

Saivism, Vaisnavism, Saktivism, Ganaptyam, Kaumaram and Sauram are the six school of Hindusim. Of these schools, Saivism occupies a prominent place in Tamil nadu and some part of Sri Lanka. God Siva occupies the most predominant and pivotal place in Saivism. Nevertheless differences in thought, beliefs and rituals have led to the rise of various seets in Saivism. Amongst them, some schools continue to flourish to this date, some have been prevalent for a short period and yet some others have ceased to exist and, are known only to some extent from available sources. The Saiva Siddhanta gives the philosophical bases of the southern school of Saivism. In India religion and philosophy are inseparable as such Saiva Siddhanta is used synonymously with Saivism.

Saiva Siddhanta has been expounded in fourteen fundamental works known as the Meykanta Sastras¹ and is one of the highest and most spiritual manifestation of South Indian philosophical and religious thought. A number of works on Saiva Siddhanta is available in Sanskrit also. Siddhanta Dipika of Sarvanma sampu, Siddhantartha Samuccaya of Aghorasivacarya, Saiva paribhasa, Sivajana Bodha Sangraha Vyakhyana, Saiva sanyasa paddhati, Kriya dipika and Sivagra Bhasya of Sivagra yogin, Sivayoga sara, Siddhanta Sikhamani, Sivayoga Ratna, Pramana Dipika, Ajnana vivecana, Pauskara vrtti, Prasada Dipika and Siva samadhi mahatmya

sangraha of Gnanaprakasa, Sivattattvaviveka of Appayya Diksitar may be cited as example. Besides, the astaprakaranas also deserve to mention on this respect.²

The word Saiva is derived from Siva. It means pertaining to God Sivan who is the supreme Being or Lord. The word Saiva Siddhanta is a compound word and comprising two words viz siddha and anta. The word Siddha means established and the word anta means end. Therefore, Siddhanta means 'end' of that which has been established, established end, Final end, settled opinion. *Mutinta mutipu* of Tamil word denotes the same meaning.

Saiva Siddhanta texts, especially the Meykanta Sastras have classified all the Indian religions of their period under the following four categories. (Sivajnana Padiyam -pp. 38-9)

1. The outer most religions (*Purappuraccamayankal*) Madyamika, Yogasara, Vaibhasika, Sautrantika, Jaina and Lokayata.
2. The outer religions (*Puracamayankal*) Sankhya, Yoga, Nyaya, Vaishesika, Vedanta, Purva mimamsa and Pancaratra.
3. The inner most religions (*akappuraccamayankal*) Pasupata, Mahavrata, Kapala, Vama, Bhairava and Aikkiyavada.
4. The inner religions (*akaccamayankal*) Pasana Vada Saivism (argument of stone in Saivism) Bheda Vada Saivism (argument of difference

in Saivism) Isvaravikara Vada Saivism (argument of immutability of Isvara in Saivism) Sivasama Vada Saivism (argument of equal to Siva in Saivism) Sivasankranta vada (argument of relation to Siva in Saivism) and Sivadvaita Saivism (argument of non duality with Siva in Saivism)

According to Sivajnana swamikal, the outer most religions are also called as heterodox religions, not only deny the authority of the Vedas and Agamas but also the belief in God. The outer religions accept the authorities of the Vedas. Among these groups, Nyaya and Vaisesika contradict the views of the Vedas. Purva Mimamsa and Uttara Mimamsa give special prominence to some parts of the Vedas. Purva Mimamsa gives prominence to karma of the Vedas and Uttara Mimamsa emphasizes the jnana of the Vedas. The inner most religions which treat Siva as the supreme Being, accept the Vedas and the Sivagamas but give prominence to some other sources that contradict the sacred authorities particularly the Vedas. Saiva Siddhanta, therefore, places all these sects general as outer religions (*Puram*) and considers inner religions as the true Saiva religions (Sivajnana padiyam. p.41) Meykanta Devar says in his avaiyattakkam, homage to the assembly in Sivajnana Bodha, that those who do not understand themselves cannot understand the nature of Divine as those do not agree among themselves they are come under the category of the outer religions, *tammai unarar unarar utan kiyantu tammil punaramaikelan puram.*

