

# FOLK RELIGION OF SIVAGANGA DISTRICT IN TAMILNADU: A CULTURAL HISTORICAL STUDY

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By

**D.K.VENKATACHALAPATHY**

(Register No.0747)

Lecturer (S.G) in History  
Arumugam Pillai Seethai Ammal College  
Tiruppattur

Under the Guidance of

**Dr. D. GANGADHARAN, M.A., M.Phil., Ph.D.,**

Head of the Department of History,  
A.P.A. College of Arts and Culture,  
Palani – 624 601.



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## INTRODUCTION

This dissertation entitled "Folk Religion of Sivaganga District in Tamilnadu: A Cultural Historical Study" is a micro-cultural-historical study on two counts. First, it is confined to a limited geographical region in Tamilnadu, and secondly, it is confined to the folk culture of the rural masses of the present day Sivaganga District.<sup>1</sup> The culture is of the folk, different from the Brahmanical or the classical culture, which is concerned with the worship of the *Puranic* textual based Hindu gods like Siva, Vishnu and Brahma and goddesses like Parvati, Lakshmi, Sarasvati, and Durga. However, subjected to various socio-cultural dynamics, the folk culture of the rural masses shows signs of transformation called 'upward mobility,' which some sociologists call Sanskritization.<sup>2</sup>

The introductory part of this thesis first highlights the topography of the region and the people of various communities. Then, it brings out the differences between folk religion and classical religion and also the salient features of the folk religion of Sivaganga District in Tamilnadu. It also explains

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<sup>1</sup> "Sivaganga" is also spelt as "Sivangai". In this thesis, "Sivaganga" is uniformly used.

<sup>2</sup> M.N.Srinivas, *Social Change in Modern India*, Orient Longmans Limited, New Delhi, 1972, pp.1-8. Though this concept is much debated and challenged by some sociologists, this researcher finds it operating in the region under his field study.