
MYTHOLOGICAL BACKGROUND OF THE MADIGA COMMUNITY: A DESCRIPTIVE STUDY OF THE ADIJAMBAVA PURANA

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1. INTRODUCTION

The history of a community is preserved through various sources, including written records, oral traditions, myths, legends, folklore, songs and traditional performances. In the case of the Madiga community, available historical records concerning its origin and early history are limited. Consequently, myths, legends and folklore provide important cultural material for understanding the community's traditional beliefs, social relationships, occupations and identity. The source material emphasizes that folklore reflects the life of the people and that myths and legends preserve narratives concerning the origin and history of communities.

Among the traditional narratives associated with the Madiga community, the *Adijambava Purana* occupies an important position. It is transmitted through forms such as *Madiga Aata* or *Ellamman Aata* and *Sindh Katha*. While *Madiga Aata* is presented in dramatic form, *Sindh Katha* follows a storytelling tradition. These forms are particularly associated with the Sindh Madiga tradition.

The present study examines the mythological background of the Madiga community through a descriptive analysis of the *Adijambava Purana*, with particular attention to its narratives concerning origin, creation, social organization and cultural practices.

2. Objectives and Research Methodology

The main objectives of the study are to examine the mythological background of the Madiga community; understand the significance of Adijambava as the progenitor of the community; describe the creation narrative contained in the *Adijambava Purana*; examine its

representation of clans and social groups; and understand the role of folklore and traditional performances in preserving cultural identity.

The study adopts a **descriptive research design**. It is primarily qualitative in nature and is based on the examination and interpretation of available literary and folkloric material. The study does not manipulate variables but describes and analyses the narratives as presented in the source material.

Secondary sources constitute the major basis of the study. These include books and scholarly works relating to Madiga culture, folklore, Dalit literature, village deities, untouchability and traditional practices. The reference material provided with the source includes works by Ellappa, Kadethota, Kotaganahalli Ramaiah, Channanna Walikar, Chidanandamurthy, Cheluvvaraju, Pandurangababu, K. S. Singh and others.

3. Adijambava Purana and the Origin of the Madiga Community

The *Adijambava Purana* begins with the birth of Adijambava, who is represented as the original ancestor or progenitor of the Madiga clan. The narrative proceeds from the creation of the universe to the formation and division of different clans. Thus, the Purana provides a mythological explanation of both cosmic creation and social organization.

The creation narrative begins with a primordial condition in which earth, water, air, sun, moon and other elements had not yet appeared. Adijambava emerges within this cosmological framework and becomes associated with the subsequent creation of the world. The narrative describes the emergence of different powers and the creation of cosmic elements and beings.

The Purana further describes the creation of the earth and its various components. Adijambava's descendants are symbolically connected with different stages of the creation process. The narrative ultimately identifies the created land as Jambudvipa.

One significant feature of the Purana is its explanation of social differentiation. The narrative refers to the distribution of material among different groups, including Malavara, Madigavara, Kapuvvara, Gandlavara, Balijavara and Bapunivara.

4. Cultural and Social Significance

The *Adijambava Purana* contains narratives that provide insight into the traditional worldview of the Madiga community. One important aspect is the association of Adijambava with the creation of tools and material objects. The narrative describes various implements, including hammers, pliers, hooks and other objects, as being produced through a

mythological process. This aspect of the narrative gives particular significance to labour, craftsmanship and material culture. Traditional occupations and tools are incorporated into the cosmological narrative, suggesting that productive activities are given an important place within the community's cultural imagination. The Purana also incorporates an extensive account of mythological time through references to different *Yugas*. The Krita, Treta, Dwapara and Kali Yugas are associated with different stages in the development of the world, religious knowledge and social life. The narrative also contains descriptions of marriage ceremonies, decorations, musical instruments, processions and other cultural practices. These details demonstrate that the Purana is not restricted to an account of origin but also preserves elements of traditional social and cultural life.

5. Role of Folklore and Traditional Performances

Folklore plays a significant role in preserving collective memory and cultural identity. In the Madiga tradition, the stories associated with Adijambava have been transmitted through oral narratives and traditional performances. *Madiga Aata* and *Sindh Katha* are particularly important in this regard. These traditional forms perform several cultural functions. They preserve ancestral narratives, communicate cultural knowledge to younger generations, strengthen community identity and provide a medium for entertainment and social interaction. Through repeated performance and oral transmission, traditional stories continue to remain part of community memory. The *Adijambava Purana* can therefore be understood as a cultural text that combines mythology, genealogy, cosmology, social organization and ritual practices. Its importance lies not only in its account of origins but also in what it reveals about the traditional worldview of the community. However, from a research perspective, mythological narratives should be distinguished from historically verifiable evidence. The Purana is valuable as evidence of cultural memory and traditional belief, while historical claims require corroboration through independent sources such as inscriptions, archaeological evidence and contemporary historical records.

CONCLUSION

The *Adijambava Purana* represents an important component of the cultural heritage of the Madiga community. Through the figure of Adijambava, the narrative provides explanations concerning origin, creation, ancestry, social organization and cultural practices. Its association with *Madiga Aata* and *Sindh Katha* demonstrates the importance of oral and performative traditions in preserving cultural memory.

The study concludes that myths and folklore deserve systematic academic attention because they provide valuable insights into the identity, worldview and social experiences of communities. Further research combining folklore, oral history, ethnography, literary analysis and historical evidence would contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the cultural history of the Madiga community.

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