

ELEMENTS OF HOLISTIC HUMAN DEVELOPMENT IN NAANMANIKKADIGAI: A HERMENEUTIC STUDY

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ABSTRACT

In this contemporary world, people are in search of ways to improve every sphere of life starting from relationship with one's own self to close ones and society. They are striving to live a balanced life where they can accomplish success in their vocation and perpetuate healthy relationships with oneself, others and society. The quest for identifying the meaning and purpose of one's life is still going on. Various views and perspectives are available regarding the above issues as this is not a subject being enquired recently. Notions on happiness, wellbeing, meaning in life and so on are enquired and analysed since time immemorial. This study intends to derive insights from the Tamil Sangam literature Naanmanikkadigai which belongs to the Pathinenkeelkanakku for facilitating holistic development in individuals. The qualitative approach of hermeneutic interpretation was used to analyse the contents of the text. A thorough analysis resulted in the extraction of core themes (sub themes) which were then classified into major categories (main themes) based on the relationship between the core themes. The major categories formed from this analysis include: intrapersonal relation, inter personal relationships, vocational mastery, wealth and prosperity, social relationships, just governance, nature and environment and scholarly qualities. These insights can be employed in the overall development of the individuals.

Keywords: Naanmanikkadigai, Hermeneutics, Pathinenkeelkanakku, Holistic development

INTRODUCTION

Various questions related to the nature of meaning, purpose and quality of life have been analysed and researched since time immemorial in all societies and cultures. Many of the notions with regard to happiness, quality of life, meaning in life and well - being that are found to be popularly discussed and researched today were formulated during Vedic and Upanishadic periods. Various literatures that were composed during the ancient times throw light on various concepts and issues that are seriously discussed and probed in the contemporary researches of Behavioural Science. Tremendous insights are embedded in the scriptures and texts of the ancient times which bestow immense wisdom and solutions to a great deal of problems faced in the modern

times. People are striving persistently to know how to live holistically.

The Indian spiritual knowledge can be broadly classified under two major categories: Shruti and Smriti. The term Shruti is generally applied to the Vedas and Upanishads which are revered as revealed or divine in origin and perfect without human involvement in their writing, editing or commenting.

Smriti, literally means "memory" which includes epics like Ramayana, Mahabharata, Kalpa sutras and Puranas. It came up to convey the Vedic meaning in simpler forms to even an ordinary human being, as not everyone had direct access to the Vedas. (Arka, 2018).

The ancient education system of India has always focussed on the holistic development of the individual by building a

healthy mind and a healthy body by teaching the students to fulfil their duties towards their own self, family and society, thus encompassing all aspects of one's life. Holistic living in Indian tradition promotes not only balance of mind – body – spirit, but also its positive interacting relationship with the external world including the nature and the society. A sense of meaning and happiness in life would be lost without this coherent relationship with the external world (Sharma, 2013). In counselling practices, it is very important to understand the spiritual issues as spirituality plays a significant role in both assessment and treatment (Singh & Modi, 2011).

The Bhagavad Gita, Vedas and the Upanishads form the basis of Indian spirituality, holds tremendous lessons about understanding oneself in relation to the others in the society as well. Therefore, the insights gained by examining oneself can help them in improving their control over themselves and allow them to exhibit more virtuous behaviour towards others. Bhagavad Gita considers true education as performing one's own duties for the attainment of joy, satisfaction and salvation, getting rid of the three wraths (lust, anger and fear) with the steady mind and wisdom. It stresses on the combination of mental, physical and spiritual (socio-cultural) paths of education which are very much focused aspects in the modern psychology as well (Ghimire, 2013).

The Tamil Sangam literature is majorly categorised into Pathinenmelkanakku (The Eighteen Greater Works) consisting of the Ettutogai (Eight collections) and Pattupattu (Ten songs), and Pathinenkeelkanakku (The Eighteen Minor Works). The Sangam literature is the earliest known literature of South India, and is the major source for studying about the Sangam age. Literally, the term 'sangam' means 'confluence' – an assembly. This academy of learned poets produced literary works of high quality (Dokras, 2020).

The ancient Tamil texts Thirukkural and Thirumanthiram provide references to the Siddha system of medicine which flourished in the South India. Psychiatry is a recognised branch of medicine in Siddha system and is called as 'KIRIGAI MARUTHUVAM'. Sage Agasthiyar was the chief of the Siddha School, and some of his works are still employed as

standard text books of medicine in daily use by Indian Medical practitioners. Mental illnesses were not only treated with drugs but also Psychotherapy was employed by removing the unhealthy thoughts, behaviour, postures etc., of the mentally ill and replacing them with good thoughts (Eyamam), traits (Niyamam), postures (Asabam) etc. (Somasundaram et al., 1986).

There is an epigraphic and historic evidence in a temple dedicated to Lord Venkateshwara at Thirumukkudal, Chinglepet district Tamilnadu dating back to the ninth century AD, which mentions about the presence of residential care for the mentally ill (Subba Reddy, 1971 as cited in Somsundaram, 2002).

