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THE CONCEPTS OF SAIVA SIDDHĀNTAM IN CUNTARAR TĒVĀRAM

GOVINDAN A/L MARUTHAI



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THE CONCEPTS OF SAIVA SIDDHĀNTAM
IN CUNTARAR TĒVĀRAM

GOVINDAN A/L MARUTHAI

THESIS PRESENTED TO QUALIFY FOR A
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

FACULTY OF LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION
SULTAN IDRIS EDUCATION UNIVERSITY

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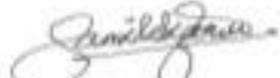
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Govindan Maruthai

2021





ABSTRACT

This study aims to identify and analyse the concepts of *Pati* (God), *pacu* (souls), *pācam* (bondage) based on the theory of *Saiva Siddhāntam* and to clarify the concepts of *cataṇai* (means) and *payaṇ* (benefits) in the 1026 hymns of Cuntarar *Tēvāram*. This study is a library research that uses the methods of content analysis and descriptive analysis. The analysis and discussion are based on the theory of *Saiva Siddhāntam*. The results of this study identified 1015 hymns on *Pati*, 113 on *pacu* and 57 on *pācam* that reflect the theory. Analysis of the hymns confirms *Pati* as the embodiment of Love taking various manifestations to bestow Grace upon the deserving souls; *pacu* on its journey to liberation undergoing the cycle of births and aspiring to be released from the fetters of *pācam* by surrendering to the Lord; and *pācam* that binds the souls in the forms of *āṇavam*, *kaṇmam* and *māyā*, leaves the *pacu* when *Pati* captivates it. The four types of *cataṇai* and the two types of *payaṇ* outlined in the theory of *Saiva Siddhāntam* can be found in almost all the songs of Cuntarar *Tēvāram*. The study also shows that Cuntarar consistently followed the traditions and concepts of *Saiva Siddhāntam* in freeing himself from the shackles of *pācam* in his songs. In conclusion, almost all the 1026 songs of Cuntarar *Tēvāram* have discussed the concepts of *Pati*, *pacu*, *pācam*, *cataṇai* and *payaṇ* based on the concepts of *Saiva Siddhāntam*. The implications of this study benefit the practitioners and the students of Saivism in appreciating the hymns in the context of *Saiva Siddhāntam* to attain bliss.





KONSEP-KONSEP SAIVA SIDDHĀNTAM DALAM CUNTARAR TĒVĀRAM

ABSTRAK

Kajian ini bertujuan untuk mengenal pasti serta menganalisis konsep *Pati* (Tuhan), *pacu* (jiwa), *pācam* (ikatan) berdasarkan teori *Saiva Siddhāntam* dan menjelaskan konsep *cataṇai* (pendekatan) dan *payaṇ* (hasil) dalam 1026 lagu Cuntarar Tēvāram. Kajian ini adalah kajian kepustakaan yang menggunakan kaedah analisis kandungan dan analisis deskriptif. Analisis dan perbincangan dibuat berpandukan teori *Saiva Siddhāntam*. Hasil kajian ini mengenal pasti 1015 lagu mengenai *Pati*, 113 bagi *pacu* dan 57 bagi *pācam* berdasarkan teori *Saiva Siddhāntam*. Analisis menunjukkan bahawa lagu-lagu tersebut menerima *Pati* sebagai penjelmaan cinta yang membolehkan mengambil pelbagai manifestasi untuk mengurniakan rahmat kepada jiwa-jiwa yang layak; *pacu* yang menuju pembebasan menjalani kitaran kelahiran dan berhasrat untuk dibebaskan dari belunggu *pācam* dengan menyerah diri kepada Tuhan; dan *pācam* yang mengikati jiwa dalam bentuk *āṇavam*, *kaṇmam* dan *māyā*, meninggalkan *pacu* ketika *Pati* menawannya. Empat jenis *cataṇai* dan dua jenis *payaṇ* yang digariskan dalam teori *Saiva Siddhāntam* dapat dilihat dalam hampir kesemua lagu-lagu Cuntarar Tēvāram. Kajian ini juga menunjukkan bahawa Cuntarar adalah konsisten mengikuti tradisi dan konsep *Saiva Siddhāntam* dalam lagu-lagunya untuk membebaskan diri daripada belunggu *pācam*. Kesimpulannya, hampir semua 1026 lagu Cuntarar Tēvāram membincangkan konsep *Pati*, *pacu*, *pācam*, *cataṇai* dan *payaṇ* berdasarkan tanggapan *Saiva Siddhāntam*. Implikasinya, kajian ini membawa manfaat kepada para pengamal dan pelajar agama Saivism dalam menghayati lagu-lagu tersebut mengikut *Saiva Siddhāntam* untuk mencapai kebahagiaan hidup.



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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

pōt.	Civañānapōtam
CCC.	Civañānacittiyār cupakkam
CN.	Caṅkarpa Nirākaraṇam
CP.	Civappirakācam
KK.	Koṭikkavi
TVP.	Tiruvaruṭpayaṅ
TKP.	Tirukkalirruppaṭiyār
NVT	Neñcu Viṭu Tūtu
UV.	Uṇmai Viḷakkam
St.	Saint
viz.,	namely
p.	page
pp.	pages
etc.	etcetera
no.	number
vol.	volume
e.g.,	for example
ed.	edition
i.e.,	that is (<i>id est</i>)
&	and

Citations from *Tirumūrais* are made in the following sequence:

(*Tirumūrai* volume no. (in Roman numerals): decad.stanza) = (?:?.?)





LIST OF APPENDICES

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NOTES ON TRANSLITERATION AND DIACRITICAL MARKS

The system adopted here is the same as in the Tamil Lexicon of the University of Madras, Vol. VI, p.xxviii.

Tamil alphabets and their English symbols with diacritical marks:

VOWELS

அ	:	<i>a</i>	உ	:	<i>u</i>	ஐ	:	<i>ai</i>
ஆ	:	<i>ā</i>	ஊ	:	<i>ū</i>	ஓ	:	<i>o</i>
இ	:	<i>i</i>	எ	:	<i>e</i>	ஔ	:	<i>ō</i>
ஈ	:	<i>ī</i>	ஏ	:	<i>ē</i>	ஔ	:	<i>au</i>

CONSONANTS

க	:	<i>k</i>	ங்	:	<i>ṅ</i>	ய்	:	<i>y</i>
ச	:	<i>c</i>	ஞ்	:	<i>ñ</i>	ர்	:	<i>r</i>
ட	:	<i>ṭ</i>	ண்	:	<i>ṇ</i>	ல்	:	<i>l</i>
த்	:	<i>t</i>	ந்	:	<i>n</i>	வ்	:	<i>v</i>
ப்	:	<i>p</i>	ம்	:	<i>m</i>	ழ்	:	<i>ḷ</i>
ற்	:	<i>r</i>	ள்	:	<i>ḷ</i>	ள்	:	<i>ḷ</i>

