

Puberty Rites and Rituals among Valluvars of Pudhucherry: A Gender Perspective

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In India feminine gender of women is conceptualized as fertility. Therefore in every transition stages of women various rites and rituals are performed for honouring her feminine and fertility, Because she has a responsibility to continue the patrilineal line by giving birth to children. Eventually to fulfill her duty of femininity, the tremendous importance of women's is given. Fertility is essential to the complete identity of a woman. As the femininity and fertility are immutably linked. This is particularly apparent in beliefs concerning the puberty rites and rituals as it enables women to recognize their natural generative power and to construct the feminine gender in contradistinction to the masculine.

In this paper an attempt is made to bring about the salient features in regarding with the rite and rituals of puberty among Valluvar of Pudhucherry in gender perspective. The Valluvar are Tamil speakers and are priestly community of Scheduled Caste group of Tamil Nadu and Pudhucherry.

There are two Objectives in this study. First one is to study the perception of puberty celebration and other one to study the rite and rituals related with the puberty.

The data for this research is conducted among Valluvar of Pudhucherry district in Union Territory of Pudhucherry. In Pudhucherry district two villages are selected, where there is high concentration of Valluvar population. An ethnographic data is collected on Valluvar of Pudhucherry district. As this subject is related with women, many women informants of different age group are interviewed and observation method is also used for collecting the data.

This rite is followed by rites of separation into a sexual world. This is a transition period from social kinship, between physical maturity and social maturity. Puberty is welcomed by one and all, for one cannot reach the state of motherhood, a higher status, without attaining menarche.

Key words: *Valluvar, Conception of womanhood, Puberty,*