There are numerous notions relating to mental health and mental illness in the Tamil Buddhist epic Manimeghalai, of the post – sangam era of the Tamil literature (Somasundaram & Murthy, 2016). It also reveals the characteristics of Catatonic schizophrenia and describes the attitude of the public towards mentally unsound as compassion and desire to help rather than a sense of fear, frivolity or prejudice or stigmatization.

Thirukkural is the most popular, widely read and translated work belonging to the Pathinenkeelkanakku conveying highly valuable and immense message to enhance various spheres of human life. It is popularly called as ulagappodhumarai to indicate its universal and secular nature. It expounds the virtues and emotions involved in conjugal love between a man and a woman. It also brings forth the values to be practiced in the family life, and how to have an intimate and disciplined love life keeping aram – virtue as the base (Vijayakalaivani, 2020). Thiruvalluvar propounds the importance of environmental protection, and makes use of nature for comparison to teach reality and morality (Kalaarasan, 2018). Thirukkural presents a Theory of Leadership that seems to integrate the traits theory, behavioural theory, ethical leadership theory and the social cognitive resource theory of leadership (Chendroyaperumal & Meena, 2007). Thirukkural offers a great deal of insights for developing virtuous professionals in Human Resource Management (HRM). Being happy at work, result orientation than task orientation, dynamism, self-motivation,

humility, truthfulness, empathy, and impartiality are recommended as indispensable qualities to be improved within the self to be a virtuous professional (Karunarathna et al., 2019). Thiruvalluvar also provides his valuable insights on various aspects of a Government and politics like delegation of authority, espionage, ministers, friendship, enmity, nation, emissary, defence, wealth, poverty, noble citizenship and the evils to be avoided in order to build a political system and governance in which ethical values are embedded (Chandran, 2016).

One can find tremendous values and wisdom that can be applied in various aspects of human life to enhance the wellbeing and have a holistic living. Tholkappiam – one of the ancient Tamil literature, describes in detail about the Psychophysiological aspects of human emotions. This text classifies emotions into eight types: nagai – laughter, azhugai – melancholy, ilivalar – dejection with guilt and deistic for living, marutkai – Wonder, Achcham – fear, Oovagai – jubilation, Veguli – anger and resentment and perumidham – buoyancy and elation (Somasundaram, 2002).

Narrowing down to recent researches in wellbeing, Positive Psychology is a recently developed field in Psychology that attempted to scientifically study positive human functioning and flourishing at various levels. Three levels of research were included in this field: the subjective level, the individual level and the group level (Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi, 2000 as cited in Oades & Mossman, 2017).

In addition to research works done in Positive Psychology, enormous lessons and values can be derived from ancient scriptures and texts to improve the wellbeing and promote holistic living in individuals. Research and analysis into these ancient texts can reveal such valuable gems to upgrade various spheres of one's life. Naanmanikkadigai is one such ancient Tamil Text belonging to the Sangam Literatures which has been chosen in this study for content analysis. It belongs to the Patinenkilkanakku which contains around one hundred poems of didactic nature. It belongs to the post – sangam period corresponding to between 100 and 500 CE. It was written by the poet Vilambi Naaganaar. Due to its clarity and easy comprehensibility, it is popular and often

prescribed as text for schools in Tamil Nadu. The name of the text Naanmanikkadigai itself denotes the fact that each poem contains four unique ideas that can be compared to well – chosen gems adorning the poem. This study intends to extract insights relating to various spheres of life from this text to facilitate holistic development of individuals.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Aim

To explore the ancient Tamil text Naanmanikkadigai using hermeneutic approach and relate to, and / or add value to modern concepts or theories in Psychology and wellbeing.

Research Design

The qualitative research approach of hermeneutics was used to analyse the content of Naanmanikkadigai. 'Hermeneutics' is understood as 'interpretation' and in the modern researches, it is used to interpret and understand religious texts and ancient literature. Hermeneutic interpretation may not remain constant at any point in time. The interpretation given to the meaning of the text keeps changing with the way one connects and understands oneself (Nair, 2019).

In this study, V R Maadhavan's commentary on Naanmanikkadigai published by Tamil Palkalaikkazhagam Publishers, Thanjavur and the digital version of Naanmanikkadigai's commentary by Baalasundaram Pillai available in Tamil Virtual Academy website was used for the hermeneutic interpretation. A thorough reading of the text and its commentaries were done and few clarifications and discussions were made with the subject experts in the field of Tamil literature. A common understanding of the intended meaning was arrived at, and core themes (sub themes) for every poem was identified which was then classified into broad categories (main themes).

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Naanmanikkadigai, written by Vilambinaaganaar holds immense lessons for humanity encompassing various spheres of life starting from having healthy intrapersonal relationship to social relationships. It focuses on motivating mankind to perform their optimum throughout their living. A lot of notions of the most popular Tamil literature Thirukkural can also be found here with a deeper explanation. This text is popular for its

clarity and easy comprehensibility. It covers contents from personal virtues to Just Governance of a Fair Administrator. The virtue of being unprejudiced has been discussed and taught centuries back with wonderful examples seems exciting and worth mentioning.

Undoubtedly, it was a book praised by all regardless of the age. Until the last century, it was one of the books that was taught to children as a part of their education, as it is easy to understand, and has the power to inculcate precious values and principles in their young minds, so that they can flourish in their lives. Now, due to the changes taken place in the education system, just few poems of this text has been included in the syllabus of the school curriculum. The habit and tendency to read such poems and imbibe its precious lessons has been reduced gradually in the recent years.

