

INFLUENCE OF FARMING CULTURE ON
THE FOLK ARTS AND RITUALS
OF NORTH MALABAR REGION OF KERALA STATE

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THESIS

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requirement for the Degree*

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the thesis entitled '**Influence of farming culture on the folk arts and rituals of North Malabar region of Kerala state**' is a bonafide record of research work done by me during the course of research and that the thesis has not previously formed the basis for the award to me of any degree, diploma, fellowship or other similar title of any other University or society.

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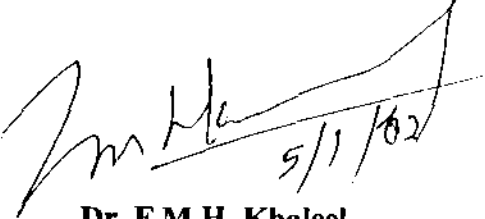


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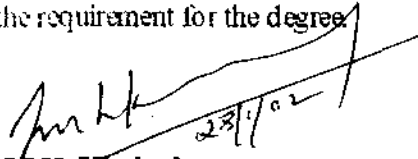
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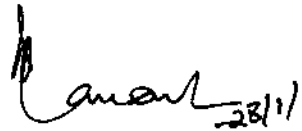
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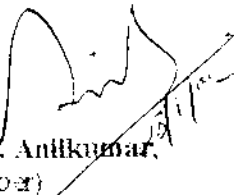
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Dedicated to the tradition-conscious

Simple people of Kerala

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Introduction

INTRODUCTION

Gods own country Kerala, is a land abundantly blessed by nature- a land where traditions unfold and customs whisper.....

Religious tolerance, hospitality, simplicity, cultural richness, and broad outlook of the people are only few of the many factors, which supplement the scenic beauty and pleasant climate of the state. Different religions, groups and communities in their historical evolution, have subscribed to the growth of a dream like panorama of visual art forms in Kerala.

The highly diversified agro-ecosystems of different regions in Kerala give rise to varied cropping patterns and farming systems. These, quite often influence the life styles and traditions of the community in those regions. Meanwhile, farming culture at large is an interplay of the socio-economic settings and ecological embodiments in every region.

The different dimensions of folklores of any specific region have been observed to have a deeprooted influence by the farming systems and practices of the locality.

North Malabar region of Kerala state, particularly, the erstwhile '*Kolathunadu*' extending over parts of present Kozhikode, Kannur and

Kasaragod districts, is considered to be a repository of folk arts and rituals. Kerala owes much to *Kolothunadu* alone for the pride she enjoys by way of rich folk tradition and the volume and variety of performing arts.

The tradition-conscious, simple people of this area belong to the farming community at large. Since the people have the interest in their blood, the rituals and folk arts still survive the onslaught of science and politics over ages.

Previous studies have shown that performance of folk arts and rituals like *Theyyam*, *Chimmaanakkali*, *Kothaammoori* and *Pathaamudayam* coincides with the different farming seasons, and the mythological narrations of these art forms are found to have linkages with ethno-meteorological charts.

In this background, this particular research was undertaken to study the “Influence of farming culture on the folk arts and rituals of North Malabar region of Kerala state”, with a set of distinct objectives.

The specific objectives of the study were:

1. To study the influence of farming culture on folk arts and rituals of North Malabar region of Kerala.

2. To identify the specific elements in folk arts and rituals as influenced by the various farming practices.
3. To assess the scientific rationals of the folklore elements in the context of farming culture.
4. To analyse the locational and contextual differences in the folklore elements as influenced by farming systems and practices.

Scope of the study:

Kerala folklore, by now, is a subject, which is almost in an exhausted state in the research area. But so far, no scientific enquiry has been made in the state about the influence of farming culture on the folk arts and traditions followed in different locations, particularly in relation to the farming practices and indigenous systems which are location specific.

Moreover, many of the indigenous knowledge systems in relation to these aspects are being gradually lost and are at the verge of extinction, since they are associated with oral transmission and still remain to be fully explored.