Sarva darsana samgraha of Madhavacarya identifies four sects of

Saivism namely, Nagulisa Pasupata, Saiva darsana, Pratiyabhijna and Rasesvara (Sarva darsana Samgraha, pp. 1034) Among these, Rasesvara could not be treated as a sect of Saivism as it deals only with the welfare of human beings and not the philosophical and religious aspects. Dr. S Radhakrishnan, a well known contemporary Indian philosopher, had affirmed the same view in this regard (Indian philosophy —Vol II p 723) The Pasupata Saivism also called as Nakulisa Pasupata as it was founded by Nakulisa. The other sect, Pratiyabhijna is a monistic system which flourished in Kashmir. Cowell suggests that the Saiva darsana of Madhavacarya mostly denotes the Saiva Siddhanta philosophy. (Sarva darsana Samgraha, p.105) Vasupati. Misra refers to the four sects of Saivism namely, Saiva, Pasupata, Karunika Siddhanta and kapalika when he comments on Sankara bhasya. (A History of Indian Philosophy Vol.V, p.1) Gunanathe also mentions the same view but includes Mahavrata and kalamuka sects instead of kapalika and karunika Siddhanta. K.C Pandey traces eight school of Saiva religion from the available literature in Sanskrit. They are Pasupata dualism, Siddhanta Saiva dualism, Dualistic non dualistic Saivism of lakulisa Pasupata, Visistadvaita Saivism, Visistadvaita Saivism, Nandikesvara Saivism, Rasesvara Saivism and Monistic Saivism of Kashmir (An outline of History of Saiva philosophy, p.6) Most of these sects except Saiva darsana of Madhavacarya fall in the category of inner most religions than the inner religions.

But, Arulnandi, Sivacarya mentions Saiva sects that give truth are six in

number, *meytaru caivamati yiru munrum*. (Sivajnana siddhiyar, p.7) Thirumular also holds the view as there are six religions which are theistic '*annalai natiya arucamayam*'. (Thirumantiram -1535). Sundarar, one of the Saiva camaya acharyas too has said the same as '*arival mikka aruvakai camayam*' the very know ledgeable religions are six in number (Tevaram 7792) This classification clearly spells out the six sects of Saivism though they donot specifically mention any particular sects.

Umapati Sivacarya mentions that Saiva Siddhanta is darkness for the groups of outer religions and brightness for the groups of inner religions. '*Puraccamayattavark kirulay akaccama -yat toliyyay.*' (Sivapragasam -7) The inner religions mainly differ from Saiva Siddhanta due to the differences of opinion on liberation. Therefore inner religions could be called as the different sects of Siddhanta religion. It is notable that Talluvapragasa swamikal mentions about eight permanent religions out of the nine religions namely. Suddha Saivism, Asuddha Saivism, Miccirra Saivism, Siddhanta Saivism, Anati Saivism, Avantara Saivism, Bheda Saivism, Anu Saivism and Ati Saivism as the sects of Siddhanta. (Tattuvapragasam p. 139). But Sivajnana swamikal particularly states inner religions as the closest to Saiva Siddhanta.

The Tamil Lexicon gives the names of sixteen sects of Saivism as Urtha Saivism, Anati Saivism, Ati Saivism, Maka Saivism, Bheda Saivism, Abheda Saivism, Antara Saivism, Guna Saivism, Nirguna Saivism, Attuva Saivism, Yoga Saivism, Jnana Saivism, Anu Saivism,

Kiriya Saivism, Nalupada Saivism and Suddha Saivism. Tattuva lingadevar's Tattuvanjanu bhagosara and Winslow's comprehensive Tamil and English Dictionary also mention sixteen sects of Saivism. futher more, Marajjnana Sampantar mentions seven classes of Saiva religions, Viz, Anati Saivar, Ati Saivar, Maka Saivar, Anu Saivar, Avantara Saivar, Piravara Saivar and Antiya Saivar (Saiva Samaya neri p.188)

These classification is mainly based on caste distinction. It is very diffecult to findout the reason why the list of sixteen includes Anati Saivar, Ati Saivar, and Maka Saivar and excludes Anu Saivar, Avantara Saivar, Piravara Saivar and Antiya Saivar. It is a Notable fact that the three sects included belong to the Brahman caste and the excluded sects belong to the non Brahman castes. These sects of Saivism are not strictly on conceptual classification of Saivism as they include some of the caste oriented sects in it. Further more, the Madurai Tamil Lexicon gives more than eighty sub classes of Saiva names owing to legal and illegal union between two different classes.

Thirumular, a Tamil saint, describes about four sects of Saivism as Suddha Saivism, Asuddha Saivism, Marga Saivism and Katunsuddha Saivism. (Thirumantiram -1394) It is interesting to note that the word Saiva Siddhanta was used first by Thirumular. According to Thirumular, those who have realised the excellence which is the highest, are Saiva Siddhantins only, '*Melana tatparan Kantullor Saiva Siddhantare*' (Thrumantiram -1396) It could be confirmed from the references that SuddhaSaivism denotes Saiva Siddhanta

Thirumular is of the view that it is possible to realize the concept of sat and asat by satasat in Suddha Saivism. At the same time, the Suddha Saiva sect, one of the sixteen sects, which was classified by Tattuvanijanubhogasara also emphasises the realization of the three eternal entities, namely, the God, Soul and bonds. It is not clear that Thirumular's Suddha Saivism could be identified with the Suddha Saiva sect of Tattuvanijanubhogasara. Concerning this, Sivajnana Swamikal mentions that Suddha Saivism could be accommodated under Siddhanta Saiva as it does not; ideologically differ from Saiva Siddhanta (Sivajnana patiyam- P.86) Marajjnana sampantar also mentions Suddha Saivism as a sect of Saivism when he classifies Saivism into three sects, viz, Suddha Saivism, asuddha Saivism and miccira Saivism (mixture of suddha and asuddha Saivism) (Saiva samaya neri -262) Thirumular's explanations of the four sects are not clear in detail. Under each of those sections something other than that sects described by Thirumular. Owing to this, it is not possible to understand these sects clearly.