GRANTHA CHARACTERS

ஜ்	:	<i>j</i>	ஸ்	:	<i>s</i>
ஷ்	:	<i>ṣ</i>	க்ஷ்	:	<i>kṣ</i>
ஹ்	:	<i>h</i>			





CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION



Civā as the Godhead has been worshipped by the Saivites, and the Hindus at large, from time immemorial. Ancient recordings and archaeological artefacts have further validated this revelation. Although various sects of Saivism have evolved along the passage of time, the Tamil people have held on steadfastly to the so-called Tamil Saivism with doctrines and creeds of their own. From such a tradition sprang the *Tirumuṟais* and the *Saiva Siddhāntam* philosophies. Cuntarar *Tēvāram* belongs to the former and the *Meykaṇṭa Shāstrās* are of the latter (Devapoopathy, 1986). This study entitled ‘The Concepts of *Saiva Siddhāntam* in Cuntarar *Tēvāram*’, intends to unravel the correlation between these two. An important consideration that has been taken throughout this thesis is in the use of the name Cuntarar. The researcher is fully aware that at the time of the composition of the hymns and until the end of the twelfth





Tirumurai, nowhere had the name Cuntarar been mentioned to denote the hymnist. He was referred as ‘Ārūran’ by himself and the later poets. However, the present day Saivites are much used to calling him ‘Cuntarar’ than ‘Ārūrar’. To break monotony in the reading of the thesis, the researcher opts to using the various names - ‘Saint Cuntarar’, ‘Cuntarar’, ‘the Saint’, ‘Ārūrar’, ‘Vantōṅṅar’, ‘the hymnist’ and ‘the poet’ - to mean one and the same poet of the seventh *Tirumurai* (Cuntarar, 1997).

The chapter begins with an explanation to the background of this research, followed by the statement of problem, research objectives, research questions, significance of the research, limitation of the study, research sources and finally the operational definitions before summarizing the chapter.



1.2 Research Background

Cuntarar *Tēvāram* belongs to the later part of the seventh century and the complete conceptualization of the *Saiva Siddhāntam* marks the 14th century (Devasenapathi, 1988). The events leading to the birth of Cuntarar’s hymns and the formulation of the *Saiva Siddhāntam* concepts would help to create a trigger point for the research ideas. Hence, the relevant historical elements leading up to this period are visited briefly.

Saivism is a religion that is practiced by the Tamil speaking Hindus, not only in the heartland of Tamilnadu, but throughout the world. The followers of Saivism are called the Saivites. They uphold Civā as the one and only Almighty Supreme God and the Tamil Language as the first divine language. The other deities that are worshipped





by these followers are taken as Civā's manifestations. Their religion's antiquity along with its language dates back to the pre-Vedic before the third millennium B.C. (Singaravelu, 1993).

The sacred books of Saivism are mostly found in the Tamil Language compared to the other languages of the sub-continent. As a result, the divine Saivite poets have placed the Lord and the Tamil Language on the same pedestal. At times they have sung to say that the Lord is in the form of the Tamil Language (Vellaivāraṇaṇār, 1972). These devotional literatures are divided into 'tōttiram' and 'cāttiram'. The tōttiram consists of devotional lyrics sung in praise of the Divine, whereas the cāttiram outlines the creed and philosophy of the religion. Of the tōttirams, the Tamil Saivites hold the twelve *Tirumuṟais* as the basis for their tenets; and of the cāttirams, the fourteen *Meykaṇṭa Shāstrās* are held in high esteem as the basis for scripture (Rangaswamy, 1958).

The compilation of the *Tirumuṟais* was done in the early part of the eleventh century A.D. The first three volumes are by Saint Tiruñānacampantar and four to six are by Saint Tirunāvukkaracar. The seventh volume (*Tirumuṟai*) belongs to Saint Cuntarar (Vellaivāraṇaṇār, 1972). The expression *Tēvāram* to denote the first seven *Tirumuṟais* was first used by Saint Umāpati followed by the Irattaiyar (the twin poets) of the 14th century (Siddalingaiah, 2004). This term remains till this day to refer specifically to the above seven volumes and in general to all the hymns sung from the *Tirumuṟais*.





The Tamil people and their language have legends that their ancient history extends up to about ten thousand years. They are the custodians of a civilisation that was far superior to the others of their times (Nilakanta Sastri, 1958). However, this progress had suffered from two unexpected and severe catastrophes caused by the seas that swallowed up their lands and kingdoms in which two successive academies (*caṅkams*), literature and history were lost (Paranjoti, 1954). This legend is first mentioned in the commentary of Iṟaiyanār's Kaḷaviyal, written in about the eighth century, which remains as a literary evidence for connecting the Tamil civilization with other prehistoric ancient civilizations (Veluppillai, 1980).

A recorded Tamil literature has been documented for over 2000 years (Zvelebil, 1992). After the deluge, the only surviving literature of the second *caṅkam* period is the great grammatical work 'Tolkāppiyam' (Paranjoti, 1954). After which, the Tamil literature of the third *caṅkam* dated from 300 BC – AD 300 is available to this date. In addition to these, there are earliest epigraphic records found on rock edicts and 'hero stones' that date from around the third century BC. More than 55% of the epigraphical inscriptions (about 55,000) found by the Archaeological Survey of India are in the Tamil language. Material evidences suggest that the Tamils were of the language and culture associated with the Neolithic complexes of South India (Southworth, 2004).

The third century B.C. saw the reawakening of the three royal dynasties, the Cheras, Cholas and Pandiyas. Under these dynasties, the Tamils built great temples, irrigation tanks, dams, and roads. Voluminous Tamil literature and art were created with royal patronage. Traditional cultural practices were documented during this period





of about 600 years until the end of the third century A.D. Historians mark the close of *caṅkam* era around this period (Nilakanta Sastri, 1958).

After the close of the above era, for three centuries, the Tamil land was ruled by the Nomadic tribes from the North, known as Kalabhras. They suppressed the Tamil kings and ruled the land cruelly. It was during this era, Jainism and Buddhism took advantage in weakening the beliefs of the people in their ethnic religion. Tamil Literature was influenced by the Buddhist and Jain thoughts due to the change in the political life of the Tamils (Kandaswamy, 1995a). However, credit should also be given to this period for the didactic works such as the *Tirukkural*, and *Nāḷadiyār*. Jainism and Buddhism, took deep roots in the society, giving birth to a large body of ethical poetry, *Kīlkaṇakku Nūlkaḷ*. The two great Tamil epics *Cilappatikāram* and *Maṇimēkalai* were composed at this time. The Kalabhras were displaced around the seventh century by the revival of Pallava and Pandya kings, but the influence of Jainism and Buddhism existed in the kingdom (Nilakanta Sastri, 1958).