This study is expected to yield valuable information relating to some traditions and belief systems of the farming community of the

region which are to be probed further to identify their scientific rationale, if any, and to inculcate into the modern technology generation process.

Limitations of the study:

The study was conducted with sincere approach, keen effort and systematic adherence to various social research methods. However, as the project was undertaken as a part of the requirement of Masters degree of the researcher, time and resources were constraints to the indepth probing of the concepts.

Most of the folk arts and rituals are getting endangered today. So, it was very difficult to trace the locations where these were performed in their pure forms. Many of them are closely associated with religious belief systems and hence there were obvious constraints to go for micro level analysis of the rituals performed.

Presentation of the study:

1. Introduction

2. Theoretical orientation

2.1. Concept of culture

2.2. Folk arts- related concepts

2.3. Concept of rituals.

2.4. Relationship between agrarian society and folk arts and rituals

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Theoretical Orientation

2. THEORETICAL ORIENTATION

Theoretical orientation helps in classification of important concepts being studied, with explanations. This chapter aims to develop and establish the theoretical framework for the study based on ideas and concepts gathered from review of existing literature. Such a recapitulation will serve as a precursor for the present study. Eventhough folklore is a subject area which has been exhaustly dealt with, studies or literature relating to the influence of farming culture on folk arts and rituals are scarce. However the available literature on this indicates the strong linkages between the farming culture of the locality and the folk art forms available. The literature review is presented under the following heads:

- 2.1. Concept of culture
- 2.2. Folk arts- related concepts
- 2.3. Concept of rituals.
- 2.4. Relationship between agrarian society and folk arts and rituals
- 2.5. Specific elements in folk arts and rituals as influenced by various farming practices.
- 2.6. Specific elements in farming culture which influence folklore.

2.1. Concept of culture:

According to Cuber (1968), culture is the continually changing pattern of learned behaviour and the products of learned behaviour, which are shared by and transmitted among the members of society.

Strauss (1969) has seen culture as the reproduction of nature. When natural facts are given new meanings they become symbolic. Green and red contrasts in nature, when given new meanings, led to the evolution of traffic signals.

Culture is a human phenomenon which implies the recording and transmission from one generation to the next, of learned ways of behaving, believing, valuing and desiring (Cooper, 1970).

Some people regard culture as purely a matter of intellectual and spiritual values, in the sense of religion, philosophy, legal systems, literature, arts, music, etc. sometimes this is extended to include refinements in the manners of the ruling class (Kosambi, 1970)

Fairchild (1977) indicated that essential part of any culture is to be found in the patterns embodied in the social traditions of the group i.e., in the knowledge, beliefs, values, standards and sentiments prevalent in the group. It is the appreciation of values with reference to life conditions.

While describing *Theyyam* as an integral part of the culture of North Malabar, Marar (1999) suggested that any culture in a society has its roots in the folk arts of the region.

2.2. Folk arts: related concepts

William J Thomas while coining the word 'Folklore' meant a study about the facts related to tradition, but unfortunately, later on folklore began to get concentrated around oral narration and transmission alone (Leach, 1949).

Leach (1949) has further reported that folklore is a very strong medium of communication. It has chronic relationship with the mind of common man, he added.

Upsala Institute of Dialect and Folklore Research in Sweden has divided the materials to be preserved in the Folklore Archives into twenty one groups as follows (Eriksson, 1961):

- 1) Shelter
- 2) Livelihood
- 3) Caste
- 4) Human life
- 5) Nature
- 6) Folk medicine
- 7) Chronology
- 8) Social norms
- 9) Myth
- 10) Cultural heritage
- 11) Personal thoughts and memories
- 12) Oral literature
- 13) Music
- 14) Sports games, dances
- 15) Recreations, competitions,

toys 16) Handicraft 17) special anthropologic units 18) Swedish culture in other countries 19) Traditions of foreign countries 20) Broadcast and business and 21) Miscellaneous.

In the researches conducted, efforts have been made to classify folklore into sub units. Dorson (1972) reports that folklore has been classified broadly into four, *viz.* oral literature, material culture, social folk customs and performing folk arts.