The inner religions have close similarities with Saiva Siddhanta as mentioned earlier. Sivajnana swamikal while commenting on Sivajnana bodham says that inner religions are Siddhanta Saivism. It is worthwhile to note the sects of Siddhanta Saivism which were discussed by Umapathi Sivacarya (Sankarpanirakaranam - p21) According to Sivajnana swamikal, the sects which accept the realities of six, namely God, soul, egoism (*anavam*) karma and two kinds of power *maya* follow the inner

religions. At the same time, he mentions that the sects of Suddha Saivism could be included in the inner religions as Bheda vada and Pasana vada does not have much differences in themselves. Umapati Sivacarya mentions the doctrine and refutation of nine religions in his Sankarpanirakaranam. Among these, *maya vada* and *akkiya vada* are come under the category of outer religion and inner most religion respectively. Saiva vada is a sect which is not mentioned in any other classification. Tattuvapragasa swamikal states eight religions as sects of Siddhanta. These are almost the same as the classification from Sankarpanirakaranam except *maya vada*.

Like Saiva Siddhanta, Pasanavada accepts the three bonds. Further it suggests that egoism (*anavam*) causes the suffering and struggle of the cycle of birth of the soul. The God helps to distribute the birth to the souls according to their past deeds. The soul attains liberation which means getting rid of the bond that obstruct the individual soul from realizing the God. Pasana vadins insist that the soul becomes as insensible as a stone due to the presence of egoism in stage of liberation. It is untenable for Saiva Siddhantins. Bheda vadin also maintains similar views as the Saiva Siddhantins regarding the three bonds. Saiva Siddhantins refute Bheda vadin's arguments of liberation as they insist of difference in the stage of liberation. Saiva Siddhantins say that difference between God and soul should not exist in liberation otherwise the soul could not realise the higher state of consciousness totally. According to Sivasama vada the soul attains the form of Siva in liberation and performs the

five kinds of activities like Siva. Besides his, they emphasise that Siva and the soul are equal in the stage of liberation. Saiva Siddhantins reject their argument and stress that the soul is absolutely dependent on Siva.

Sivadvaita tries to accommodate the views of Saiva Siddhanta and Vedanta in their school of philosophy. They say that accepting dualism will contradict the teaching of the Vedas. Therefore, Siva is the only nondualistic reality. Siva appears as many souls due to adjuncts. The soul and bonds are the evolution of consciousness power according to Sivadvaita. Saiva Siddhantins refute that it creates confusion about the purpose of creation of the world and the necessity of Siva's five kinds of activities.

The soul becomes one with Siva in liberation according to Sivasankranta vada. The soul loses its identity while it is absorbed by Siva. In consequence of this, the instincts will know Siva and become intelligent as it is with the soul in the stage of liberation. Therefore Siva's grace will be attained by the process of Sankramam. Saiva Siddhantins refute that pasajana never imparts patijnana without God's grace.

According to Isvaravikara vada, the soul attains Siva after achieving the maturity. Siva neither grants grace nor comes to the soul. They insist that it is like a tree shade that Siva remains immutable and just as a traveller approaches the tree for its shade, the soul attains liberation when it matures. Saiva Siddhantins refute the said idea as an unintelligent approach to limit the power and grace of Siva.

As mentioned earlier, Saiva Siddhanta accepts the reality of three

entities. Siva is the all powerful, absolute Being according to Saiva Siddhanta. He is the only independent reality. The other two, world and soul, though eternal, have only a dependent existence. The doctrine of grace is an essential feature of the Saiva Siddhanta philosophy. Siva helps the souls in their endeavours to attain liberation. Even enquiry and faith require a super natural infusion of divine grace. Therefore, the doctrine of grace is emphasised in Saiva Siddhanta as a prominent factor in the attainment of liberation. Infact Saiva Siddhanta is not a vada but a conclusion. It is treated as a complete and systematic school of Saivism among the above mentioned sects.

Notes:

1. Thiruvundiyar,
Thirukkalirupadiyar, Sivajnana
Bodha, Sivajnana Siddhiyar,
Irupavirupattu, Unmai vilakkam, Siva
Pragasam, Thiruvarutpayan,
Vinavenba, Porripahrodai, Kodik-
kavi, Nenjuviduthutu Unmaineri
vilakkam and Sankarpanirakaranam
are the Meykanta Sastras.
2. Bhogakarika, Paramoksanirsa karika,
Tattuvatravam, Tattvasangraha,
Nadakarika, Moksa karika,
Ratnatraya and Tattuaprakasika are
the astaprakaranas.

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