At the heightened period of Jainism and Buddhism in the Tamil land, evidences in *Cilappatikāram* and *Maṇimēkalai* show that there were Tamil Saivites living along with the followers of these alien religions. The Saiva *Nāyaṇmārs*, *Kāraikāl Ammaiyaṛ* and *Tirumūlar*, were of this period. Both the above mentioned epics had shown respect to 'Civā' and His followers in the descriptions they had made of them (Kandaswamy, 2012). *Maṇimēkalai*, though full of Buddhist teachings, gives a very brief form of the essence of *Saiva Siddhāntam*. This reference is of particular importance in that the philosophy of *Saiva Siddhāntam* had already been there in the Tamil land from the ancient times before it gets codified in the 13th century A.D. (Devapoopathy, 1986).





During the three centuries of Kalabhras' rule in the Tamil Land, the heterodox faiths of Materialism, Jainism and Buddhism almost obliterated the native faiths of Saivism and Vaishnavism. In spite of the diverse forces and powers employed, including political and dialectical, these heterodox religions could not shake the orthodox faith of the ordinary folks (Muthupackiam, 1997). Naturally the native Tamils awaited a proper time to revolt against the foreign faiths. They found it necessary to campaign their own particular cause (T. S. J. Baskar, 2017). Tamil Saivism began its renaissance with the emergence of the Bhakti Movement in the beginning of the seventh century (Kandaswamy, 1995a).

Scholars claim that the seventh until the ninth centuries A.D. was the period of Tamil literary renaissance in the form of the above Bhakti Movement (Subramanian, 2010). It was during this period, following the footsteps of Saint Tiruñānacampantar and Saint Tirunāvukkaracar, Saint Cuntarar and a few other lesser prominent Saivite bards played their roles in the revival of Saivism in the early part of the eighth century. Saint Māṅikkavācakar's period of time is still under much dispute. However, some of the notable researchers have settled on the later part of the eighth century, especially after Saint Cuntarar, as the most appropriate timeframe for the Saint. The first three saints are collectively known as *Tēvāra mūvar mutali* (*Tēvāram* Trio) and together with Saint Māṅikkavācakar, are referred to as the Four Saivite Gurus (*Nālvar / Saiva camayak kuravarkaḷ*) (Kandaswamy, 1995a).

The fourteen philosophical texts known as *Meykaṇṭa Cāttiraṅkaḷ* came only after the compilation of the twelve volumes of the *Paṇṇiru Tirumuṛai*. The final volume, the 12th volume, by Cēkkīḷar was officially launched in the twelfth century





A.D. After which Civañānapōtam came into existence in the thirteenth century giving rise to the other 13 volumes of *Saiva Siddhānta* philosophy. Hence the eminent *Saiva Siddhānta* tenets were fostered by the poetry of the *Tirumuṟai* authors and the teachers of the Meykaṇṭa line of spiritual teachers. Maraimalai Adikalaar views that the *Saiva Tirumuṟais*, the Meykaṇṭār texts and other texts that embrace the tenets without contradicting stand-out as basic texts of *Saiva Siddhāntam* is worthy proof of this (Muthukumaraswamy, 2003).

1.3 Problem Statement

Cuntarar *Tēvāram* belongs to the seventh century and all of the *Tirumuṟais* belong to a period before the twelfth century A.D., it is extremely difficult for the lay person to understand these songs. To further complicate the understanding, these songs are composed in poetry with a time lapse of nine centuries. Students and followers of the *Tirumuṟais* need guidance and tutoring to understand these songs, leave alone comprehending the embedded *Siddhāntam* concepts.

More and more researchers have done their parts by bringing out the salient meanings of the *Tirumuṟai* hymns. Along those lines, various aspects of Cuntarar's poems have also been researched by scholars. Researches, which had been mainly done by Indian Scholars, have dwelt on topics of ethics, nature, music, devotion, friendship and the like in Cuntarar *Tēvāram*. One extensive research has been done by Dorai Rangaswamy (1958) on the topic of 'The Religion and Philosophy of Tēvāram' with special reference to the hymns of Cuntarar. From the available literature accessed by





this researcher, none have been found to carry out a detailed study on the concepts of *Saiva Siddhāntam* in *Cuntarar Tēvāram*.

Further to the above problems, Hinduism is a group of religions that accepts the authority of the *Vēdās*. Each sect of the group has its own authority, which the *Vēdās* supplement, and in the light of which they are interpreted (Shivapadasundaram, 1975). The word Hinduism is derived from the name of the River Indus and was given as one name to the religions practiced by the inhabitants of the Indian sub-continent (Rajendra Kumar, 1993). The masses generally believe Hinduism as to be of one religion that gives importance to idol worship and Brahmanism. Brahmanism emphasizes the caste system which gives the privilege to the caste of Brahmins to be the preachers and guides to the Hindu religion. To overcome this confusion, Adi Shankaracharya of the eighth century A.D. consolidated the doctrine of Advaita Vedanta and divided Hinduism into six major sects – Saivism, Vaishnavism, Shaktism, Saurism, Ganapatism and Kaumaram (Lakshmanan, 2005).

It was during this period, when Shankarar's Advaita Vedanta was spreading towards Northern India, Saint Cuntarar was actively going around the temples of Tamilnadu singing only the praises of Civā. In following the lineage of the first two *camayak kuravars*, Saint Tiruñānacampantar and Saint Tirunāvukkaracar, Saint Cuntarar further moves the Bhakti movement into the revival of the Tamil Saivism (Kandaswamy, 2006). It is a general acceptance that Tamil Saivism draws its major concepts from the *Vēdās*. However, this view is challenged by the reawakening of Saivism in the late 18th century with the expansion of the printing press and the old literatures coming into the field of research by well-known Tamil scholars like





Maraimalai Adikal and Dorai Rangaswamy. These scholars are of the opinion that the *Paṇṇiru Tirumūrais* are the *Vēdās* to Tamil Saivism (Klober, 2017b).

It is highly probable, that at the time of composition of the *Tēvāram* and the rest of the *Tirumūrais*, it was not considered to belong to the *Saiva Siddhāntam* canon and that the hymns themselves appear to make no such claims for themselves. Tamil researchers in the last two centuries have found, or otherwise stated, validated that the Saiva Saints had not deviated from the *Saiva Siddhāntam* philosophy, which has always been, right from the beginning, the backbone of the Tamil Saiva Tradition (Kandaswamy, 2006).

The ardent Saivites share similar views on the ignorance or lesser understanding of the religion, especially the *Siddhāntam* philosophies, by the majority of the followers. Kantinathan Pillai (1911) is of the opinion that, although *Saiva Siddhāntam* is the oldest and choicest of Indian philosophies, it had so long remained in the background that even the term ‘Saivism’ has ceased to be understood in its true meaning. Only a very few know who a Saivite is, and why he is so (Kantimatinaatha Pillai, 1911).