List (1972) has mentioned the necessity of establishing Folklore Archives, which are the institutions where we get details about the cultural history of a society, social changes occurred etc.

Communication is the transmission of message via any medium. Communication becomes complete when the abstract ideas encoded by the person is decoded by the receiver and internalized by him. In this sense, folklore can be treated as an excellent device for communication (Bauman, 1977).

Dundes (1980) has observed that folk is a collection of people who share more than one common behaviour, and all those commonness can be treated as folklore, from the anthropological point of view.

According to Propp (1984), while trying to classify folklore, we are trying to identify the genus to which each belongs. An exact definition of

what is meant by genus or genre is impossible outside classification of genre.

Similarly Jayadevan (1986) has stated that art forms of a country reflect the life of its people they embody their emotions and experience and are therefore the best expressions of their mind and culture.

Namboodiri (1998) had stated that as far as the ancient man was concerned, life itself was an art for him. Folk arts are the reflections of their feelings and several events or happenings in their life.

Payyanadu (1986) reports that in Kerala, folklore has been used as a device for diffusion of innovation. A noted example is the use of a folk art form '*Villadichaan pattu*' in the propaganda for family planning in rural areas, a quarter century ago.

Namboodiri (1999) has also observed that folk arts and folksongs reflect the life and culture of a society in the past.

It was by the nineteenth century, as a continuation of the researches in England and other European countries, that folklore research became popular in India (Bharathan, 2000).

Of late, Kannan (2000) has observed that folklore is the unrecorded history of society.

Similarly, Payyanadu (2000) views folklore as a totality of folksongs, folk arts, rituals, customs, and beliefs and so on. In short, it is the totality of human life as such.

2.3. Concept of Rituals

Any activity, which might have resulted in incidental or accidental success, transforms to rituals in the course of time (Caudwell, 1947). While discussing imitative magic as a class of rituals, he further stated that the principle behind imitative magic is that through imitation of similar events or processes which already exist in nature, the desired results could be achieved.

Supporting these observations stands the conclusion of Malinowski, (1926) that science generates from experiences and experiments, while magic generates from traditional beliefs.

Researches conducted by Stierer (1956) endorsed that based on several beliefs related to magic and religion two groups of activities have evolved viz., positive rituals and negative taboos.

Stierer (1956) has further classified rituals as magical rituals and religious rituals; the former being still subdivided into imitative magic and contagious magic.

Similarly, Chatopadhyaya (1968) has stated as follows: 'Magic is either the crude materialism which denies spiritualism and religion; or the forerunner of it'.

Huxley (1970) has reported about the existence of imitative magic among certain tribes, where people perform rain dance during periods of severe drought with the hope of bringing rain to irrigate their crops.

Mantras, which pray to the goddess of rains to shower upon the ploughed agricultural lands, can be seen in Atharva Veda. (Acharya, 1973).

Maple (1973) has observed that suggestions, illusions and perceptions form the base for magic and thereby rituals.

Ancient people believed that through magical rituals; agriculture would flourish and give bumper yields. Frazer (1976) has mentioned that these types of rituals were prevalent even in different parts of Europe. But he observed that Magic was a false science and an abortive art; if at all it proves fruitful, then there was science in it, and never can be called as magic, exclusively. The principle behind contagious magic is that objects, which were once in contact with each other, can later on create positive or negative effects on one another on being subjected to magical rituals.

Nambiar (1990) states that belief has been the building block of all rituals. Examples of imitative magic is reported to be conducted at *Kunnummolom* temple at Cheruthazham in Kannur district. He has made mention of another imitative magical ritual still prevalent in North Malabar in connection with promoting the fecundity of jack tree. From his observations, he has concluded that as far as North Malabar is concerned, the rituals here are neither exclusively magical nor exclusively religious, instead they are “magico religious rituals”. He has also reported that rituals have helped a great deal to reduce the primitive man’s fear for the natural calamities.

