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## KONGU VELLALAR'S MARRIAGE RITUAL'S

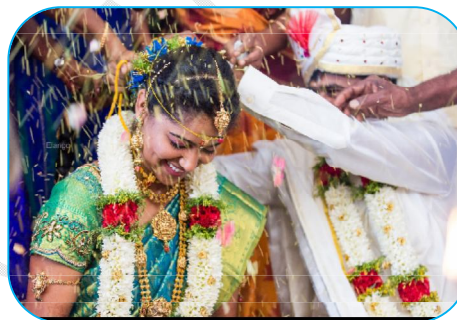
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### ABSTRACT:

*The Kongu Vellalar were of great assistance to the king by being in various positions and ranks in the army. They also got the title 'Kamindan' from the king for their meritorious service and loyalty. Later the title got modified as 'Gounden'. To streamline the living together of the boy and the girl, certain regulations and procedures were created. The procedures and habits as per certain regulations later became 'rites'. The performance of all the rites collectively in a sequence is called marriage. All the ceremonial rites relating to Kongu Vellalar marriage are performed by 'arumaikaarar' arumaikaari, naavidhan (barbar), washer man (vannaan) and such other who are closely associated with the occupation of Kongu Vellalar Gounders. The Kongu Vellalar marriage can be said to resemble the 'prajaapathyam' type marriage of the Aryans. In Kongu Vellalar marriage, the bridegroom's family goes to the bride's house, propose the marriage and request the consent of the bride's family for the alliance. After obtaining consent from the bride's family, the marriage takes place.*



**KEYWORDS:** Betrothal, Sambandhi, Kuladheivams, Gounden.

### INTRODUCTION:-

Kongu Vellalar Gounders- Ceremonial Rites in Marriages. The various rites being performed nowadays in the marriage ceremony of Kongu Vellalar community are unique in nature. Each and every rite is performed for some specific reason. The original rites performed centuries ago in Kongu Vellalar marriage ceremony which resembled 'Sangam' age rites have undergone minor changes and modifications from technology

and consequent changes in customs, habits and facilities. Some rites have ceased to exist because of their having become obsolete. The rites which are being performed nowadays in Kongu Vellalar marriage ceremony reflect the superior character, rich culture and high tradition of Kongu Vellalar community.

### PORUTHAM AND SAGUNAM PAARTHAL:

Tholkaappiyar says that there are ten aspects of agreement

(porutham) to be looked in to between the boy and girl. They are birth, quality of family, strength, age personality, attachment, humility, compassion, knowledge and wealth. The temples of respective 'Kuladheivams'. Keeping flowers in front of god and watching the movement of the flower, listening to the voice and sound of lizard are some of omens, which are looked at before taking a decision on matrimonial matters. Only if the omen is good and positive. The

green signal for the marriage will be given. Mutual visit to the houses of bride and bridegroom. After coming to a decision that the proposal for marriage is satisfactory and can be gone through, the bridegrooms, family members and close relatives will visit the house of the bride and see for themselves the state of affairs, the house, the land, quality of living, status and other such things and in the same manner, the bride's family members and close relatives will visit the bridegroom's house. Only after knowing and evaluating all these aspects and getting themselves satisfied with all relevant matters, will consent be given to the next stage called betrothal.

### **BETROTHAL:**

After taking a decision that the marriage can be conducted. An auspicious day will be chosen and on that day. The bridegroom's family along with relatives and friends will go to the bride's house. The bride's parents as well as bridegroom's parents are called 'Sambandhi'. A plate containing fruits, Betel and areca nut will be kept on a tripod. Persons from bride's side and the bridegroom's side will sit opposite to each other, with tripod kept in between them and start holding discussions. The bridegroom's side will tell the bride's that they have come to request their consent for the marriage alliance and the bride's will reciprocate by giving their consent with pleasure. Then the two sides will exchange plates containing coconut and fruits. The girls will be called and given a plate containing new dresses and presents. After receiving the same, the bride will enter the dressing room and come out after wearing the new dress given by the bridegroom's side. The bride will be asked to keep in her lap betel, areca nut, turmeric, lemon, etc. and pay regards and respect to elders present on that occasion to grace the betrothal function.

### **INVITATION FOR MARRIAGE:**

Nowadays marriage invitation cards are printed and mostly sent by post. Only close relatives and friends are invited personally by handing over invitation cards. In those days, the kudimagan used to go to each and every house in person for extending the invitation for marriage. The kudimagan will also specify the number of invitees in each house for the marriage. Even if person from the bride's family or bridegroom's family invited personally, the invitees will not attend the marriage unless he kudimagan comes in person and extends the invitations. Such was the importance attached to the kudimagan's invitations in those days in Kongu Vellalar marriages.