Teaching Strategies of Naanmanikkadigai

Some of the teaching strategies used in this book correspond to the modern techniques used in the field of Psychology for behaviour modification. The author uses various examples as a means to instil the needful lessons in the minds of the learners.

Conflicts and disunion would destroy one's strength, falsehood would destroy one's body, and evil friendships would destroy the respect of the entire family of the individual in the same way an impure vessel destroys the pure milk poured into it (23). Three different values are emphasized using one example of impure vessel spoiling the entire milk in it.

The consequences of not learning, and getting educated is explained through a very catchy example. The words falling from an uneducated and ignorant person would be enough to destroy him, in the same way the banana tree's shred causes its own destruction (84).

Apart from the example based teaching, the other technique found in this text includes operand conditioning. Generally, in this technique, reinforcements and punishments are used to strengthen or weaken behaviours. It is considered that the behaviour which is rewarded is more likely to be repeated in the future whereas, the behaviour that is punished will occur less frequently in the future. In this technique, the consequences of behaviour determine the probability of the behaviour being repeated (Staddon, & Cerutti,

2002). It is surprising to see that the author has used such techniques in the process of teaching virtues and morality centuries ago. The author mentions about the consequences of various virtues and actions while teaching the same to the learners. Every good virtue and behaviour has been related to its rewarding outcomes while teaching them, and on the other hand negative characteristics and evil behaviours has been related to their unpleasant outcomes. This technique being used in several poems can be noticed while deeply analysing the text. It can be effective in nourishing virtuous behaviours and reducing / removing negative and unhealthy behaviours of the learners.

Although listening to and obeying the loved ones may seem bitter initially, its consequences would be positive and rewarding (100). Thus, author advises the learners to go by the words and recommendations of the loving ones.

The consequences of not earning adequate money, not committing good deeds and reduced strength are also explained. A man who is not earning enough for the family will not be respected by his wife (101); therefore, he is advised to earn adequate income for the family. Someone who has done evil deeds and not committed good deeds will have negative outcomes as a result of his behaviours (101), therefore he is asked to be mindful of his deeds. Also, one should always strengthen his self by means of various developmental activities for self - improvement, otherwise, he may have an increased number of enemies who might be more powerful to defeat him (101). This advice can be taken in the context of a career or in governance and leadership tasks.

Although pursuit of happiness is one major topic studied in positive Psychology, there are other topics too which are its key areas of concern. They are realizing potentials, pursuing interests, nurturing others and leading authentic lives. Plenty of insights can be derived from the poems of Naanmanikkadigai to help achieve these goals and upgrade various spheres of one's life having virtues and morality as a base. The core themes identified from this text can be classified under the categories namely: *intrapersonal relationship*, *interpersonal relationships*,

vocational mastery, wealth and prosperity, social wellbeing, nature and environment, scholarly qualities and Just Governance.

1) Intrapersonal Relationship

Intrapersonal skills are about one's inner-self. These skills consist of Emotional Self-Awareness, Assertiveness, Independence, Self-Regard and Self-Actualization. Expressing one's feelings, living and working independently, feeling strong and confident in expressing ideas and beliefs are indications of good intrapersonal skills (Bhatpahari, 2020).

Naanmanikkadigai has a lot of values to offer with regard to intra personal aspect of life. It talks about the *personal virtues, emotional management, self - care, and self - development.*

a. Personal Virtues

Self-discipline without the mixture of any evil in it is like having all the wealth (8), whereas, failing to have self-discipline can damage the fame of the entire family (94). Reaching out to those who don't give due respect (8) and even taking food from those who aren't loving (93) is discouraged to safeguard one's *self-respect*, as it would bring insult and humiliation. *Self-regulation* is the ability to control one's sense organs and follow the righteous path without giving regard to one's own desires. Only those with self-regulation can easily carry out the act of penance (18), and can get rid of evil deeds (45).

Modesty and being shameful is an essential virtue for women (11). *Tolerating* the mistakes of others is better than reacting to it with harsh words and hatred (13 & 69). *Chastity* is emphasized for woman (15) and *bravery and courage* for men (92). Falsehood can destroy a beautiful body, (23) whereas truthfulness brings praise to the individual (24). *Laziness* can destroy the individuals, (89) therefore it is advised to get rid of laziness. These are some of the personal virtues extracted from this text in relation to intrapersonal development of individuals.

b. Emotional management

Several poems talk about the significance of *anger management*. One should not lose his temper with others and throw out offending statements even at times of any faults from their side (3). Not managing

anger can destroy all other good qualities (10). It is recommended to get rid of anger which can cause harm to one-self in many ways (13). Victory can be a result of abandoning anger (17). The blessings and mercy of the Almighty God will be with only those who can manage anger (40), hence the author says that if one is willing to give up anything, the first thing should be chosen as anger (81). He clearly outlines the positive outcomes of controlling anger and the negative effects of poor anger management. On the other hand, the author talks about positive emotions in this book. The merriment attained by different people has been outlined: A brave and competent soldier derives pleasure from fighting before the king, great people attain pleasure from helping others, poor people attain pleasure from getting help, mean people derive pleasure from useless activities (36). Although different people attain pleasure from different acts, noble people achieve happiness and pleasure by helping people in need and it is the true happiness that one's wealth can offer one (37 & 38).