Ganesalingam (2001) opionates that Saivites, whether educated or not, are so ignorant of their religious values. They confuse the Vaidika cult and the Vedanta as Saiva religion and its philosophy. The ex-president of the Hindu Sangam, Datuk A.Vaithilingam, says that a majority of the masses are ignorant or do not understand the philosophies and tenets of their religion (Paramasivam, 2016). “The knowledge of Saivism which comes from a tradition and culture of more than five thousand years has





not been understood well, even by a large portion of the community” (Vaithilingam, 2016). It has to be regretfully accepted that a good majority of those that profess to be Saivites do not know the basic tenets of Saivism (M. Arunachalam, 1978). Religious practice has now become merely a mechanical routine for many. The precepts and philosophy of religion are not understood, and no interest is shown in understanding them. Anything given in the name of religion is consumed without any question (Ganesalingam, 2001).

It is also necessary that Saivites should have at least the basic knowledge on all aspects of Saivism (Ganesalingam, 2001). The backbone of Tamil Saivism is the concepts of *Saiva Siddhāntam* (Kandaswamy, 2006). Greater importance is given to the *Paṇṇiru Tirumūrais* as the basic scripture for the Tamil *Saiva Siddhāntam*. Religious classes are conducted in most of the Hindu Temples, but only to sing the *Tēvāram*, the other *Tirumūrais* and the holy songs in praise of Civā and His Forms. These ordinary practitioners and students as well as teachers of Saivism sing the hymns, normally paying attention to the raga or ‘pan’ as it is called in Tamil, without understanding or seeing the embedded *Siddhāntam* concepts in them (Ramakrishnan, 1986). It is only on conceptualising the meanings of the lyrics with its interpretation, the ordinary people would be able to see the *Pati*, *pacu*, *pācam*, *cātaṇai*, and *payaṇ*, in them.

Tamil Saivism is different from the other sects of Hinduism. Swami Civā Nandhi Adikalar, Chairman and Chief Executive of the World Saiva Council, 1996, declares that Saivism is a separate and complete religion in itself and is not an appendage of Hinduism (Kindra, 1997). Unlike the Vedanta, Saivism believes this world is real and not an illusion. God (*Pati*), souls (*pacu*) and matter (*māyā*) are all real





but separate entities which are in existence forever. Tamil Saivism accepts the one and only true God, given the name as Civā. Such revelations have not reached most of the practitioners of Saivism (Ganesalingam, 2001).

Saiva Siddhāntam posits three eternal entities which are real and have to be in existence infinitely. The entire cosmos is composed of these three entities which are based on the conclusions arrived after a logical examination of them:- *Pati* (God), *pacu* (souls) and *pācam* (bondage) (Anantharasan, 2008). Saint Tirumūlar sings on the connection of these three entities, thus:

Pati, pacu, pācam eṇap pakar mūṇṇil

patiyiṇaip pōl pacu pācam aṇāti;

patiyiṇaic ceṇru aṇukā pacu, pācam,

Pati aṇukiṇ pacu pācam nilāvē. — X.: 115



It says that three categories are eternal: *Pati* (God), *pacu* (souls) and *pācam* (bondage); but *Pati* is untouched by *pācam*. *Pācam* binds only the *pacu*. But when *Pati* nears *pacu*, *pācam* will not stand (B. Natarajan, 1991). The term, ‘*Pati aṇukiṇ*’ in the fourth line of the stanza, tells us that ‘if God nears’ the soul. It is a condition whereby the *Pati* only comes to the soul of a ripened devotee. This connotation leads to the means (*cātaṇai*) and the benefits (*payaṇ*) in reaching the Lotus Feet of the Lord (Shanmugam, 2013).

On examining these realities, the *Siddhāntam* philosophy guides the souls to liberation from their births and shows the means to attain that liberation. Once the souls are liberated, they attain mukti (salvation) at the feet of God. Attaining mukti is the





final goal, the benefit (*payaṇ*) of each soul. Religious tenets (*camayak koḷkaikaḷ*), especially that of *Saiva Siddhāntam*, explains the inherent nature of God (*Pati*), souls (*pacu*) and the cosmos (*māyā*) and the ways to understand them (Gnanapoongothai, 2007). Most Saivites fail to understand these concepts which are actually drawn from the hymns of the *Tēvāram* Saints. Hence it becomes necessary to undertake studies to reveal the basic concepts and creeds of Saivism found in the *Tirumuṟais* as a service to the Saiva world (Seeta Lechumi, 2010).

Based on the above perceptions, this research intends to analyse the hymns of Cuntarar, the seventh *Tirumuṟai*, and look for the concepts of the *Saiva Siddhāntam* philosophies in them. In doing so, the *Saiva Siddhāntam* philosophies will be summarized to find the main concepts, *Pati*, *pacu*, *pācam*, *cāṭaṇai*, and *payaṇ*, as the pivotal points to look into the references made by Cuntarar in his hymns. It is expected that such an analysis and compilation will give the readers a clear understanding of the hymns and at the same time its essence, the *Saiva Siddhāntam* philosophy. The concepts of *Saiva Siddhāntam* are seen from the perspective of Civañāṇapōtam as postulated by Meykaṇṭār of Tiruveṇṇey Nallūr.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

This study will be done with the following objectives in mind:

- i. To identify the concepts *Pati*, *pacu* and *pācam* in Cuntarar *Tēvāram*;
- ii. To analyse the concepts of *Pati*, *pacu* and *pācam* in Cuntarar *Tēvāram* according to *Saiva Siddhāntam*; and



- iii. To extract and clarify the concepts of means (*cātaṇai*) and benefits (*payan*) as embedded in Cuntarar *Tēvāram* based on *Saiva Siddhāntam*.

1.5 Research Questions

- i. What are the concepts of *Pati* (God) that are postulated in Cuntarar *Tēvāram*?
- ii. How does Cuntarar present *Pati* (God) in keeping with the concepts of *Saiva Siddhāntam*?
- iii. What are the concepts of *pacu* (souls) that are postulated in Cuntarar *Tēvāram*?
- iv. How does Cuntarar present *pacu* (souls) in keeping with the concepts of *Saiva Siddhāntam*?
- v. What are the concepts of *pācam* (bondage) that are postulated in Cuntarar *Tēvāram*?
- vi. How does Cuntarar present *pācam* (bondage) in keeping with the concepts of *Saiva Siddhāntam*?
- vii. How do the hymns of Cuntarar show his actions and deeds (*cātaṇai*) that reflect the concepts of ‘means’ in *Saiva Siddhāntam*?
- viii. How do the hymns of Cuntarar explain the benefits (*payan*) in keeping with the concepts of *Saiva Siddhāntam*?



