Tradition and Transformation: A Discussion on Thirukkural in Indian Political Thought

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Abstract
The relationship between literature and politics is a reciprocal one. The core theme of literature makes a positive impact on individual and society. Literature was considered as a powerful tool to explore the moral, ethical and social values which brought notable changes in the socio–political sphere. In this context, Thirukkural is most important universally accepted literature as it reveals the ethical values of politics and administrative system found in the erstwhile Tamil society like elements of state, fortification, excellence of army, factors for good governance, qualities of a king, minister, avoidance of faults, etc. Thirukkural is a timeless Tamil Classic written approximately 2,000 years ago by the great thinker and philosopher – Saint Thiruvalluvar. Ethical and political principles of a very high standard are expressed in the Thirukkural in a lucid and precise manner which also applicable to the present-day democratic governance. Out of the three, the second part ‘Porul’, (Wealth) is a treatise on political philosophy and administrative practices as well as on economy. It is directly addressed to the leader or the Ruler. As such this paper attempts to highlight the administrative thoughts of Thiruvalluvar in the context of good governance and welfare politics that existed in ancient Tamil society.

Key Words: Administration, Politics, Welfare State, Good Governance, Democracy.
I. INTRODUCTION

It is well known on the Indian Subcontinent that ethical philosophers have written ethical works. Thirukkural is an example of a piece of writing that conveyed a moral message and has survived to the present time. Tentatively living with his wife, Vasuki, Thiruvalluvar is believed to have written the book on palm leaves. The Mylapore neighbourhood of Chennai is believed to be where he is hiding out. Because it contains universally applicable principles, this work has been translated into a plethora of languages throughout the world. Thirukkural is widely accepted and practised in Tamil Nadu, to the point where it has been equated to the Vedas and dubbed the "Tamil Veda" (Tamil Vedic tradition). The work and its contents are only vaguely understood by political theory historians, despite this fact. Kautilya's Artha Shastra is the more well-known of the two texts (a Sanskrit text). For example, Joseph J. Spengler (1971) includes a chapter on the Artha Shastra and another on Manu's Dharmashastra as part of his scholarly study of Indian political and economic thought. When it comes to Tamil kings and taxes, Spengler (chapter 3, no. 79; chap. 4, no. 47) makes reference to them in the footnotes, but he does not mention Thirukkural. Consequently, the purpose of this article is to draw attention to an ancient work on politics that is not included in the canon of Sanskrit literature and to engage in a conversation about it with an English-speaking audience.

They are based on four fundamental life goals: dharma, artha, kamma, and moksha. The couplets are based on four fundamental life goals: (liberation). However, Thirukkural is only interested in the first three of these items. If one lives his or her life in accordance with the ethical principles outlined in this text, it is assumed that the fourth goal will be achieved on its own.

According to oral tradition, Thiruvalluvar is the author of these couplets, and he is believed to be the poet. Valluvar is the name given to the weaver's caste. As part of this update, the honorific title thiru, which is derived from the author's surname, has been included in the list. The fact that he has been the subject of several urban legends hasn't helped us figure out who he is. For the creation of the work, several authors have proposed various time periods for its conception. According to archaeological evidence, it was built between the first and fifth centuries A.D. Therefore, it is impossible to determine with certainty the time period during which it was written. Furthermore, we have no way of knowing whether or not there were more couplets than the ones that have been passed down to us from the original sources of inspiration. After the original composition was completed, it is possible that a couplet or two were added to it. According to the terms of this document, the document will be considered a work by a single author. In the porul (material things) paal, which is the first of three objectives in life, you will learn about politics, economics, and administration, among other things (division). It should have been taken into consideration that all of these topics were interconnected in some way. It is divided into three sections: Aram (virtue), Porul (wealth), and Kamam (knowledge). Aram is the first section, Porul is the second, and Kamam is the third section (Love). You can read about Porul's political and economic philosophy in the sections devoted to him. You can also read his poetry.
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Polity

The foundation of government in Thiruvalluvar's polity (statecraft) is royalty, not democracy, as he sees it. In contrast to the rest of the world, the king is bound by the rule of law in the Kingdom of Thailand. Thiruvalluvar, a Tamil writer from the sixth century, imagines what an ideal state led by a just king would look like and describes how such a state would function, without a hint of realpolitik or cynicism in his descriptions of how such a state would function. This can be interpreted as a practical application of ethical reasoning in Thiruvalluvar's situation. Many of the characteristics associated with royal status are something he wishes to emulate.

This was in keeping with the system of government that was in place at the time, as Thiruvalluvar established an executive-style state under the direction of a king. The monarch is also in charge of the production, acquisition, preservation, and distribution of the nation's assets, among other things. In order to complete these tasks, it is claimed that the king will require a large army of subjects, food supplies, ministers, allies, and defensive fortifications. Several characteristics, according to Thiruvalluvar, are required of a king in order for him to be effective in his reign. Courage, vigour, and vitality; liberality and wisdom; diligence and learning; boldness and valour; grace and virtue; virtue and grace; and virtue and grace are just a few of the characteristics that characterise a Christian. Everyone believes that getting to know the king will be simple and straightforward.

