

INDIAN SURVEY



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VILLU PATTU-A TRADITIONAL FOLK ART OF SOUTH TAMIL NADU

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Introduction

Villu Pattu is one of the heritage resources in Tamil Nadu. This is a folk art where performers narrate stories of chronicled, religious sequences through melody, with 'Villu' as the primary instrument. It is performed in the southern districts of Tamil Nadu. It is commonly famous among the Nadar and Ezhava communities of South Tamil Nadu. The music and dance of Tamil Nadu had their beginnings in the temples. From early times, various groups of people were named to sing divine songs in the temple. The officials called Thevara Nayakams or heads of the world of music planned the private worship of rulers and group singing. Tamil Nadu is wealthy in various creative articulations and each structure is fascinating and has its very own advantages. Music, the comprehensive language of humankind is referred to in Tamil composition as *Pattu*, *Padal* and *Isai*. The Tamil composing is rich with notes on music and instruments. Music included a huge place in the life of the Tamil people.

Origin of Villu Pattu:

In festivity of the temples, Villu Pattu is the focal function. For the most part, these festivals are conducted from January to May. These festivals occur on Tuesdays for female divinities and on Fridays for male divine beings. Villu Pattu has stood up to various transformative stages. The people worship the divinities with planning Pongal and making offerings. In festivity Villu Pattu (bow-song) is performed ceremonially. Despite the way that the Villu Pattu messages exist in oral traditions, they have been written in palm leaves and scratch cushion too. The name of the melodic describing structure was gotten from the essential instrument that is used – the "Villu" or "bow," having a singular string with jingling ringers attached. The bow foundation of the instrument accounts for several other variations of the name Villu Paatu, such as Vil, Villu, Villadi, Villadipaattu, Villadichanpaattu and Villisai. Villu Pattu narrated the life of heroes, local deities, historical events and stories of Epics and Puranas, which were once very popular in the society, are of rare occurrence today because of the effects of modernization. India has large

forms of music and dances as a part of year old convention of expressive expressions and tradition of the people. They were powerful in conveying forward the different legendary stories from age to age while entertaining the audiences. Tamil culture is the way of life of the Tamil people and established in human expressions and lifestyles of Tamils in India and all over the globe. The antiquated Tamil works, for example, the Silappatikaram, portray an arrangement of music, and a seventh century Pallava engraving at Kudimiyamalai contains one of the soonest enduring instances of Indian music in documentation.

The Tamil poem *Viralividu Thoothu* composed by Deivasilaiyar in the sixteenth century states about the love of Sudalai Madan through Villu Pattu and Kaniyan Koothu, which recommends that Villu Pattu on Sudalai Madan showed up in any event in the early part of sixteenth century. He makes use of the phrase "*Paadukinra Villaam*" for denoting the Villu Pattu that was carried out to sacrifice the deity Sudalaimaadan. The majority of the occurrence of this art was pervasive in the temples situated in the southern areas of Tamil Nadu. As indicated by Lakshmanan Chettiar (2002), the content of the tunes of Villu Pattu are simple and flowing and are invariably in ballad style, couched in rural dialect, and abounding in proverbs. The idioms and phrases being utilized among the villagers have been used in these songs. However, they got another shape and have gotten pregnant with significance. The running matters of these songs are such a logical inconsistency rhythm and an inside rhyme subject to stresses which serve to update the assessment of music in them. Another huge portion of the substance is that essentially every couplet or refrain closes with a decline. The repetition of the hold back empowers the audience to follow the bow-song story.

Instruments:

Udukkai, Kudam and Thala Kattai are other instruments used to add flavor to the performance. The traditional instruments such as Pambai, Urumi and Thakkai are also being used. These instruments were very noisy as the sound of these instruments often did not allow the words to be audible to the listeners. However, the audience always enjoy these noises too. Dolak, Dolki, or Mridhangam, Tabla, Kol, are replaced now-a-days. Every performance is started with pooja and a Thuvakkamelam or Theermanam (Signature Rhythm). With no additional makeup, the artistes are seated around the Lead artist on the stage. Exactly when Villu Pattu is going full scale, there is a radiant coordination of music raised from the Veasukols, ringers, pot-beating, Udukku, tala kattai and cymbals to the mentality of tune. Harmonium and thabela, which are the fundamental portions of present day Villu Pattu programs, were not, now used in the antique type of Villu Pattu. Villu Pattu is an old kind of melodic, a describing craft of southern Tamil Nadu. Villu, the