Excessive love for one's wife, *excessive desire* to earn and *excessive vigilance* to protect the earned money can spoil one's sleep (9). Hence, it is recommended to avoid these aroused states. Although bravery has been mentioned as an essential quality for men, one should possess *fear* to commit wrong and evil actions (27).

c. Self-Care

Starving is better than having unhealthy food, entering fire is better than living separated from loved ones (15). Eating healthy food and being with loved ones can enhance our physical and mental health. Although the food taken is pure and healthy, it can cause harm to the body with illness (51). Therefore, necessary efforts should be taken to cure the body when found with symptoms of illness. The necessity of having vegetarian food is emphasized and taking meat is discouraged as it is a sin to kill the living beings (39 & 60).

d. Self- Development

This theme can be related to the 'personal growth' and 'purpose in life' component of Ryff's model of Psychological wellbeing. 'Personal growth' refers to the

feelings of continued development and potential, being open to experience and feeling increasingly knowledgeable and effective (Ryff, 1989). 'Purpose in life' refers to having goals and a clear direction in life with meaningful past and beliefs that give purpose to life (Ryff, 1989).

According to Naanmanikkadigai, the growth of an individual is determined by his deeds, his wisdom, knowledge, realisation of the instable nature of world and non - attachment to this materialistic world. The *good deeds* committed by the individuals would elevate their level in the same way the fresh and beautiful flowers add beauty to the whole bouquet (49). Proceeding in the *righteous path* can only result in positive outcomes with regard to one's wellbeing (86).

The significance of *learning, education and wisdom* has been addressed in several poems of this text. Those with wisdom and education will be revered and excel in the congregation of great people. Living a life without learning and seeking knowledge is futile (22). Education gives the ability to distinguish between right and wrong without which one will remain ignorant of the world around (24). Education can be the only saviour at the times of disasters and defeat (30). Only the learnings and intellect of an individual will be with him at any point in time. There is no aid like one's wisdom and education in this world. Learning should take place with clear understanding and thorough analysis for mistakes to be avoided, and for the same to be applied in practical life (71). The right time in one's life for seeking education is their young age (93). Lack of education may cause disrespect to one's entire family and hinder their further development (82). The author even calls it a sin to not seek education in the young age because it may lead to a lot of negative outcomes in the future. Naanmanikkadigai talks about the importance of education, the positive outcomes of education and the negative consequences of not seeking education, the right time to seek education and how to seek education in detail. Perseverant efforts are indispensable for accomplishing great goals in life (35). One should be willing to put consistent efforts to elevate their standard.

Everything in this worldly life is instable in nature in the same way life, health, wealth and the youth that one enjoys are not stable and eternal. The births and deaths taking place constantly around are timely reminders, revealing that nothing in this world is long lasting (78, 59). The habit of reading good books can aid one in realising the instable nature of this materialistic world, reducing his love and attraction for worldly pleasures. It may also inspire them to lead a righteous life, and attain pleasure from virtuous and meaningful actions facilitating the achievement of eternal life and salvation in the hereafter (29). Only the good deeds of a person would follow him till the end aiding him to achieve eternity (17) and success in this life as well as the hereafter (58). Non - attachment to materialistic desires and worldly pursuits aid people in the attainment of salvation (58, 74). Pursuing worldly goals without any space and efforts for virtues and good deeds can only increase their desires leaving them unsatisfied with anything that they get. Those with noble goals and good deeds live a peaceful and satisfied life which would give them eternity (68). Such deeds stay with them forever whereas materialistic pursuits tend to fade away with time. Therefore, it is recommended that one can reach the state of self-actualization and salvation only by getting his / her self free from materialistic pursuits that give only timely pleasure (81).

2) Interpersonal Relationships

This theme can be related to the component 'positive relations with others' in the Psychological wellbeing model of Carol Ryff. It is the ability to have warm, satisfying and trusting relationships with others; it includes concern for other's welfare, strong empathy, intimacy, affection and understanding the give-and-take of human relationships (Ryff, 1989). The ability to build and maintain healthy inter-personal relationships with others is an essential aspect of one's wellbeing. There are enormous lessons in this text with regard to different kinds of interpersonal relationships that one can have, starting from intimate family relationships to relationships with scholars and noble people.

a. Family Life

No other relationship is as significant as that of a husband for a wife; the relationship with the children is significant for the parents, and no other relationship can serve the purpose of the parents for children (56). Motherhood is always unique irrespective of the era and time we are in. The love, care and sacrifice of a mother cannot be compared to anything else in this world (34). In a family, everyone are inter dependent, and every relationship has its due significance. Every member has their vital roles to play. Family can serve as an efficient supporting system that aids in facing the challenges of daily life. A reality to be understood and accepted by the couples is that love quarrels are inevitable and beautiful elements for increasing the love between the partners (46). Sweet words of a wife can pass positive energy and happiness for her husband (7) enhancing his emotional state. A virtuous family relationship is equal to asceticism (8) which includes abundant responsibilities from the side of husband and wife. Raising children without providing them education can harm the entire society, if they grow up as ignorant people. It is the responsibility of the parents to educate and mould their children (94). Husband is the head of the family. It is essential for him to be firm, responsible and clear in his actions. Wrong deeds of the husband can destroy the entire family. The entire family would follow the head and therefore, he should act responsible and be righteous (21). Although, husband is considered to be the breadwinner of the family, wife is the primary care taker of the family. She takes care of the entire household including children and her husband. Thus, she is rightly called 'the home maker of the family'. Immense insights are available in this text on the significant roles and responsibilities of the wife. A home or family life without good wife will only end in vain (22) because it is a good wife who would elevate the family life (20).