2.4. Relationship between agrarian society and the folk arts and rituals

In Dundes’s (1965) opinion, any folklore survives in a society because it has certain duties to fulfill. The existing folklores definitely have their roots in the common man’s mind. He has also suggested that the modern folklorists should take an earnest effort to identify them.

Apart from art forms, rituals also have an appreciable bond with the agrarian society. Years back Douglas (1966) had opined that ‘as words to thoughts are rituals to society; or even more than that’.

Support this, Pickering (1976) has made the observation that rituals have played important role in maintaining social relationships.

According to Menon (1978), the unsophisticated imaginations and rhythmic impulses of a sensitive group of people found supreme expression in a variety of folk arts in Kerala. The ordinary activities of the people in the field of agriculture formed their themes.

Choondal (1979) has reported that *Theyyam* and most other folk art forms are performed by artists belonging to certain specific communities like *Pulaya, Malaya, Vannaan*, etc. which have agriculture as their major occupation.

Analysing the concepts of various *Thottampaattu*, Payyanadu (1979) has mentioned that there is ample description of the agrarian background of *Theyyam* in their lyrics.

Namboodiri (1983) mentioned that in the song of *Chimmaanakkali*, there is a clear picture of the toiling agricultural labourers who were being cheated by the landlord; in the background of feudalism.

Kurup (1986) states that the cult of *Theyyam* and allied art forms of North Kerala has been contributed by an agrarian society. The cult of *Theyyam* was converted to regulate the agrarian relations as a part of feudal system. In the twentieth century, when Peasant Movement started

in this region, it was even directed against the *Theyyam* cult in several places, he added. On the basis of occupation, those groups which needed much physical exertion were treated as low class. When they were isolated from the society, out of revenge, they took much pains to evolve and enrich art forms and literature unique to them, and thereby to establish a stand for themselves in society. This is how most of the folk art forms took shape, as observed by another author too (Vidyasagar,1986).

In his book on the folk art of Kerala, Nambiar (1989) has stated that *Kolathunadu* is the birthplace of *Theyyam*. It was an outcome of the feudalism that existed then. He has further observed that most of the performing folk arts have their roots in the agriculture bound social life of ancient people, *Kalichan theyyam* and *Kothaammooriyaattom* being relevant examples, meanwhile moaning the chronic death of these folk art forms in the present day society which has almost forgotten about agriculture.

Nambiar has also identified the *Thottampaattu* of *Pottan Theyyam* as a marked example - and perhaps the first of its kind for the mentally stressed situation of the lower class agricultural labourers.

In *Kolothunadu*, the agricultural labourers were people of low caste and socially dejected group. Eminent personalities representing this low class labourer group, who fought against the then existing social discrimination are devoted as 'Gods' in *Theyyam*, today. These include *Kuttichaathan*, *Kandanaarkelan*, *Nellukuthippothe*, etc. (Namboodiri, 1989).

Observations of Namboodiri (1998) have narrated the fact that until the proposed date of performance, the low class people were not expected to be in the vicinity of high class. But contrastingly, during the time of performance, the latter bow before the former to receive blessings. This is an important social impact of folk arts and rituals.

During performance, *Theyyam* mentions about one belonging to *Pulaya* community as '*Pathillam Vayaladiyan*' which means 'Slave of the field'.

Sivasankarappillai (1989) makes mention of another art form viz. *Thottampaattu* conducted in *Bhadrakali* temples by the *Vannaan* community. In this art, there is detailed description about the origin of earth. In its concluding portion, there is a mention about a conversation between mother Earth and Lord Vishnu in which the former is very considerate and empathetic towards those toiling in the soil for their

livelihood and discusses with Him about the way she should align herself so that agriculture progresses and flourishes in future. (This portion of *Thottampaattu* is attached in Annexure I.)

The uniqueness of this *Thottampaattu* is that the mention about the origin and establishment of goddess Earth is concentrated and confined to Malabar region of Kerala alone. According to Sivasankarappillai (1989), the social impact here is that lord Vishnu is the symbolic representation of the higher class who procured the land areas, which were once the paradise of the low class agricultural labourers.