1.6 Significance of the Research

Scholars in the field of Saivism have carried researches into the various volumes of the *Tirumuṟais* to search for the concepts of *Saiva Siddhāntam* in them. As far as the seventh *Tirumuṟai* - *Cuntarar Tēvāram* - is concerned, researches are available on topics of aesthetics, poetics, language, fine arts, ethics and morality, and the like. For reasons unknown, a research that only brings out the concepts of *Saiva Siddhāntam* in the above work, has not been available to this researcher. Since the other *Tēvārams* and the rest of *Tirumuṟais* have been researched to bring out the above philosophies, it is time for this research to be done in that area. As such, the current researcher intends to fill that knowledge gap by researching on the *Saiva Siddhānta* philosophies in *Cuntarar Tēvāram*.



The study focusses on interpreting and finding out the concepts of *Saiva Siddhāntam* in the hymns of Saint Cuntarar. The available hymns of Cuntarar are collected as the seventh volume of the *Paṅṅiru Tirumuṟai*. It contains 100 decads (*patikams*) and is made up of 1026 stanzas. On the other hand, the concepts of *Saiva Siddhāntam* are derived from the fourteen *Meykaṅṅa Shāstrās* with the first of the series, *Civaṅṅapōtam* and its elaborate commentary, *Civaṅṅacittiyār*, along with *Tirumantiram*, as the main references.

The *Paṅṅiru Tirumuṟai* along with the *Meykaṅṅa Shāstrās* were composed in pure Tamil poetry as most of the old Literatures were, until the coming of the prose literature into Tamil in the eighteenth century. The above devotional literatures fall into divisions, viz: the sacred literature called the Twelve *Tirumuṟais* and the other, the





exposition of the Saivite Philosophy called the Fourteen *Shāstrās*. The former is known as the ‘*tōttiram*’ and the latter as the ‘*cāttiram*’ (Muthukkumaaraswamy, 2011). Of the ‘*tōttirams*’ the study of the sacred hymns known as *Tēvāram*, the first seven of the Twelve *Tirumūrais*, becomes of paramount interest and Saivism has its best exposition as a living faith in these hymns (Rangaswamy, 1958). The ‘*cāttiram*’ comprising of the *Vēdās*, Saiva *Āgamās*, and the *Meykaṇṭa Shāstrās*, are considered to form the scriptural basis of the *Saiva Siddhāntam* (Kandaswamy, 2006). The alternative view to the above accepts Tirukkural as the Tamil Agama and as an authority in place of the *Vēdās*. (Kindra, 1997). The research will highlight these salient points along with the exposition of the five concepts of *Siddhāntam*.

The hymns of the *Tēvāram* are ‘*tōttirams*’, which are devotional poems that had sprang forth from the emotional and spiritual depths of the poets. Their songs are addressed directly to the Lord, seeking penance, help or guidance by surrendering themselves through the lyrics. In due course, they depict the beauty of the natural surroundings and the enchantments of the environment of the temple in which the manifested shrine of Civā resided. These poems portrayed the empirical life in which the souls underwent untold sufferings of existence. Kanthasamy (1993) says, “These hymns describe the ardent and fervent attitude of the devotees to get released from the clutches of mundane life and to get eternal solace under the gracious feet of Lord Civā” (Kanthasamy, 1993, p. 10).

Though the nature of the poems is as mentioned above, the saint poets have presented enough materials and anecdotes pertaining to the basic principles of *Saiva Siddhāntam*. Such principles that are embedded in the poetry, need commentaries and





explanations for the lay people to realise (Kanthasamy, 1993). This research would be a guide to the practitioners in following the manner in which Saint Cuntarar overcame his sufferings, did his penance and sought the help of his bosom friend, Lord Civā.

There is a great awareness among the Tamil Hindus to learn the *Tirumuṛais*. Various Hindu organisations conduct periodical competitions in the recital of *Tirumuṛais* (Navarathinam, 2013). Those who take part in such competitions, normally memorise the hymns without any inkling of the presence of the *Siddhāntam* principles. The same applies for the non-competitors who recite in their daily prayers and holy occasions. Such a study would help the followers of the religion and others who are interested to know the elements of the *Siddhāntam* philosophy that are embedded in the hymns of Saint Cuntarar. They would be able to understand the concepts of the triple realities and the attainment of liberation through the perspective of Saint Cuntarar.

Cuntarar *Tēvāram* holds a special place among the *Paṇṇiru Tirumuṛai*. This is due to the importance given to him as the third of the *Tēvāram* Trio. It was he who sang the ‘Tiruttonṭar Tokai’ that made references to the 63 *Nāyaṇmārs* for the first time. This composition became the precursor for Nampiyāṇṭārnampi’s ‘Tiruttonṭar Antāti’ and later, Cēkkīlar’s ‘Tiruttonṭar Purāṇam’, the 12th *Tirumuṛai* (Periyapurāṇam). Hence, a research into this volume would help in the understanding of the other *Tirumuṛais* in the same vein.

It is a norm for Hindu temples to conduct classes in *Tirumuṛai* recital, lectures about the Saints, dialogues on the philosophies and other necessary colloquiums. The teachers and lecturers involved in the above activities look for guidance from research





materials. This research would greatly help in propagating the truths found in these hymns. Teachers of *Tēvāram* would benefit immensely in understanding the hymns of Cuntarar and in teaching their meanings along with the recital.

Siddhānta philosophy gives a plausible explanation to everything relating to Saivism. It is rational and scientific in its approach and outlook (Ganesalingam, 2001). It is important for the followers of the religion to understand this aspect. As mentioned earlier, *Siddhānta* philosophy draws its essence from the *Tirumūraḥais*, and Cuntarar *Tēvāram* is an inseparable prominent part of that whole. This research aims to give the necessary explanations embedded in the poems.

Cuntarar *Tēvāram* belongs to the Tamil poetry of the seventh century. The reciters and learners of these hymns need a well-grounded knowledge of Tamil grammar and poetics to comprehend the hymns. In making matters further difficult, the *Meykaṇṭa Shāstrās* are also, not only metrical but, in exotic philosophic formulas. The laities would not be able to understand the hymns, leave alone the realizing of the presence of the *Saiva Siddhānta* philosophies in them. Only by understanding the philosophies of the religion, the followers (the Saivites) could appreciate the hymns and learn to live a life of a Siddhāntin (Ganesalingam, 2001). Through this research, the five main aspects of the Siddhānta philosophy, namely: *Pati*, *pacu*, *pācam*, *cātanai* and *payan*, would be identified in the hymns and explained, in order to achieve the objectives of the study.