Cohesion among the family members is essential for the smooth functioning of the family. Hence, women are recommended to go by the consent of their husbands (38, 86) to maintain the cohesion and understanding in the family. Wisdom, beauty (54) and shyness (55, 89) are considered to be the attributes of a good wife to please her husband and care the

family. However, the beauty of a woman with no shyness is considered to be dangerous (94). A noble woman would guard her chastity even without any external protection on the other hand, if she decides to cheat her husband, then no external protection can stop her from doing it (91). A wife who cheats her husband without shyness and loyalty is considered to be his enemy (84).

b. Close Relatives and Neighbours

Being united with all the relatives, interacting with them, inviting them, helping them when they are in need are considered essential for maintaining a healthy relationship with them. The importance and necessity of relatives will be realised only when one is struggling in his down times (5). Showing hospitality for the guests coming to us is considered vital for strengthening the relationships (46). Sweet words that one utters can strengthen the relationships whereas harsh words can weaken the relationships with them (16). Showing concern and mercy for one's relatives when they are in their difficult times is emphasized for prolonging the relationship. Those with no compassion will be refrained by others (57). Not being in good terms with the relatives and avoiding them can cause destruction to one's own self (20, 86).

c. Friends

Having good friends everywhere we go is considered essential. One should learn to form good friendships wherever they go. Being in a place where there are no good friends is pointless (22). True friends will never harm even at times of conflicts, quarrels and anger (25). Being glad, showing cheerful countenance and expressing positive emotions strengthen the bond in friendship (26, 38). Trust is an essential quality of good friends. Deficiency in trust can weaken the bond between the friends (27). Reduced love (45), lack of transparency (57) and falsehood (19 & 76) are other features that weaken the bonding in this relationship. Betrayal in friendship is equal to murder (8). Though having friends around is essential, it is important to have good friends. Having friendships with evil people can destroy not only oneself but also the respect of the entire family (23).

d. Scholars and Noble People

Building good relationships with great scholars and noble people is also indispensable for one's growth and wellbeing. Being with learned people can make one knowledgeable as them (57, 75), as they would share their valuable learning and experiences. Scholars are righteous people with good intellect and wisdom; adoring them and *obeying* their words would bring positive outcomes in life (76) whereas disobedience to them can end up in negative consequences (89). Such noble people are attracted by only *sweet words* (12) rather than other materialistic rewards.

3) Vocational mastery

This theme can be related to the 'environmental mastery' component of Carol Ryff's Psychological wellbeing model. It refers to the feelings of competence and the ability to manage complex environments (Ryff, 1989). Developing *expertise and proficiency* in the work taken up is essential for one to attain success and growth. This has been addressed in the 85th poem of Naanmanikkadigai. An artist's expertise in his skills and performance would bring praise and appreciation to him in the same way the sea resources bring prosperity to the towns nearby (85). "Practice makes man perfect" is a popular proverb emphasizing the importance of *training and practice* for one to excel in his vocation. A soldier with adequate training and preparation would bring victory to the army (20). A competent soldier acquires merriment when he fights for his nation before the king (36). This reflects the pleasure and happiness of a competent worker when he performs before his authority. Opportunities for *improvement* are indispensable for sustaining in any field of work. A soldier's praise would fade if there are no battlefields for him to show his competence (43). *Bravery* has been noted to be an important attribute of competent soldiers (39). *Unity* is inevitable for one to remain strong (23), and *coherence* of an army leader with his soldiers is indispensable for gaining victory in the war field (54).

Dealing with the resources appropriately plays a vital role for accomplishing the goals. Apart from using the best possible resources for completing the related tasks, the one using the resources should also possess adequate skills and proficiency to manage and / or use the

resources. The effective use of resources (horse) depends on the efficiency of the worker (rider) (72). Thorough *research and analysis* is significant before commencing any important task or making important decisions. The after effects of a decision or action will not be identified by those who don't analyse about it beforehand (68), hence it is recommended to carry out clear research and analysis before the commencement of any work rather than being affected by its consequences later. It is recommended to discuss with people who have experience and expertise in the field, get their suggestions and opinions, analyse the same to identify the best decision to be carried out (77).

4) Wealth and Prosperity

Accumulating wealth and prospering in life is the objective of everyone in today's world. Wealth is an inevitable part of human living which includes all the resources held by an individual for his livelihood. Naanmanikkadigai offers its perspective on the importance, uses, and means of earning wealth. With regard to the *importance and uses of wealth*, virtues and happiness arise from having enough wealth (7). Wealth can lead to charity and helping the impoverished people (16), from which the giver derives pleasure and satisfaction (36 & 38).