Through his research, Nambiar (1990) has identified that rituals put faith and beliefs into practice. It is believed that when man was in isolation, rituals had not much importance. Instead it was when he started social life that rituals gained popularity and importance. He opined that rituals have taken shape from the felt needs of a collectivity with common goals and common struggle for existence.

After a series of exploratory research, Namboodiri (1992) has identified three art forms and a ritual in particular as having strong relationship with agriculture, viz., *Theyyam*, *Chimmaanakkali*, *Koohaamoori* and *Pathaamudayam* respectively.

Kerala has a cultural background rooted in agriculture. So, the different rituals and folk arts related with agriculture throw light on the rich cultural heritage of the state (Sivasankarappillai, 1989).

Marar (1999) has opined that certain art forms like *Kothaammoori*, *Chimmaanakkali*, *Kalakettu*, *Panarkali*, etc. are those which originated purely in relation with agriculture.

He further pointed out that even in the dismal days of untouchability, the low class agricultural labourers who were the *Theyyam* performers had the permission to go to *Namboodiri illams* to perform. Once the ritualistic art form commences, the performer in his attire appears in a divine frenzy. Then it becomes the turn of the landlord to pay obeisance to the transformed low class performer. The latter places his hand on the landlord to bless him.

Theyyam and certain rituals are performed during the gap between the harvest of one crop and the sowing of next season crop. The performance, if in a fallow paddy field will be called '*Vayalthira*'. "Belief is that people welcome God to their land in order to mark their gratitude and receive blessings" - says the author. He has also opined that even though rituals basically control *Theyyaattom*, it is not wrong to call

it as an agricultural festival. Moreover, regional folk arts are capable of giving ample details about the past with respect to that area.

Observations made by Namboodiri (1999) revealed that *Thottampaattu* sung before the performance of *Theyyam* gives a clear picture of the social and cultural history of North Malabar. In some of them we can visualize an ancient society which practised shift cultivation or rather introduced such a style.

In the past, when society meant an agrarian society, folklore existed as oral literature alone, among the illiterate agricultural labourers (Radcliff, 1976).

Likewise, in earlier days, folklore studies were intended to learn in depth about their collective behaviour. But later, it lost clarity in its own objectives (Payyanadu, 1999).

Through his research, Payyanadu (1998) has reached the conclusion that along with urbanization and industrialization which followed the end of colonial era, land itself got divided into forest, cultivating land, etc. Then the study about the agrarian society was treated as folklore.

According to Nambiar (2000), in most folk art forms, including *Theyyam*, *Chimmaanakkali* and *Kothaammoori*, artists belonging to certain specific communities are performing them. They include *Pulaya*,

Malaya, Vannaan, Munooottan, Anjoottan, Velan, Koppalan, Maavilan, etc. Majority of them depended on agricultural alone to make their livelihood.

Vithidal, Uchaaral, Nira, Puthari, Pathaamudayam, etc. are exclusively agrarian rituals prevalent in Malabar region. (Rajagopal, 2000).

2.5. Specific elements in folklore as influenced by various farming practices

2.5.1. Fertility cult

Raghavan (1947) has stated that *Kothaammoori*; a ritual-cum-art form, which still exists in North Malabar, is one of the few fertility plays, which faces the threat of extinction.

Chathopadhyaya (1968) has mentioned about a strong belief in ancient times that fecundity of woman is dependent up on soil fertility, solely.

Nambiar (1989) has opined that it is quite natural that there exists a preponderance of fertility cult in the folk arts and rituals of a society which solely depended on agriculture, for their livelihood. The strong belief which prevailed in the ancient agrarian society was that the causes behind human fertility and crop fertility were the same.

Maple (1973) reports that in this background people used to conduct ritualistic sexual intercourse to boost up agricultural production. Similar practices are reported to be followed in Central America also at the time of sowing the first set of seeds (Frazer,1976b)

In North Malabar, the belief was that the fecundity of plants and trees can influence human beings also. According to Nambiar (1985) this was the basis of several fertility festivals like *Nira*, *Puthari*, etc.