1.7 Theoretical Framework of Research

The theoretical framework provides an appropriate design to do the study. The Theoretical Framework (Figure 1.1) is built on the concepts of *Saiva Siddhāntam* of the *Meykaṇṭha Shāstrās* as the theory for the research. Concepts of the Triple Realities – God, Souls and Bondage – are identified and analysed before going on to the second level of the concepts that explain the ‘means’ and the final ‘benefits’. These concepts are studied in the hymns of Cuntarar by identifying, analyzing and clarifying them, so as to find the answers to the research questions. The *Saiva Siddhānta* concepts are taken as the theory for the research of Saint Cuntarar’s Seventh *Tirumurai*.



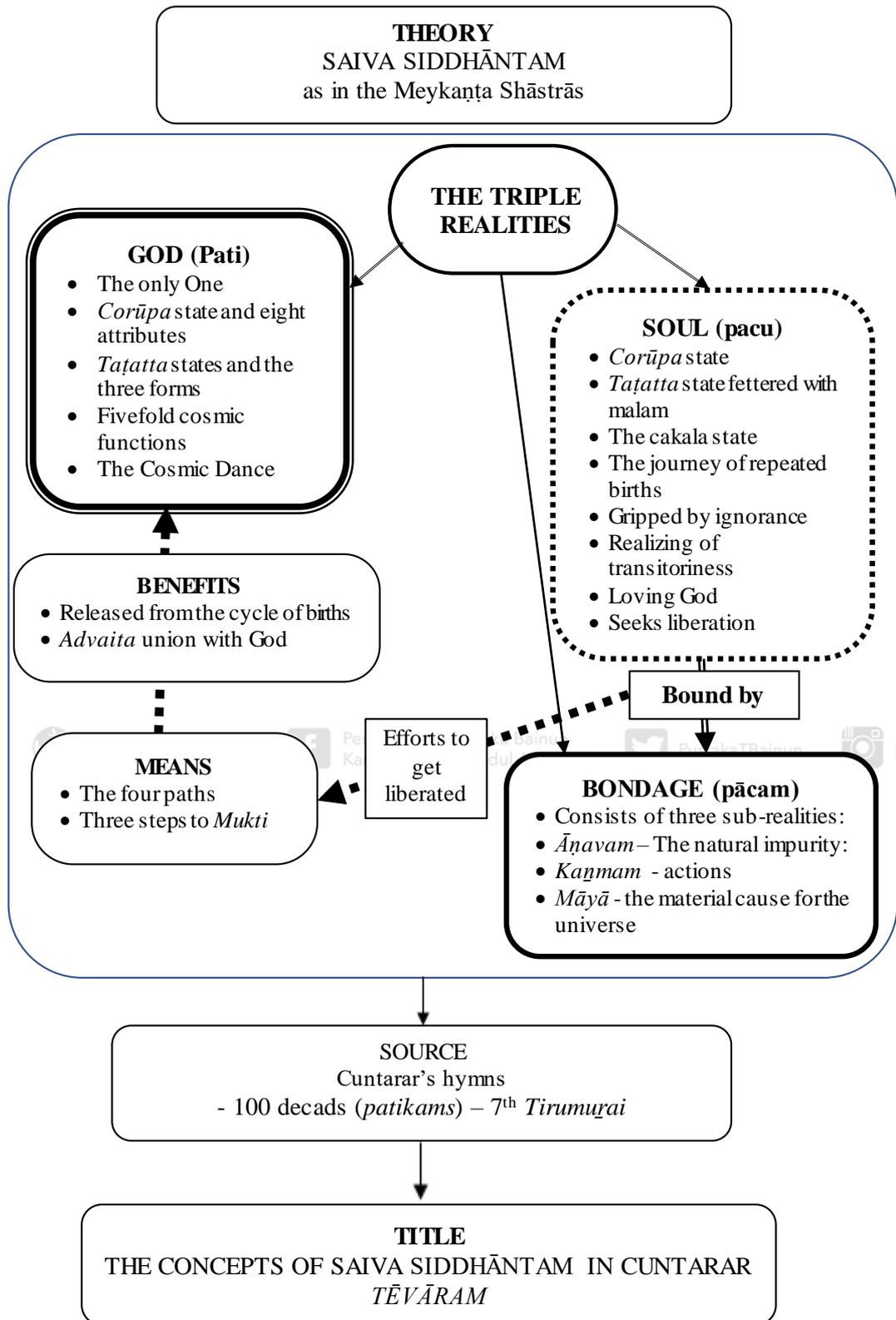


Figure 1.1. Overview of Theoretical Framework used for the Study



1.8 Study Limitations

This study contains two aspects: the material under study and the concepts (or theories) that are to be used. The material is that of Cuntarar *Tēvāram*, the seventh volume of the *Paṇṇiru Tirumurai*. For the purpose of references the other volumes may be quoted to further clarify the concepts but they are not taken for study. The concepts that are sought after are of the *Saiva Siddhāntam* canon that is derived from the *Meykaṇṭa Shāstrās* with a special emphasis on Civañāṇapōtam, Civañāṇacittiyār and the Tirumantiram. The objective of this research is to study the five main aspects, namely: *Pati*, *pacu*, *pācam*, *cātaṇai* and *payan*, in the hymns of Saint Cuntarar. Only these aspects will be seen in the volume that contains the available 100 decads (1026 stanzas).



(Kandaswamy, 2006), Civañāṇapōtam (Nallaswami Pillai, 1984), Civañāṇacittiyār cupakkam (Nallaswami Pillai, 1948) and Tirumantiram (B. Natarajan, 1991) are taken for the purpose of reference and quotations. However, to get a truer picture of the hymns and the concepts, the original Tamil texts of Tharumai Ātheenam are taken for the study.

1.9 Research Source

As this research is based on library study materials, relevant books, journals, conference papers, and a variety of other media would be sought after. These materials are classified into primary and secondary sources. There is a distinction between these two.





‘Primary sources’ provide the data for the research whereas ‘secondary sources’ provide integrative reviews of broad areas of research’ (Graziano & Raulin, 2007).

1.9.1 Primary Source

The primary data source for this research is the seventh volume of the *Paññiru Tirumuṛai*, which is sung by Saint Cuntarar in the seventh century A.D. The text edition is the one published by Tharumai Ātheenam in 1997. For the English translated version, the translated work of Kandaswamy (2006), published by the Chennai, Institute of Asian Studies will be sourced. As to the concepts of *Saiva Siddhāntam*, the 1994 edition of the *Meykaṇṭa Shāstrās* published by the Chennai, Saiva Siddhānta Perumandram and the tenth volume of the *Paññiru Tirumuṛai*, Tirumūlar’s Tirumantiram will be taken. As these books are also in Tamil, the English translation rendered by Nallaswami Pillai (1984) and by Natarajan (1991) will be respectively sourced.