Wealth can make a person strong and capable of accomplishing most of his needs and desires (31 & 66). Nothing is as beautiful as a wealthy living (34). The author views wealth as an important means of charity and strength which makes one's life pleasant and lovely. Appropriate use of wealth can result in a great deal of virtues which may result in happiness and inner satisfaction. Although wealth is an important aspect of one's happy and virtuous living, the *means of earning wealth* is very important. Only wealth earned from righteous sources and ethical means can bring prosperity to one's life (63). Wealth can be accumulated only if there is the blessing and will of the almighty (66), therefore one need not blame oneself for not being able to accumulate wealth.

With regard to *managing wealth*, one should be careful while spending his wealth. The righteous way to manage wealth is to carry out every possible virtue with it, and

attain self-sufficiency and happiness from such good deeds and the wealth one has (95). Although charity and helping those in need is considered to be an important worth of wealth, one should also know the right time to indulge in such activities. When there is deficiency of wealth, one is recommended not to use it for charity. Moving one step further, it is even considered as a sin to do so (93). At times of deficit in wealth, the better option may be to multiple the wealth by means of appropriate investments before offering the same for noble causes. Apart from these, evil deeds (19), and absence of shamefulness (45) can also destroy one's wealth. Wealth spent on evil deeds will end in vain, and absence of shamefulness can lead to unethical and filthy behavioural outcomes in the individual destroying the wealth. Therefore it is recommended to abandon evil deeds and unhealthy behaviours that can destroy one's wealth (13).

Absence of wealth can lead to *poverty* which has been well articulated by the author of the text. Managing wealth is emphasized for refraining from poverty. There can be nothing as sorrowful as poverty (31). One of the painful consequences of poverty includes begging (16) as begging leads to humiliation and disgrace (17). Poverty can also make one's youth and personality futile (82) by not allowing him/her to indulge in self - developmental activities. Those in poverty will be pressurised financially and struggle to even attain their basic needs which may hinder their learning process and progress for future. At the same time, those in poverty are better than those who do not use their wealth for good causes and destroys it (69).

5) Social wellbeing

This theme can be related to the social contribution and social integration component of social wellbeing. Social contribution is the feeling that one has something valuable to contribute to the society and believing that their daily activities are valued by their community. Social integration is the feeling of belongingness to the community, sharing the commonalities with the community and feeling supported by the community. (Lopez et al., 2006). The readiness to help others without denying has been described as a strength and great quality of the individual (31). *Helping* impoverished people and giving for *charity* is

as good as worshipping and praising the almighty God (53). Therefore, helping those in need at the right time is considered as a lovable act for God. Giving food for those starving is the best form of charity that one can do (81) and it can elevate the position of one's family and creates respect for the same (71). Contributing for those in need and poverty are such noble actions that would even make one's enemy appreciate him (63).

The citizens of a nation and the governance are interrelated. Being *responsible* and loyal citizens is indispensable for the entire Government to be firm and Just (21). Only if the people are strong, healthy and productive, they can contribute for the development of the nation. Rain, which is one of the blessings of the nature embraces only those places where there is a just government, virtuous people and those who indulge in penance with self -regulation (48). The rain that is poured in a place itself reflects the virtues and quality of the people living in there just like the face serves as the index of the mind (70). Those with morality and responsibility would take care of the nature without exploiting the environment for fulfilling their greed. Therefore, the author would have connected rain to the morality of the citizens. There are also people who are loved and praised by the administrator (king) (53) due to their high citizenship qualities. Accepting things from evil people should be avoided (3) because it may have come from their unethical evil sources by causing damage to the society. Therefore, the author advises not to even accept anything from evil people.

Only the nation in which its people are *united* is considered to be the best nation (71) because, *unity* among people can contribute for the development of the nation. When there are conflicts and fights among people leading to greater chaos and violence in the nation, the progress of the entire nation will be hindered. Worshipping God in unity can yield more blessings from the almighty (62) due to its positive outcomes for everyone collectively.

Maintaining healthy relationships with others in the society is an important aspect of social wellbeing. Being *neutral* and *unprejudiced* is an important quality emphasized for having better social

relationships. Virtuous people may arise from anywhere irrespective of their family background and birth just like precious stones reside at the great ocean (6). *Humiliating others* (52) and underestimating people with less strength and wealth are the characteristics to be refrained from (3). The good nature of individuals will be reflected in their *neutral and balanced* nature (79). Therefore, one should be neutral and balanced in their behaviours (27). At times of sharing wealth or other resources among people, it should be done fairly without taking sides (76). *Gratitude* is a significant character strength for better mental health and for building better social relations. Ungrateful people cannot have healthy relationships with others, and remain alone without true friends and good company (60) as they do not realise the value of any help offered to them (46). Therefore, one should remain grateful for the help offered by others (13). Those who value the aid offered by others in the right time, and remain grateful for the same are better than those who do good deeds in the view of this text (69). *Cheerful countenance and positive expressions* are the requisites for one to be appreciated and liked by others whereas rude behaviours and *grumpy face* will not be appreciated by people (60). Those with *compassion* and concern for others will be liked by all (60). Being unprejudiced, neutral and balanced, grateful, compassionate and with cheerful countenance are found to be the core themes for building healthy social relationships from the text Naanmanikkadigai.

