I have written this paper not to hurt any one's feelings but just to express my views, as I have said a coin has two sides each work also has two folds. Good as well as bad, some people always speak good things even if it has hurt you. They would never criticise but being an academician, and I getting an opportunity through Regin sir who provided a platform to me and I could put down my thoughts and experiences about the place. So everything achieved or received is not a plate full of goodies, always one has to undergo difficulties also to achieve something in life. I am very thankful to Regin sir for his support to accept such a paper.

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