1.9.2 Secondary Source

The research has relied heavily on the secondary sources for the various interpretations of the primary data. They were very useful in writing the literature review and the background of the study. These secondary sources came from related books in the field of study. References have also been drawn from *Tirumuṛais* other than the ones mentioned in the primary source above. Various journal articles, theses, conference





papers, web pages and other electronic media were sourced to substantiate and validate the findings of the primary source.

1.10 Operational Definition

The operational definition explains the key concepts based on the context of the study. As this study takes on the concepts of *Saiva Siddhāntam* as the theory for the research, it has become pertinent to explain some of the main terms used in this context. Some of the words that do not have an English equivalent are also defined in this section.



Saivism is one of the sects in the Hindu Religions. It upholds Lord Civā as the one and only Supreme Being. The word ‘Saivism’ is derived from the root word Civā. It is the oldest surviving pre-historic religion having its followers all over the world. There are four main schools of Saivism. They are the Pācupatā, the Vira Saivam, the Kashmira Saivam and the *Saiva Siddhāntam*. Each school has its own philosophy, its own practices and rituals. However, all followers of the religion give the utmost importance to the holy ash, the five syllabled mantra – NA MA CI VA YA, and the worship of Lingam and temples (Moti Lal, 1987). This research uses Saivism to mean the Tamil Saivism based on the *Saiva Siddhāntam*.





1.10.2 Saivites

The followers of Saivism are called the Saivites. They pray and hold in reverence the images of Cīvā in the forms of Nataraja, Lingam and Rudhra-Cīvā. They give due importance to temple worship, wear the rudrāksha and apply the holy ash on their foreheads and all over their bodies. However, the ordinary Saivites are not seen wearing the rudrāksha nowadays. The Tamil Saivites revere the *Tirumuṟais* and *Meykaṇṭa Shāstrās* as their scriptures (Moti Lal, 1987).

1.10.3 Nāyaṇmārs

Nāyaṇmārs are the Tamil Saiva Saints who were identified by Saint Cuntarar in his ‘Tiruttonṭar Tokai’. They are 63 in number including the poet. After the composition of ‘Tiruttonṭar Purāṇam’, better known as ‘Periyapurāṇam’ the author Saint Cēkkiḷar was added as the 64th *Nāyaṇmār* into this group. The heroes of both the Purāṇams are the same Saiva Saints who were known as *Aṅpārs* and *Aṭiyārs*. The former means God’s lovers and the latter as God’s servants. These *Nāyaṇmārs* lived in the land at various times; some were of previous *yugās* like Kaṇṇappar, some from the near past and some were of the same period as Saint Cuntarar. They came from various strata of lives - from kings to paupers, from different castes and professions. Except for Saint Tirumūlar, the other 62 are devotees attending to the household and other normal duties. All these saints were people who had overcome desire and attachment. All these saints attained *Mukti* by living lives of sheer love, devotion, and service to both God and mankind. To these *Nāyaṇmārs* the only God was Cīvā (Ponnusamy, 2015).





1.10.4 *Tirumuṟai*

The *Tirumuṟais* are a compilation of the above seven volumes of *Tēvāram*, the hymns of Saint Māṇikkavācakar as the eighth, the ninth by nine other devotees, the tenth by Tirumūlar, the eleventh by another twelve devotees and finally the twelfth volume is by Cēkkīlar. Scholars differ on the manner of compilation of the above twelve volumes. Most of them agree that the first seven volumes were in existence before the retraction of the *Tēvāram* by Nampiyāṅṭārnampi during the reign of Ātitta Cōlan I. Possibly Nampi could have included Saint Māṇikkavācakar's Tiruvācakam and Tirukkōvaiyār as the eighth volume. The ninth, tenth and eleventh might had been compiled after Nampi and before Cēkkīlar (Vellaivāraṇaṇār, 1972).



The above twelve volumes are collectively known as the *Paṅṅiru Tirumuṟai*.

They are considered by the Tamil Saivites as the Holy Tamil *Vēdās* and are held in high esteem (G. Subramania Pillai, 1948). Since the *Tēvāram* and Māṇikkavācakar's compositions are part of this collection, the same reverence and holiness accorded to them are also given to the collection as a whole. In singing the *pañcapurāṇam* as a reflection of this holiness, hymns from the *Tēvāram*, Tiruvācakam, the Ninth volume and the twelfth volume are selected. Except for the Ninth volume, from which two songs are selected, the others contribute one song each, thus making the five of the *pañcapurāṇam* (Devapooopathy, 1986).





1.10.5 *Tēvāram*

The word ‘*Tēvāram*’ can be split in two ways: ‘*Tēva*’ + ‘*āram*’ or ‘*Tē*’ + ‘*vāram*’. In the first splitting it would mean ‘Garland for the Deity’ (*Tēva* = Deity; *āram* = garland). In the second splitting (*Tē* = sweetness; *vāram* = a type of melodious songs) it means sweet melodious songs. Both the definitions befit the word ‘*Tēvāram*’ (Kandaswamy, 1995b)

At present this word ‘*Tēvāram*’ refers to the first seven volumes of the *Paṇṇiru Tirumuṛais*. *Tēvāram* hymns are the products of the Southern Indian Bhakti Movement of the seventh and eighth centuries A.D. These volumes were sung by the *Tēvāram* trio - Tiruñānacampantar, Tirunāvukkaracar and Cuntarar. At the time of compilation, Saint Tiruñānacampantar’s collections were known as *Tirukkaṭaikkāppu*, Saint Tirunāvukkaracar’s were called *Tēvāram*, and Saint Cuntarar’s compositions were known as *Tiruppāṭṭu*. These hymns are considered to be the canonical works for the codification of the later *Saiva Siddhāntam Shāstrās* (Vellāivāraṇaṇār, 1972). This study is based on Saint Cuntarar’s *Tiruppāṭṭu* which is also referred under the term ‘*Tēvāram*’ these days.

1.10.6 *Saiva Siddhāntam*

‘*Saiva Siddhāntam*’ is the philosophy and creed of Tamil Saivism. The word ‘*Saiva*’ is derived from ‘*Sivam*’ referring to the Supreme Lord Civā. This connection shows that all schools that accept Civā as such have affinities with this philosophy. The word





‘*Siddhāntam*’ is a compound word made up of two words – ‘*siddha*’ and ‘*anta*’. The first means ‘the established truth’; while the second means ‘end’ or ‘final’. Together they convey the idea of absolute intellectual finality, the final word or end of ends. The most important feature of *Siddhāntam* is that it gives more value for reason, than for anything else (G. Subramania Pillai, 1948).

Saiva Siddhāntam tenets are codified and exemplified in the ‘*Meykaṇṭa Shāstrās*’. The philosophy’s central theme is about the liberation of the souls from ‘*pācam*’. In doing so, it hinges on five main concepts of *Pati*, *pacu*, *pācam*, *cātaṇai* and *payan*. The English equivalents of these words are – God, souls, bondage, means and benefits (Piet, 1952).



