

Cauvery – A tale of two families

Sudharsan S.N.

Cauvery's sad journey from a scenic, holy and nourishing river to the most contentious watershed in south India today.

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Of all the rivers in the Indian sub-continent, the river Cauvery is one, which has one of the most wonderful and yet turbulent courses. Turbulent not by its flow, but because of the way the people make divisions and transform it into a wild mountain stream.

CAUVERY'S BIRTH:

Cauvery can be compared aptly with a beautiful girl, in all her grace. Mother Nature gave birth to her in the lush green hill slopes of Coorg district in Karnataka. If Nature can be called Cauvery's mother then the state of Karnataka is her adopted mother. Though Karnataka is only a political division we are forced to perceive it as a form of nature in itself.

Karnataka is a place where Nature can be experienced in its purest form. Right from the sandy beaches of Karwar to the hill slopes of the Western Ghats. From the rivers that flow in Karnataka to the people who speak a wonderful, sweet language called Kannada, Karnataka is pure passion of it's own. It can very well be called an apt home for Cauvery, a place where Mother Nature has rightly gifted Cauvery to, where she transforms into a beautiful woman.

Her birthplace is "Thala Cauvery" which is nestled amidst the hill slopes of the Western Ghats. This mountain range serves as the source for all the South Indian rivers. She takes form there and grows as She travels into the lush green plains of Karnataka. Infact this greenery is credited to the entry of Cauvery into the plains.

She grows into a small girl in Mysore district and very soon attains the status of a young woman, in full bloom, in Sivasamudram. She dances down the Sivasamudram waterfalls like a nightingale and enchants everyone with her beauty. She gently flows down the plains of Karnataka where She is responsible for the fertility of all the Southern districts. She can be compared to a girl whose presence brings good luck, fortune and glory, wherever She steps into. She brings prosperity and there would not be anyone in Karnataka who would not compare her with the Hindu goddess of fortune Devi Sri Mahalakshmi. She is indeed a blessing.

CAUVERY`S MATRIMONY:

Now comes the time and a place where Cauvery's adopted mother Karnataka has to dress her up in her marital clothes and present her as a bride before Tamil Nadu. She makes some final arrangements before marriage and this can be seen from the stretch of the river where it flows along the border separating the two states. The bride has a glimpse of both of her houses, the place where She has fallen in love with - Tamil Nadu waiting in all its splendor to embrace her with love, warmth and affection and on the other side her mother's house Karnataka which bades her farewell with tears of joy. Cauvery jumps up in joy and happiness, to be a bit accurate in terms of geographic terms, Cauvery jumps down in joy in Hogenakkal in the form of a beautiful waterfall. She then flows through the districts of Salem and Namakkal and then onto Karur where She brings life to the people.

Tamil Nadu is one of the most wonderful places one can ever talk about. It is, perhaps, by far one of the oldest civilizations on Planet Earth and, as a Tamilian, in my humble opinion, has the sweetest and the most mellifluous language. The rich heritage, culture, and the people all spell poetry. It is indeed very apt for the wonderful Cauvery to fall in love with Tamil Nadu. Cauvery is, in fact, the lifeline of Tamil Nadu.

The true love of Karnataka is evident from the fact that She passes on whatever She has in the form of water to Cauvery so that Cauvery can in turn bring pride to her in Tamil Nadu. Cauvery then washes the holy feet of Sri Ranganatha in Srirangam, Tiruchirapalli district which is considered as one of the holiest of all Vaishnavite temples. She then passes onto Thanjavur district where her true character of benevolence is revealed to the wide wonderful world. Here She behaves as a lady responsible for the entire family called Tamil Nadu, by giving all her wealth and fortune to Thanjavur district. Thanjavur is called the granary of Tamil Nadu and is one amongst the top three rice producing regions in the whole nation.

