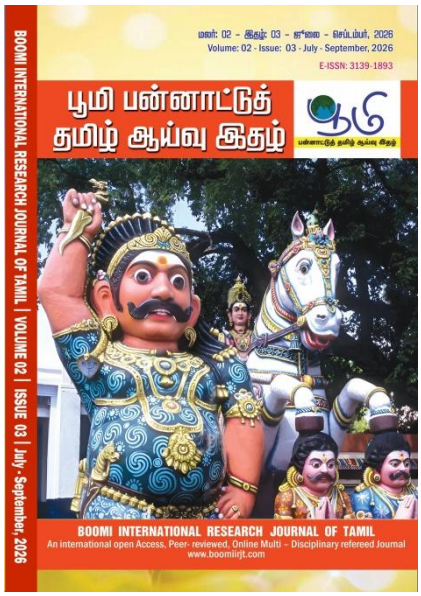
The Concept of Chastity as Depicted in Silappathikaram from a Mythological Perspective

சிலப்பதிகாரம் பேசும் கற்புக் கோட்பாடு தொன்மவியல் நோக்கில்



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உதவிப் **பேராசிரியர்**, **தமிழ்த்துறை**, அகர்சந்த் மான்மல் ஜெயின் கல்லூரி, மீனம்பாக்கம், **சென்னை** - 600061 **மின்னஞ்சல்**: ssaravanachamy@gmail.com

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Abstract

Literature, grammatical treatises, religious texts, and ethical works consistently emphasize that the concept of *Karpu* (chastity/marital fidelity) is defined specifically for women. The term *Karpu* is

used to denote adherence to the words spoken by the *Thalaivan* (the male partner/husband)—specifically, heeding his instructions or awaiting his return. A woman who waits for her partner's return is considered chaste; the term implies a nature wherein she accepts her partner's word and remains within the home as his possession. In this context, the word *Karpu* appears in twenty-three instances within Sangam literature. Examples include:

'…… *Karpu mēlpaṭuvi' (Akananuru 323:7)

'Karpinin va̲l̲āa na̲r̲pala utavi' (Akananuru 86:13)

'Nāṇoṭu miṭainta karpin vā̲n̲utal' (Akananuru 9:24)

Commentators such as Naccinarkkiniyar and Ilampuranar state that a woman remaining at home, steadfast in the path of *Karpu* and performing virtuous deeds, exemplifies the highest form of conduct; thus, the author (Tolkappiyar) placed the *Mullai* *thinai* (landscape of pastoral life and domestic waiting) first. The statement "To be chaste is to never falter in one's word" is attributed to the poetess Avvai (*Vetrivērkai*, 14). This article aims to examine the concepts of *Karpu* portrayed in *Silappathikaram* from a mythological perspective.

Keywords

Introduction, Mythological Theory, Women and the Concept of Chastity, Conclusion

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