profound established weapon of saints inconceivably fits be used as a fundamental instrument for the Villu Pattu masters. Villu or the Villu, is the main instrument of this society performing craftsmanship. The materials that go to make up the gathering conveying the foundation music for the bow-tune include an astoundingly tremendous bow made both of a tough piece of the palmyra tree or of metal. The Villu that gives ambient melodies for Villu Pattu includes a seven feet long wooden bar with bowed metal covers at the two completions which are tied by a strong high strain string. The point of convergence of the curved side of the bow is made to lay on the neck of a colossal estimated earthen pitcher. The pitcher itself lays on a sensitive cushion or a round circle like thing with a bended opening made of coconut fiber. As such the bow, when set on the neck of the pitcher and held in touchy harmony by the performers, takes after an enhanced bow with its two terminations looking upwards. There are various bronze ringers dangling from the bow in succession start to finish. The focal point of the Villu home on a pot and broadened line of the Villu is hit with two sticks that are outfitted with jingles. These sticks are called *Veesukolor Villadikol*. Generally, this Villu is delivered utilizing the capacity compartment of palm or Jack natural item tree. However, as of now a-days, a couple of artistes use metallic Villu in addition. The string is commonly made of the tendons of cows and unexpectedly a thick cotton string. A pair of shafts is used to play on the string which would product a jingling effect because of the bells tied to the Villu. The Villu is adjusted by the entertainers utilizing a little string that is attached with the Villu and enormous finger of the leg.

The fundamental artist situated in the focal point of the Villu beats the string with two thin wooden poles called *Veesukols* musically to the melody. One supporting craftsman holds a percussion instrument called *udukku* in flat situation in the left hand and beats it with the fingers of right hand. The *udukku* should be the instrument in the possession of Lord Siva creating a sound resonating as Tamil. Different names for the *udukku* are *Tudi*, *Parai* or *Idai Surungu Parai*. This is a very vibrant rhythmic instrument. This is a small drum, about 30 centimeters in length with a narrow waist in the middle. Straightforwardly along the middle overlooking the twine is a thick tape, the squeezing of which fixes the pitiful string on the film achieving the sharpening of the tone. The effect of this is really captivating. For the most part, the shell is of metal, wood or earth. Another supporting expert keeps *tala* with the guide of two wooden pieces while other one plays images. *Kudam* is a significant instrument in Villu Pattu. There is no differentiation among any sort of Music and it has all inclusive allure as an outline of this, the "Ghatam" of Carnatic music with the "Kudam" of Villu Pattu. This instrument should be quick ad lib of the pots conveyed for gathering nectar during chasing. Obviously, presently it has become "representative", it is as yet the pot of best music. It

gives the base tone of "Ghum" to the high pitch of the jingling of the rings attached to the Villu. Shruti box or Harmonium is likewise being utilized nowadays. The bow is formed connecting materials like vilkathir, munaikuppigal (tip snares) thick rope (vadam) chimes (manigal) and rings. The center piece of vilkathir is bound to the pot. Playing on the cowhide string with veesukol (beating stick) music is delivered. Just the ideal vocalist utilizes the veesukol. Pot player is the head of tune vocalists. This pot is made of dirt and is prepared in skin. Its mouth parcel is exceptionally solid. Holding an instrument looking like the table tennis however in the correct hand and beating beneath the neck part of the pot with a wooden piece called *chothukattai*. Villu Pattu is sung by raising various sorts of tunes consolidating rectangular wooden pieces made of solid Karungali tree and beating instruments made of Bronze. The instrument is called *udukkuor thudi*, is capable of making musical variations and various rhythms. The body portion of *udukkuis* made of bronze and its two sides are covered with animal skin. The special rhythm produced is called *Udukku*.

Performers:

There are regularly five artists in a Villu Pattu group. They are Pulavar or Annavi or the lead entertainer vocalist, Secondary performer much of the time and Instrumentalist, Kudam (pot) player, Jalra player and Udukkai player. A co-entertainer beats the pot while singing. There is regularly another co-craftsman who goes probably as attentive person to the depiction, articulating appropriate oral responses. All the performers also accompany the main singer in his songs and also follow him through chorus singing. They also participate in the dialogues by assuming certain imaginary roles in the course of the narration. The Pulavar is the head of the troupe. He is usually a poet and a singer as well. Composing songs impromptu and delivering the same to suit the occasion and audience are his special talents.