Without Cauvery one can very well doubt if Thanjavur would have ever had a glorious past which in turn would have meant the wonderful Tamil civilization would have been in jeopardy. A small walk in the fields of this holy place would bring tears of joy to Wordsworth. Greenery, prosperity, splendor and magnificence everywhere, which is evident from the various kingdoms that have tried to, lay their hands on this place. Thanjavur has been the cradle of civilization in South India and Cauvery has been the main reason for this. She silently merges with Mother Nature in Poompuhar where She mingles with the sea.

THE BUNCH OF MADMEN:

Unfortunately there are people who do not like this natural phenomenon. They are people who do not belong to either of Cauvery's homes, Karnataka or Tamil Nadu. They are people who want to make a mess out of the entire system of Nature.

These fanatics do not like Karnataka passing on all her water wealth to Tamil Nadu. That is not something what Cauvery wants or what Tamil Nadu asks for. It is the law of Nature. Every time people

have tried to go against the framework of Nature and every time there have been people who have questioned the nature of Nature there has been but bloodshed, hatred and misfortune.

By doing this they gain power over the families and in turn plunder and loot the families, of the riches they have. These people make tall claims to serve the families of Karnataka and Tamil Nadu and in fact leave nothing but desperation and misery to the people of the two states. What is more disheartening is the fact that they make use of this innocent young woman called Cauvery to attain their greedy desires.

Poor Cauvery, all that She knows is how to bring life and happiness to wherever She goes and now She has been branded as the reason for this hatred. If this silent river would have really been a woman, able to speak out then one cannot imagine the sorrow She would suffer in the hands of these madmen. It is better that she has remained as a silent river.

Even now there does not exist any hatred between the Kannadigas and the Tamils. Both Karnataka and Tamil Nadu are two forms of Nature, in all their glory. Both are in fact one, but a political borderline forces one to perceive them as two. The so-called middlemen who are in search of vanity create such a false projection and brand themselves as the saviors. If one would count the number of people gaining importance and power through this Cauvery issue then the list goes on and on.

THE INNOCENT CAUVERY:

People fight on Cauvery`s name, thereby hoping to gain unwarranted fame, vanity and publicity. She has not just given us water and prosperity, but something above all that - LIFE.

More sickening is the fact that these madmen make use of innovations and marvels to gain vanity. Little could have Dr.Vishweshwariah realized that his engineering marvel, the Krishna Raja Sagar Dam would one day become a penitentiary where water is jailed and stopped from it's natural flow. What the visionary had in his mind was power generation and regulating the flow of water to suit the needs of the people in seasons where She could be put to harm by unprecedented floods from Karnataka.

The reality has to be accepted. The river is controlled by these vanity- driven madmen. They make use of it to gain power, to remove another family member from power, to loot the riches and cheat the people. All one can do is search for the possible solutions to end such a crisis which is defaming both the families and in turn the maiden itself.

Cauvery is in love with her Tamil family and yet bonded to her mother Karnataka. The solution finally rests in the law of Nature. It is the law of Nature that her daughter Cauvery should take her form in the family called Karnataka, give her with which Cauvery is in love, give fertility and prosperity all along it's course.

Let us stop this bitterness where a Kannadigas sees a Tamilian as his sworn enemy and vice-versa. Let us stop a bunch of madmen trying to capitalize on people's weaknesses towards their feelings of language, culture and civilizations. One should be proud of their own civilization but any attempt to suppress another man's feelings can be branded as nothing other than sadism.

IS THERE A SOLUTION?

Now both the families, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka are in jeopardy over answering to their family members, and the only thing one can do is to look upon the skies in search of Cauvery's real mother, who is Mother Nature. She is nestled in the gentle passing breeze to the bright radiant sun and in the wind that carries the clouds, which have the riches in the form of rainwater. Mother Nature is the only solution and She is free from all the bonds and also from the madmen.

It is like a mother feeding the crying baby to pacify it. All She can do is keep giving her this eternal wealth called water, oft called the Elixir of life.

The only possible solution that one can suggest is a hearty prayer to Mother Nature. It is not a religious prayer, but a prayer to our Mother who is far above communal distinctions. A prayer to bring rain to Karnataka, a prayer to bring prosperity to Tamil Nadu and a prayer to bring glory to Cauvery.

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