



THE STUDY OF DEATH CREMATION IN KURNOOL DISTRICT OF ANDHRA PRADESH

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ABSTRACT According to the Hindu religious books, death is the sixteenth and the last samskara or ceremony. The aim of present investigation is to study the death cremations, for this, the observations are in Kurnool district of Andhra Pradesh. I have been observed two types of customs of those who die in the family. Many steps observed in the death cremations like they bring the dead body out of the house, a bunch of incant sticks or lit a candle right from the time of death, put salt in a cloth and on the stomach, legs of the dead body are tied with a rope, incant sticks should be kept near the pillow, spray perfume, flowers or garlands and put them on dead body, from 6pm onwards, they take a log and put fire and after all the relatives come on the same day of death or the next day they start custom of burning or cremation.

KEYWORDS : Death, Candles, Salt, perfume, Burial Ground

Introduction

Kurnool is a district in the state of Andhra Pradesh, India, and the city of Kurnool is currently the headquarters of the district. It is located in the west-central part of the state on the southern banks of the Tungabhadra and Handri rivers. It had a population of 4,053,463 of which 28.35% were urban as of 2011. The 10th Largest District in India. Area 17658 km². Population wise 53rd Place in India (Thoomati Donappa, 2001). In Kurnool district has 54 Mandals and more than 750 villages and the villagers maintains the many different traditional cultures (Venkatalakshamma and Munirathnamma, 2013).

On death of some one Janapadas follow different customs. They follow different customs near dead body, Sampathi, burial ground. They are many castes in Kurnool district of Andhra Pradesh, India. But they follow only two types of customs after the death of a person. They are 1. Motulu and 2. Tirumaladarulu. They follow two types of customs for those who die in the family.

Near dead body

They bring the dead body out of the house. People of higher castes put a woollen bedsit or blanket on the floor and keep the dead body on it. Castes like Mala and Madigas will take a cot and put the woollen bedsit on the cot and lay dead body there. As soon as the person dies, first they will insert cotton in the nose and ears. So that blood doesn't come out of the body and the Janapadas believe it.

Candles or Incense sticks

At the head of the dead body they put a bunch of incant sticks or lit a candle right from the time of death, till the dead body reaches the sampathi, they should be glowing.

Salt

On the stomach of the dead body, they put salt in a cloth and make it like a temple. By this, the stomach will not bulge, they believe that, it is not kept, stomach bulges. After one day of death, the dead body gives bad odour. Now a day, to prevent that, dead body is kept in ice-box. In earlier days, janapadas used to keep rock salt under the dead body to prevent it from deteriorating.

Rope

Two legs of the dead body are tied with a rope. If they are not tied like that, legs will be let stretched and permanent contracted or relaxed condition. They also believe that, if the legs are led like that, that dead body doesn't become devil and attack family members or other people. They believe that died people will become devil. If the tie legs, they don't none and attack others.

Incant sticks

Janapadas believe that dead people are equal to god. Until sampathi is made, the dead body should be either buried or cremated. Till then, these incant sticks should be kept near the pillow or else candle can also be lit. And they should be glowing. These sticks are kept in a tumbles filled with soil.

Perfume or Scent

From the dead body we will get the bad odour. As person man dies because of any disease or intake of poison etc., than it bleeds from the nose or ears or water comes out of those parts. So to prevent that or to get rid of that odour, they spray perfume or scent.

Flowers

As soon as people hear the death of any person they bring flowers or garlands and put them on dead body, either friends, relatives or neighbour do this work. Putting flowers or garland on dead body indicates their love and affection to that person.

Nippu gundam

If dead body needs to be put at home in the night, from 6pm onwards, they take a log and put fire. And later then go. On adding small sticks to it. They believe that if fire is not kept like that, devils will come near the dead body. And if people see the devils, they become afraid. So till the morning, the fire in nippu gundam is left like that only. Along with dead body people also don't sleep that night. They don't leave the dead body alone.

Giving bath to dead body

After all the relatives come on the same day of death or the next day they start custom of burning or cremation.

Having food is the custom of Tirumala darulu

Before stating the funeral, all the relatives come and they bring a sheep or hen food from that and they arrange food for all those people who visit to see the dead body. Either to family members or people who belong to that gotra. It will be difficult to have food in front of dead body, so they forget everything and eat food.

Before that, they make the dead body sit, they put their plate of food in the hand of dead body and feel that the person is having food with them for the last time, near family members may not eat after seeing the dead body. But they are made to at least once and after that they will start the programme, it giving bath to dead body.

They bring out a cot and if lady dies, ladies or gents dies, gather give bath to the dead body. They sub it with soap. If the dead body is lady, daughter in laws are asked to do this. And sons pour water o the legs of their mother. Daughter in laws and grandchildren's also pour water like that after giving bath, they do the following things.

If a lady dies

Mother of dead body or people from that home, bring vadibiyam for that person. If consists of a sari, lehenpa, blouse, turmeric, kunkum, bangles, flowers, sandal etc. they clear the dead body with cloth and put this dress to it. Later they apply turmeric, put kunkum, wear bangles, flowers to dead body and the sister in laws will cry that they are giving all these for the last time.

If a man dies

Brother family members of the died person bring new cloths and wear it to dead body and put a sandal sticks and tie a thread to waist. Brothers, brother in laws, sons, near relatives of died person will do all these things. After the bath, according to their customs, they do prayer, read veda mantras and finally, all the relatives or family members, fall on the feet of dead body and ask to it to see them for the last time. First they put a tambulam in the mouth of dead body and all of them will have one and start the savayatra. When they carry it to burial ground, they take coins, flowers, karas, puffed rice and those it all along the road whre they go, till they reach the burial ground.

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Reference

1. Venkatalakhhamma and Munirathamma (2013). Study of Traditional Cultures Events in Kurnool District of Andhra Pradesh and Their Aspects. Indian Journal of Applied Research, 4(3), 471-472