

The Evolution and Socio-Cultural Reflections of Tamil Lullabies from Ancient to Modern Times

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INTRODUCTION

- This research article explores the multifaceted nature of "Thalattu Padalgal" (Tamil lullabies)
 - analyzing their historical evolution
 - inherent characteristics
 - structural forms
 - contemporary relevance.
- Rooted in the profound maternal bond, lullabies are identified as the **spontaneous melodic expressions of a mother's immeasurable love for her child.**
- This study traces the origins of lullabies in Tamil Nadu, from their mention in ancient texts like Tolkappiyam and Sangam literature (Paripaadal, Natrinai) to their development in Bhakti literature, where Periyazhwar is credited as the first to compose a Thalattu in Tamil.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Purpose

- Sung by mothers and grandmothers to soothe infants to sleep.

Themes

- Express maternal affection, daily rural life, hopes, anxieties, and devotional feelings.

Form

- Characterized by repetitive refrains such as “Aararo Aariraro” and simple melodies.

Cultural role

- Served as carriers of cultural values, morals, and Tamil linguistic patterns.

Gender aspect

- Functioned as an emotional and creative outlet for women.

Musical influence

- Some lullabies show links with Carnatic ragas (e.g., Nilambari).

Modern changes

- Decline due to lifestyle shifts; less common among younger mothers.

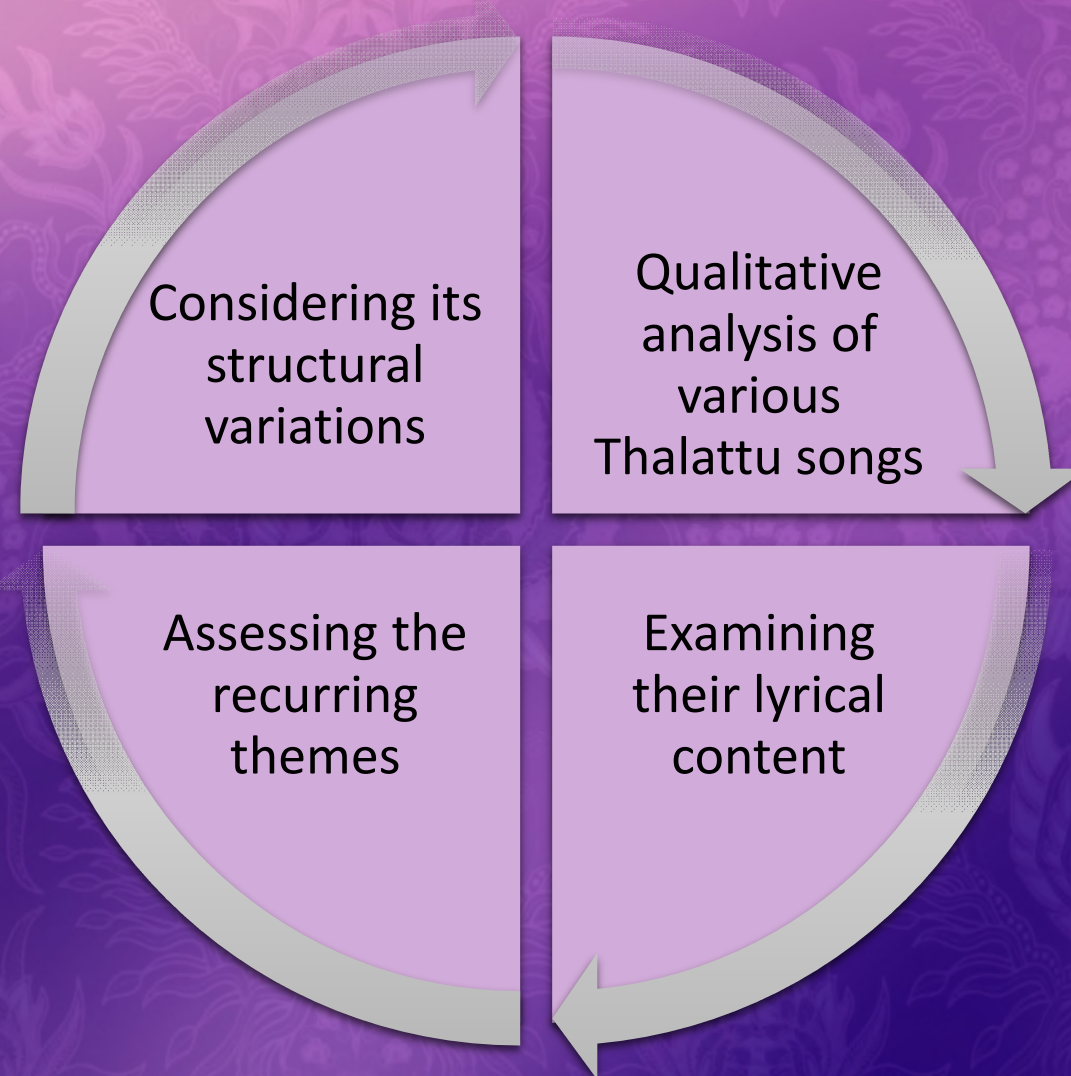
Revival efforts

- Documented through recordings, albums (e.g., Vatsalyam), stage performances, and online initiatives during COVID-19 era.

Significance

- Lullabies remain cultural artifacts reflecting Tamil society’s history, emotions, and evolving identity.

METHOD



FINDING AND DISCUSSION

- The study delves into how these songs articulate a mother's experiences of hardship before childbirth, her prayers for progeny, her questioning of a child's cries, and elaborate descriptions and praises of the child.
- Furthermore, it investigates the consistent use of prosperity-inducing words like wealth, pearls, corals, cattle, and buffaloes, reflecting a mother's aspiration for her child's prosperous life.
- The research also highlights the adaptable nature of lullabies, noting how their length can vary based on the mother's emotional state and the child's sleep.

CONCLUSION

- The objective is to demonstrate how Thalattu songs serve not only to soothe a child but also as a rich repository of socio-economic realities, familial values, and cultural beliefs prevalent across different eras in Tamil society.
- The study will conclude by emphasizing the enduring presence of lullabies in human society, underscoring their significance as a unique literary and musical tradition that continues to express the timeless emotions of motherhood.

CONCLUSION

- This woman proudly sings that her husband is a government employee, earning five hundred rupees a month. In her lullaby, she praises her husband, singing that he has a golden pen, a soft mattress to lean on, and royal respect wherever he goes.

‘ஆராராரோ ஆரிராரோ – கண்ணே
ஆராராரோ ஆரிராரோ

.....
ராஜா போர தேசமெல்லாம் ராஜகூடம்’.

('Aarararo Aariraro – my dear child,

Aarararo Aariraro

.....
Wherever the king goes, it's a royal court.')

- How does this mother perceive her child? As a green mango in the month of Maasi and a ripe mango in the month of Vaikasi. Who is the child's father? He is the virtuous one who owns the grove of screw-pine trees with a thousand blossoming petals! He is the righteous one who owns the grove of Punnai trees with a thousand fragrant flowers!

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THANK YOU!