In the opinion of Thiruvalluvar, a state is defined as one that upholds law and order while also ensuring equal justice for all citizens. To him, it is critical that the king rule in a just manner. The king is asked to conduct an extensive investigation and to administer justice and punishment in a fair and impartial manner, and he agrees with this request. It is his contention that, in the final analysis, it is the sceptre that is victorious rather than the sword. According to Thiruvalluvar, the use of lethal injection in the case of criminals who have committed crimes against humanity is not a moral objection, and the author concludes that punishment is a moral obligation. Given the overall tone of his writings, which is one of nonviolent resistance, his support for the death penalty appears to be a bit of a paradox.

According to Thiruvalluvar's chapter on Tyranny, tyranny is always an option in a policymaking form of government where policy is made. If a ruler has evil intentions while in power, he may succumb to tyranny, which he strongly condemns because of the self-destructive effects it has on individuals and on society as a whole. As an explanation, Valluvar was pessimistic. The author asserts that an oppressive and exploitative tyrant will cause the people a great deal of unknowable and indefinite suffering if he continues to rule. An oppressive and sinful monarch is compared to a murderer in terms of evil. He predicts that the wealth of the state will be depleted as a result of the king's cruelty and the tears of the oppressed. Terrorism will be assassinated, according to him, if a king participates in it. Natural events, such as the cessation of rain and the production of less milk by cows, he claims, have been brought about by the king's injustice. As a result, those who are treated unfairly will suffer terrible consequences. In the end, the tyrant will lose everything, as Thiruvalluvar forebodes. Thiruvalluvar's perspective on the king and the state is that of
a lawful system governed by fair and consistent laws. Justice is emphasised as a fundamental principle of government administration, and he emphasises the importance of justice in particular. The role of the king as a social planner is one that should be cherished.

Advisors, soldiers, and other administrators are needed by the king in order to run the state effectively and efficiently. In terms of the roles and characteristics of these officials, Thiruvalluvar is well-versed, and his opinions on them are plentiful. He goes into great depth about how to choose and manage them. It is said that the ministers are "the king's eyes," and Thiruvalluvar counselled extreme caution when choosing them for the throne. It is his suggestion that well-known figures be recruited, and that they be subjected to rigorous testing. Afterwards, the king should delegate tasks to his subordinates with no regard for how they will be completed. The implication is that once a king has placed his trust in an appointee, he should not turn his back on that person. The fact that these should not be "yes men," but rather outspoken critics who aren't afraid to speak out in public, is indisputable in his eyes. His view is that Ministers must have a good education, be intelligent, and be able to provide timely advice. Also, they should be pragmatic in their approach and avoid harbouring traitors.

The government is in charge of maintaining a diplomatic network and an envoy corps. As part of his search for an envoy, Thiruvalluvar asks the king to look for qualities such as amiability in breeding, loyalty in service, intelligence in sociability, courage in battle, persuasive scholarship in battle, and wit in battle. A friendly and non-offensive demeanour is expected from the diplomat. Even if he is threatened with death, the diplomat must maintain his faith in the goodness of his king.

In addition to diplomats, the government requires espionage capabilities. According to Thiruvalluvar, spies are essential to the mission's success; otherwise, the mission will fail. As the king's eyes and ears, spies are responsible for keeping track of all events. They are in charge of keeping an eye on the king's servants, relatives, and enemies, among other things. Therefore, Thiruvalluvar believes that spies will be involved in both domestic and international operations going forward. Spies must be impenetrable to suspicion, brave, and close to their targets in order to be successful in their operations. Their access to places is far superior to that of ordinary people, so they should go everywhere in the guise of holy men. Given the importance of trustworthiness, Thiruvalluvar recommends that the spy's information be confirmed by a second source who is not affiliated with the spy himself. It is essential that the spies do not know each other in order for this to be successful, and Thiruvalluvar advises the king not to publicly honour a spy in order to protect their identities.

No king could function properly unless he had the assistance of his courtiers. Courtiers receive sound advice from Thiruvalluvar about how to conduct themselves in the future. They should not be too far away from the king, nor should they be too close to him, according to custom. He forbids them from exchanging knowing smiles in front of the king or from attempting to discover the king's secrets unless they have his permission first. Their ability to read the mood of a courtroom and speak in an
effective manner should also be a strong asset. The king must, without a doubt, be treated as a sovereign.

In order to implement an effective war strategy, the king must have a strong defensive and offensive capability. Defense by fortifications was the most effective method available at the time. In the opinion of Thiruvalluvar, a good fort is one that is surrounded by blue waters as well as open space, mountains, and dense forests. A strong fortification with thick and impenetrable walls is essential for maximising effectiveness. In the event of a siege, it should be difficult to capture and well-supplied with food and water.