### **rites BEFORE MARRIAGE:**

As soon as the marriage is fixed, the relatives will voluntarily come forward to involve themselves in all work relating to the marriage in bride's house and bridegroom's house. The relatives consider it an honour to go to the marriage house and do the works relating to the marriage. The various rites in Kongu Vellalar marriages are conducted by an elderly person of the Kongu Vellalar community itself, called 'Arumaikaarar'. Rising of sacrificial fire and chanting of vedic hymns do not find a place in the marriage ceremony of Kongu Vellalar. The marriage rites reveal the fine qualities and rich traditions of Kongu Vellalar community. Wide publicity is given for the celebration of temporary structure (pandhal), cutting firewood and the loud beating of musical instruments. The events and rites such as 'Parriyam' idudhal, betrothal, kulamKodhudhal and MuhurtthakaalNaattudhal serve as evidence for the marriage. Fasting and 'KaappuKattudhal' are rites which mark the determination of the bride and the bridegroom to enter into a new life. Typing of thaali by the bridegroom around the neck of the bride and exchanging of garlands in the presence of all gathered for the marriage ceremony mark the completion of the wedding. The blessings for the couple through mangalavaazhthu songs are also considered to be the blessings of the people present for the marriage ceremony. The rite 'naattukalvazhipaadu' shows that any important event or activity is commenced only after paying regards and respect for community leaders and obtaining their blessings. When other communities have opened their gateway for Aryan and priestly rites, Kongu Vellalar community has not accepted the above rites for purpose of following. The main purpose of today's marriage movement is that all the marriage rites should be performed only in Tamil. This is being followed fully in Kongu Vellalar

marriages. In each and every marriage, it is natural that certain rites take place. Marriage without rites means marriage without irrational and foolish rites. Most of the rites of KonguVellalar marriages resemble those in marriages of Sangam age.

KonguVellar Marriage Rites and Marriage Venue. In the Past, Kongu Vellalar marriages took place in bride's house. In those days, it was the practice that only very close relatives were invited for the marriages. However, nowadays relatives, friends, neighbor and other known persons are being invited in large number for the marriage. The marriage of Kongu Vellalar are celebrate for there consecutive days.

#### **The First Day Event:**

The First day even is called 'Naalvirundhu'. On this day, close relatives of the bride and bridegroom will host feast of the bride's family and bridegroom's family respectively.

#### **The Second Day Event:**

On the second day, marriage arrangements will be done by brining together all relatives. Events such as erection of pandhal (temporaryshed), cutting of 'MuhurthaKaal', hairdressing of bridegroom by kudimagan. Informaing the marriage event to village community by drum beating, hosting of feast for the relatives in the bride's family as well as bridegroom's family, bridegroom leaving for the bride's house will take place on the second day. The marriage event will take place in bride's house.

#### **The Third Day Event:**

The mukurtham will take place on third day. The bride and the brideroom will be seated on the marriage platform on completion of appropriate rites. The thaali (mangalanaan will be tied by the bridegroom around the bride's neck and mangalavaazhthu song will beecited. The marriage events will come to a close with the serving of grand feast to all relatives. Friends and neighbors. The marriage events will be performed by a respected elderly person of the community itself called arumaikaarar. This section explains the various events of the marriage ceremony.

#### **CONCLUSION:**

Rich culture, high tradition, customs and habits of Kongu Vellalar, who are the indigenious clan of Tamil Nadu, are revealed in the various marriage rites. The Kongu Vellalar is comparable to the best in the world. The Kongu Vellalar, who were the chief architects of agriculture, can feel very proud of their unique and ancient culture, known extraordinary hard work, hospitality, helping nature, harmonious living with nature as well as other communities, courage respecting women, high standards of living, prosperity and support to deserving. Kongu Vellalar Marriages in Tamil Literatures Kongu Vellalar had held high positions such were chieftains and army generals. Hence rites relating to government administration and war find their places in Kongu Vellalar marriages. The events such as bridegroom riding a horse in olden days, giving gifts and presents including weapons are examples of the above. The main occupation of Kongu Vellalar was agriculture and they excelled in it by their hard work and dedicated efforts. Hence agriculture related rites such as boiling paddy and seer koodai formed part of the marriages rites of Kongu Vellalar.

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