6) Just Governance

A just administration is indispensable for the livelihood of people as they are dependent on the administration of the administrator (King), in the same way the child is dependent on mother's milk for its living (28). The administration of the nation depends on the qualities of the administrator (41). Virtuous and noble people who indulge in penance with self – regulation are present only in the nation where there is a fair administrator (king) (48).

A just administration, prosperity of the nation and wellbeing of the people are the attributes that bring praise and appreciation for the ruler of the nation (85). A just and competent ruler would work his best to extend his boundaries by capturing places where people are suppressed and impoverished by

unethical and evil rulers (86). Looking for the appropriate time to defeat the foes and holding on to right opportunity is an essential attribute for a sharp ruler (88). Being aware of the means of attaining victory via righteous administration is crucial for an intellectual administrator (90). Establishing justice without giving space for any emotions, and regular introspection of one's own self for identifying his flaws and rectifying the same are described as the essential qualities of the Just ruler (95). Though mercy and compassion has been mentioned as the essential virtues, it is not recommended for a ruler at times of giving judgements as he is obliged to establish justice. Showing mercy to wrongdoers or taking sides can kill the justice (95).

Absence of a competent army and effective defence system would destroy the fame of the ruler (43) because it may give space for other powerful armies to capture his nation and exploit their resources and people. However, if the ruler himself turns evil and exploitative for his extravagance and selfish motives, then his own army would turn against him to vanish him (51). Significance of just governance, qualities of just ruler and importance of the army are the key areas of concern in this text regarding Just Governance.

7) Nature and Environment

The *significance of water* has been dealt in several poems of this text. It is a primary natural resource equally vital for every living - being on earth. Every life on earth depends on the rain for its survival (28). Water is the basic source for a seed to grow further (66).

Besides stating the significance of water, teaching morality and reality via nature is worth mentioning. Noble people would even end their lives than leading an unethical one in the same way the bamboo shoot breathes its last when its flowers turn into bamboo rice (4). Here, the quality of noble people has been compared to the quality of the bamboo tree. The shyness of women and virtues of men add beauty to them in the same way paddy and sugarcane crops add beauty to the farming land (11). Here, the virtues are compared to the crops in the farmland.

The author talks about the stable things found in the environment for teaching the instable nature of life. The sun, moon and the stars are stable always, similarly disease and efforts are found everywhere always; those who get and offer are there always the same way birth and death are seen always inevitably (59). Thus, the instable nature of life needs to be realised by the learners.

8) Scholarly Characteristics:

High qualities of great scholars are outlined in the text so that learners can derive insights from them. Learned scholars do not dwell on the past (10), instead, they focus on the present to be more productive and live meaningfully. If they are not strong and firm, even their opinions and views would turn unclear and weak (less authentic) (21). A congregation without learned and experienced scholars is futile (22) as its discussions and / or decisions arrived at may lack credibility and authenticity. Therefore, nothing is considered as good as the birth of such great scholars (34). They have the *love for learning* that motivates them to gain more insights and clarity from better experienced people (73). They are aware that the process of learning continues until life continues. They do not take pride before those who are not learned as themselves in the same way an illiterate don't take pride in the assembly of learned people (98). This indicates their *humble* nature which in turn acts as an ornament to them (90). They do not get angry upon others and have tolerance to the flaws committed by others (50). They do only deeds that are found to be right and useful by searching, learning deeply and analysing about it. Their acts tend to be pleasing to all (40). They derive happiness from committing deeds that are appropriate to their standard, values and principles (67), and from *helping and giving* those in need to their possible extent (37).

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The main themes derived from the analysis are intrapersonal relationship, interpersonal relationships, vocational mastery, wealth and prosperity, social wellbeing, just governance, nature and environment, and scholarly qualities encompassing every sphere of human life facilitating holistic development of the

individuals. Some of these themes can be related to the components of Carol Ryff's Psychological wellbeing model. Self - development element of the intrapersonal relationship can be related to the personal growth and purpose in life component, and interpersonal relationships and vocational mastery can be related to the positive relations with others and environmental mastery components respectively.

Personal virtues like self-discipline, self-respect, self-regulation, modesty, deeds for hereafter, bravery and truthfulness are emphasized to enhance one's *intrapersonal relationship*. Emotion management is considered to be a great quality to promote one's success. The ways of attaining eternity and true happiness which are the searches of the contemporary world are noted as seeking education, committing good deeds, leaving of attachment by realising the instable nature of worldly pleasures. The significance of every close relationship, and the means of sustaining healthy *interpersonal relationships* with one's family members, relatives, friends and noble scholars are put forth. Roles and responsibilities of husband and wife, qualities of good and evil friendships are well defined.