1.10.7 Meykaṇṭa Shāstrās

Meykaṇṭa Shāstrās are referred to as the ‘*Meykaṇṭa Cāttiraṅkaḷ*’. This corpus consists of fourteen books written between the twelfth and the Fourteenth centuries A.D. The collection earns its name because of its belonging to the Meykaṇṭār Guru Heredity, known as the Meykaṇṭār Cantāṇam (Moorthy, 1988). These books posit the concepts and doctrines of the Tamil Saivism (Devasenapathi, 1974).

Although the prime basic systematic treatment of the tenets of Tamil Saivism is found in the *Civañāṇapōtam*, this work is preceded by two shorter ones of the twelfth century – *Tiruvuntiyār* and *Tirukkaḷirruppaṭiyār*. The fourth book - *Civañāṇacittiyār* - is an elaborate one that explains further the concepts of *Civañāṇapōtam*. The author of





the fourth book, Aruṅnanti Civam, had written another one book called ‘Irupāvīrupaktu’. The sixth is ‘Uṅmai-neri-Viḷakkam’ by Manavācakam kaṭantār. The remaining eight books – ‘Uṅmai Viḷakkam’, ‘Civappirakācam’, ‘Tiruvaruṭpayan’, ‘Viṅā Venpā’, ‘Pōrrip Pahroṭai’, ‘Koṭikkavi’, ‘Neṅcu Viṭu Tūtu’, ‘Caṅkarpa Nirākaraṇam’ – were written by the fourth cantāṇa kuravar, Umāpati Sivam (Ponniah, 1962).

1.10.8 *Pati*

Pati is God, the only one beyond comparison, the immaculate and is referred as Civā by the Siddhāntins. *Pati* is the Pure Being (*Sat*), the very source of all knowledge (*Cit*) and eternal bliss (*Āṇandam*), so is called *Satcitāṇandaṅ* (Devapooathy, 1986).

1.10.9 *Pacu*

The *Pacu* (souls) are countless in number and are eternal. The word *pacu* denotes the state of bondage and are not the one and the same substance as God. They are not emanates of God, as opposed to the view of the Vaitikas and Monists but are real (*Sat*) separate whole entities. The *pacu* is intelligent (*Cit*) and is capable of knowledge but its knowledge is limited, intermittent and not independent (Ganesalingam, 2001).





1.10.10 *Pācam*

Pācam, 'bondage', consists of three impurities that bind the souls. It is also referred to as fetters, chain and binders (Moorthy, 1988). The first of these is the *mūlamalam* or *āṇavam* as it is usually called. The second is the *kaṇma malam* and the third is the *māyā malam*. Further definitions are given under the respective headings below.

1.10.11 *Āṇavam*

Āṇavam is one of the three natural impurities that envelopes the *pacu* which is also referred to as the original impurity or the *mūlamalam*. It is the source of ego and ignorance in the *pacu*. The word is formed from 'anu', meaning that it atomises the soul and makes it diminutive (Sambasivanar, 2003).

1.10.12 *Kaṇmam*

Kaṇmam or *karma* means action. In Tamil it is called *viṇai*. *Pacu*'s actions, both good and bad, become the *kaṇmam* that are accumulated to determine the happiness and sorrow in life, forthcoming births and evolution and maturing of the souls. Just as *āṇavam* is eternal, *kaṇmam* is also eternal due to the fact that action self-starts with the binding of *āṇavam* on *pacu* (Ganesalingam, 2001).





1.10.13 *Māyā*

Māyā is the material cause of this universe. It is from *māyā*, the body, the organs, the worlds, and the sensations are created by God. *Māyā* is the primordial material which is eternal. It is through *māyā* that the souls are able to function in their bodily forms. *Māyā* is eternal and does not possess the intelligence to function by itself. It needs an intelligent agent – who is termed as *Civā* – to give it material forms that we see as the real universe that can be perceived through the five senses of the bodily forms (Gnanakumaran, 2012).

1.10.14 *Cāṭaṇai*



Cāṭaṇai or the means to salvation denotes the four paths taken by a Siddhāntin to attain the Lotus Feet of *Civā*. These four are namely: - *cariyai*, *kiriyai*, *yōgam* and *ñāṇam*. *Cariyai* is the worshipping of *Civā* in the manifested form through bodily activities. *Kiriyai* path involves both the internal and external worship through the recital of prayers and *pūjās*. *Yōgam* is the development of intimacy with God, and it builds a communion of wills between God and the devotee. The practitioner of *Yōgam* recites the five-lettered mantra and does a series of *prāṇayāmā* (breathing exercises). *Ñāṇam* is the ultimate path, the seeking of knowledge of God. Even a practitioner of *cariyai*, *kiriyai* or *yōgam* has to pursue the path of *ñāṇam* to realise the Lord. These four paths in their order are also called as *sahamārgam*, *dāsamārgam*, *satputramārgam* and *sanmārgam* respectively (Muthupackiam, 1997).





1.10.15 Payaṅ

Payaṅ refers to the benefits of the means that *pacu* embarks on to get liberated and attain salvation (*mukti*) (Arunaivadivelu, 2000). *Mukti* is the final stage in which *pacu* unites with *Pati* in a state of Advaita. For such a union to take place the *pacu* has to be released from the bondage of the impurities – a state that is termed *pācanīkkam*. According to the path taken, *pacu* attains one of the four places with God – *sālōkam*, *sāmīpam*, *sārūpam* or *sāyucyam* (Arunaivadivelu, 2000).

1.11 Summary

The devotional literature of Tamil, as mentioned earlier, is classified into the devotional (*tōttiram*) and the philosophical (*cāttiram*) texts. These two divisions have interrelated connections. Scholars believe that the latter is an extract of the former (Rathinasabapathy, 1979). Cuntarar *Tēvāram* is a *cāttiram*. Looking for the concepts of *Saiva Siddhāntam* in the hymns of Cuntarar will be most beneficial to students who are interested in Tamil Saivism. The five basic concepts – *Pati*, *pacu*, *pācam*, *cātaṅai*, and *payaṅ* - would be studied in detail with reference to Cuntarar *Tēvāram*. As mentioned earlier, scholars were only able to study aspects of this creed in the past two centuries. This was only made possible with the liberalization of Tamil education and the churning of the rarely found palmyra manuscripts that held these valuable sources into a mass-produced printed media. A renewed interest in studying the scriptures, especially the





Paṅṅiru Tirumūrais and the *Meykaṅṅa Shāstrās* is happening in most of the world Universities (Klober, 2017b). However, the topic of this research has not been taken for study as yet, to the best of the researcher's knowledge.