Performance:

Villu Pattu has been performed mostly in the villages of Nadars and to a small extent in the villages of Vellalas and scheduled castes during the temple festivals. In Tamil Nadu, it is a tradition to perform Villu Pattu on the days of temple festivals only. There has been a growing tendency to narrate the achievements of heroes, who had suffered a lot for the benefit of others, through Villu Pattu to remember and respect them among the village people. The performance usually occurs regarding the temple celebration going on for about a week between September and January. The dais of the performance will be arrangement before the temple on one side and the audience will be situated on the ground confronting the divinity. The basic constitution of Villu Pattu is performed by a group. This group generally comprises of five artists. Every last one of them plays on the instruments and

sings. On certain events a couple of more help them. Basically, the performing artists of Villu Pattu have been partitioned into two groups. One is Vanampaadigal (lead singers) the other is Itampaadikal (chorus singers). They play on every instrument.

In Villu pattu, the entertainers are normally separated into two groups to demonstrate different sides of a subject. The principle narrator portrays the story striking the bow and going with company rehash suitable reactions orally. Performing this art is popular among the Nadars of Tamil Nadu. Villu Pattu have been performed in the premises of temples as a sacrifice to propitiate the small deities and they seem to be the most flourishing folk performing art in this district. In Villu Pattu, the main artist narrates a story from religion or social issue while striking the Villu that rests on a mud pot, the co-singer beats the mouth of the pot by making a chorus and another co-singer utters appropriate oral responses to the words of main artist. There is another percussion instrument called Udukku, which the player holds in a flat position while playing. A second part in the gathering will keep tala with the guide of little wooden pieces called the Kashta. A third part will play the cymbals. At the point when the bow-tune program is going all out, there is an ideal co-appointment of music wherein the bow, the chime and the percussion instruments work together each creating without anyone else and in mix, overwhelming and quick moving music with regards to the dispositions of the ballad. By this art, stories of village deities are described before the likenesses of the divinities till one enthusiast having a place with that town gets into craze to play out a furious move called *Samiyattam* before individuals swarmed during the celebration. In current Villu Pattu, which are prominently called present day Villu Pattu, harmonium and tabela are utilized notwithstanding the old instruments utilized in this Villu Pattu, some film tunes are likewise included at reasonable places and jokes are underlying to pull in the crowd, however the essential subject or narrating is the equivalent.

Some Popular Artists:

The specialty of Villu Pattu developed rapidly and consistently in the twentieth century, and it was upheld by numerous specialists. Aruvikkuttipulavar taught Villu pattu to his pupils Somasundaram Nadar and Madakkannu Nadar in nearly around 1862-1875A.D. The artists who contributed to the growth of Villu Pattu are Sathur P. Pitchai Kutti, Kothamangalam Subbu, Thovalai Sundaram Pillai, Kolappa Pillai, Kuladeivam Rajagopal, Sevalkulam Thangaiya, Villathikulam Rajalakshmi, Sivakasi Gandhimathy, Kovilpatti Chinnappa, Srinivasan, Chellappa, and Kanchi Muthuganesan. Contemporary artists include Kavignar Subbu Arumugam, S.S. Rajendran, Attur Gomathi, and Kanchipuram Vajravelu. Subbu Arumugam popularized the art of Villu Pattu with his great enthusiasm. Impressed by his

talent, N. S. Krishnan, the comedy king of the Tamil film industry, invited him to Chennai and involved him in performing in his Villu Pattu programs. Subbu Arumugam also wrote many comedy movie scores for his mentor. He became an expert in Villu Pattu and performed a variety of themes. Another performer contributing to the art of Villu Pattu is Ms. Gandhimathi of Madurai. She has been a Villu Pattu artist for more than 30 years, beginning the study of singing and instruments as a child.

Conclusion:

The contributions of Villu Pattu artists and performers of Tamil Nadu must be seen in this unique circumstance. For, without them and their soul of commitment, there will be a distinction with the past. It is unquestionably the legacy of the express that shapes its uniqueness. Tamil Nadu has given the space to its variety to bloom and blossom and be communicated in its completion. They sporadically help the nearby government to spread social messages and promulgation. In this way, a valuation for the social milieu through social the travel industry is critical for the improvement attempts. The honorable advances taken by the accomplice is of excellent tremendousness. Social variety is as basic to a general public as common assortment. Tamil Nadu has a commitment to pass on the procured culture in the whole of its riches and combination to the people later on. The endeavors should be to set up a positive climate for the social conventions and practices to flourish, understanding that it is the social abundance which are the assets that make the state satisfied, superb and related. Expressive arts make shows, lifestyles and conviction systems of Tamil Nadu have set aside long a long effort to create. Tamil Nadu has its people social conventions and rich innovative verbalizations.

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