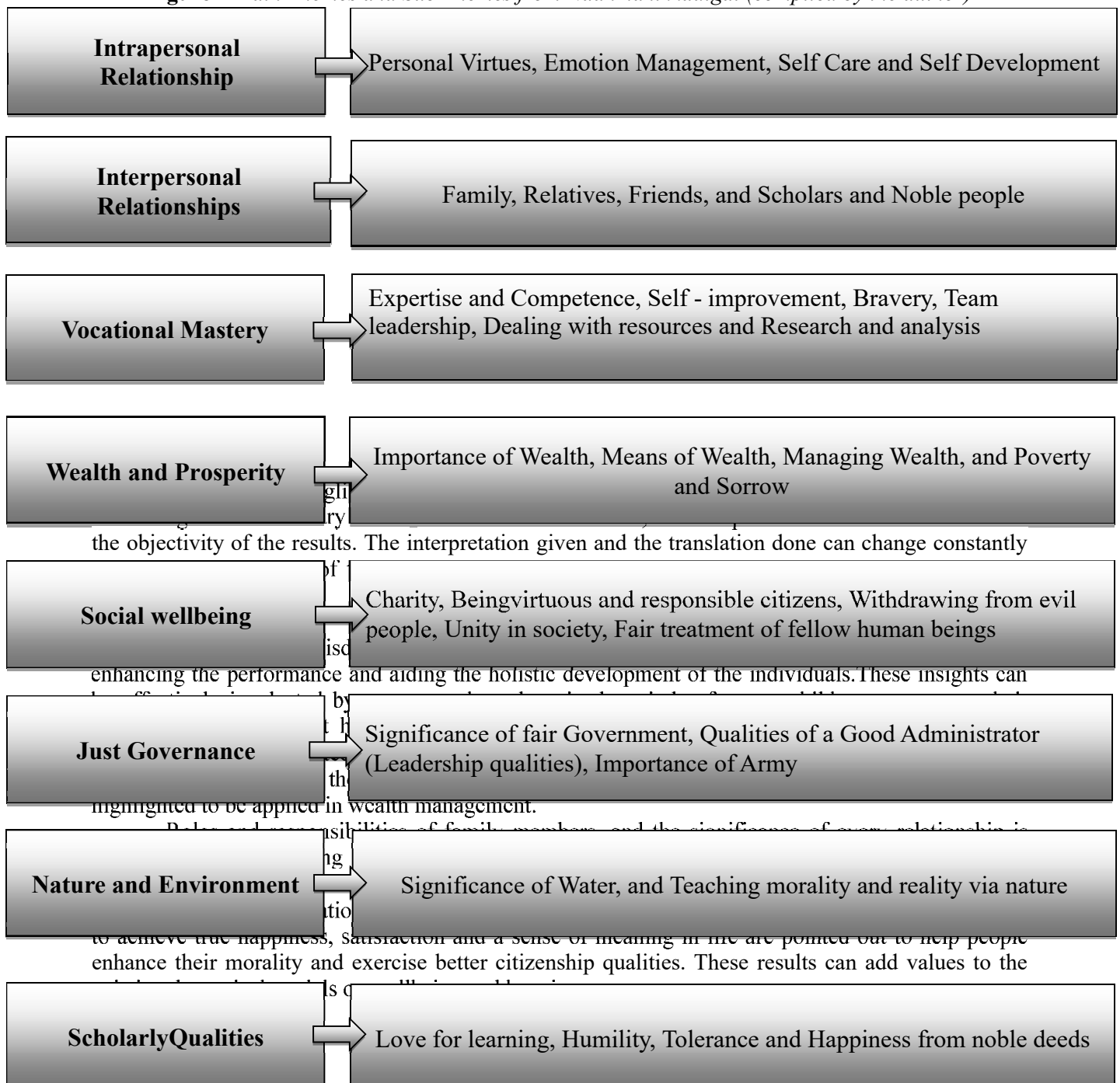
Possessing adequate training, competence and expertise, unity and coherence with the team, effective resource management, bravery and courage to take risks, researching, discussing and analysing with experts before making important decisions are said to be indispensable for *vocational mastery*. Using *wealth and prosperity* for charity and for other good deeds is emphasized as the utmost use of possessing wealth. People are advised not to spend the wealth in charity when they themselves are in deficiency of wealth as it may push them into poverty. The sorrow and pain related to poverty has been well explained to manage the available wealth and resources efficiently.

Being responsible citizens, fair, neutral, courteous, unprejudiced, grateful and respectful in treating fellow human beings; being united and having feelings of belongingness to the society and contributing one's wealth for impoverished people are recommended for *social well-being*. With regard to *just governance*, the prosperity and virtues of the people depend on the ruler of the nation. Therefore, a ruler should be just, intellectual, correct his flaws regularly through

consistent introspection, possess a strong and competent army for the growth and development of the nation. Absence of an army can lead to external attacks, and absence of good virtues in the ruler can bring his destruction from his own army. Hence, a smart ruler is advised to take care of both. With regard to *nature and environment*, the significance of water and rain is emphasized. In several places, morality and reality of life is taught through examples from nature and environment. Good deeds of people are

connected to the showering of rain motivating people to commit good deeds. Love for learning, absence of pride and being humble, integrity, and deriving pleasure and happiness from helping others are highlighted as the *scholarly qualities*. The wisdom procured from this text can contribute to the holistic development of the individuals, providing solutions to various searches of the modern world regarding eternity, happiness and meaning in life.

Figure 1 Main Themes and Sub Themes from *Naanmanikkadigai* (compiled by the author)



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