It should be protected by a garrison of strong men who are always ready to fight. It is the ability to outwit and advance that distinguishes a successful army. In a winning army of this size and calibre, desertion, dissatisfaction, and slackness have no place. In acknowledging the military's hierarchical structure, Thiruvalluvar asserts that the army will disintegrate if it does not receive strong leadership. As long as the king's army is comprised of fearless and well-behaved soldiers, the army is referred to as his wealth in the kingdom. Three desirable qualities for soldiers are listed by Thiruvalluvar in his poem. A bribe should not be able to penetrate them. The ability to buy them out of their responsibilities should not be available to anyone. Their best option is to band together and fight death on its own turf. They must be courageous, honourable, and steadfast in their beliefs in order to be successful. When it comes to military virtues, Thiruvalluvar extols bravery as the most important trait a soldier can possess in his writings. To him, bravery in battle is a sign of a man's masculinity. Those who are brave enough to give their lives for the sake of immortality are referred to as soldiers of valour.

A number of observations about military strategy are made by Thiruvalluvar during the course of the war. The first step, he believes, in defeating a foe is to select the most advantageous location for the battle in order to win. Although he is careful to point out that men are difficult to deal with when they are on their own territory, Following the selection of the most advantageous location for victory, the determination of the most advantageous time is critical. According to him, when an opportunity presents itself, the king should take advantage of it and launch an offensive.

Twenty-four-year-old Thiruvalluvar knows that zeal cannot be used to replace knowledge. So before taking any action, he advises that one should carefully consider the strength of one's own forces, the nature of the action contemplated, and the positions of one's enemies and allies. His recommendations are that war should be avoided with the powerful and that weak adversaries should be selected as combatants. The motivations of those who make for easy targets remain a mystery. Among the many flaws that Thiruvalluvar identifies is a long list of weaknesses that future rulers should avoid. historically, kings who are cowardly, illiterate, and unsociable were thought to be simple prey. A person falls into this category if they make a mistake, fail to complete a task, or are dishonest. On the other hand, kings who have become consumed by blind rage and excessive lust are said to be easily defeated.
II. FINDING

Strategizing is critical when it comes to selecting and defeating adversaries. If one is going to fight in a war, Thiruvalluvar advises that one should plan for it, strengthen it, and defend one's own positions. Taking decisive action, he also suggests taking a stand against those who are despised but not defeated. If one does not take precautions, enemies will attack him and defeat him at all costs. It is essential to avoid the danger of being a lone fighter in the face of numerous opponents. If you find yourself in a situation where you have two enemies, Thiruvalluvar recommends that you make one of them a friend, in particular. Whenever faced with adversity, he recommends that one should consider all possible outcomes.

III. SUGGESTION

The fact that Thiruvalluvar is a pro-war activist, despite these observations, cannot be concluded from the evidence at hand. Despite his rhetoric, he is a long way from embracing that position. Even in jest, he is persuasive when he declares that war is such a terrible thing that it should never be desired. In stating that the world is secure under the rule of a king who can make friends out of foes, Thiruvalluvar demonstrates that the poet's heart is genuinely in favour of international peace. As a result of his worldview, it is clear that Thiruvalluvar is an optimist who does not harbour any cynicism in his soul. A number of characteristics distinguish Thiruvalluvar's political and economic theories, which are discussed in greater detail below. Unlike Kautilya's Artha Shastra, Thirukkural does not purport to be a comprehensive work on statecraft and diplomacy. The general ethical principles that underpin the organization's operations serve as a guideline for the types of behaviour that it encourages. While it is widely believed that Kautilya was attempting to assist any specific king in his ascension to power, Thiruvalluvar did not make such an effort. General guidance is provided in his writings to anyone in charge of the state. Everything he says is vague and he doesn't go into great detail. The succinctness of his language and the form allow him to convey the most important points in the shortest amount of space.

IV. CONCLUSION

To what extent did Thirukkural's economic and political ideas influence the Indian people's economic and political thought? No one knows whether or not this had any effect at all on anything. In part due to the fact that its currency was written in Tamil, it is likely that it was only used in the southern portion of the Indian subcontinent. Researchers have pointed out that there are influences from the Artha Shastra, which was read by a much larger audience because it was written in Sanskrit, as has been pointed out. Thiruvalluvar, on the other hand, is fundamentally different from Kautilya in a number of significant ways, as will be discussed below. In this section, we'll discuss a few of them. When it came to power, Kautilya went into greater depths. A strong emphasis was placed on justice by Thiruvalluvar. As an additional point of interest, the role of the government in the economy appears to be undervalued by Thiruvalluvar. However, because of Kautilya's policies, his state had a significant impact on the economy as a result of his reign. However, despite the fact
Tradition and Transformation: A Discussion on Thirukkural in Indian Political Thought

that activities such as gambling, prostitution, and alcohol production were monopolised by the Kautilyan state, Thiruvalluvar was outspoken in his opposition to these kinds of activities. The Artha Shastra is a classic work of Hindu philosophy that was written in the spirit of worldliness and realism. Thirukkural, on the other hand, remains a treatise on ethical living for the duration of the book. Its influence can therefore be seen most clearly in the everyday application of its tenets by ordinary people, which serves as the most visible manifestation of its influence.

V. REFERENCE