Certain trees like tamarind, jack etc. and the inflorescence of paddy, arecanut, etc. are attributed fertility potential in many a ritual and are treated as symbols of fertility (Nambiar, 1979).

Generally in *Kolathunadu*, there is a strong belief that cow is a symbol of fertility and prosperity. This is the basis of *Kothaamooripaattu*. The fertility potential of the cow is believed to be imparted to the crops, opined Marar (1999b)

Research by Namboodiri (1999) has found out that Kurathi is considered to be the Goddess of soil and plant fertility. The *Thottampaattu* of *Kurathi Theyyam* makes mention of several agricultural products being evaluated by *Kurathi*. Among different types of *Kurathi Theyyam*, *Pullikkurathi* and *Koonjar Kurathi* are considered as Goddessess of Agriculture.

According to Rajagopal (2000), art and culture are reflections of the fertility cult.

2.5.2. Myth

Caudwell (1947) opined that myth has an undeniable bond with social life and culture.

Hornby (1952) defines myth as a story handed down from old times, about the early beliefs of a race.

Strauss (1969) has pointed out that myth forms the basis of rituals and folk arts.

Bindey (1974) opined that rituals and folk arts have their roots in myth.

The myth of '*Pottan Theyyam*' is a marked example of the mentally stressed situation of the lower class of ancient agrarian society. Its *Thottampaattu* gives a beautiful description of the same. (Nambiar, 1981)

Namboodiri (1979) has highlighted those portions of *Kurathihottam* in which Goddess *Kurathi* judges the quality of harvested agricultural products. According to the myth, *Kurathi* is the Goddess of agriculture.

2.5.3. Grain worship

The importance of worshipping grain crops in *Theyyam* has been cited by Choondal (1976).

Food grains were considered as Gods by the people of *Kolathunadu*. Paddy grains were seen as a symbol of prosperity and was termed as “*Shree Bhagavathi*” meaning ‘the Goddess of prosperity’ (Nambiar, 1990).

Marar (1999) has opined that in the myth of *Chimmaanakkali*, the name of the Goddess, viz., *Annapoorneswari*, itself gives a picture of grain worship since ‘*Annam*’ means rice grain in Malayalam.

2.5.4. Tree worship

The importance of devoting trees in *Theyyam* has been cited by Choondal (1976).

Before commencement of *Theyyam* performance, there is a custom called *Varavili* where the artist or performer seeks permission as well as blessings from the sacred tree, which is termed as “*Shree Moolasthanam*” or the origin of the particular deity (Choondal, 1979).

The song of *Chimmaanakkali* gives a beautiful picture of an ancient agrarian society who practiced shift cultivation. The portion which mentions about setting fire to the forests and seeking permission

for the same from the Goddess of forests is very touching (Namboodiri, 1983).

Panchuruli is a *Theyyam* (mother Goddess), which is believed to be residing in Ficus tree. The primary step in its performance is *Marathil Ninnirakkal* and concluding step is *Marathilettal* (Nambiar, 1994).

Vrikshaaraadhana in *Theyyam* is of utmost importance. It is believed that the Gods reside beneath certain trees. This crude idea about God gained certain shape and form along with the development of human brains, and later on started being visualized as different *Theyyams* (Namboodiri, 1998).

Shrines of gods have been identified with the roots of *Strychnos*, *Ilanji* and *Ficus*. Fertility gods have more relation with *Strychnos* (Namboodiri, 1981).

Vrikshaaraadhana has an undebatable position in *Theyyam*. Many latex bearing trees like *Alstonia*, *Michaelia chempaka* etc. are treated as shrines of Gods (Namboodiri, 1981).

Chakkayidal or *Chakkakothu* is a ritual in connection with *Theyyam* at *Andaloorkavu* in Kannur. This is to mark the devotion to the jack tree (Marar, 1999b)

2.5.5. Worship of mother Goddess

Rituals simulating the '*Uchaaral*' in North Malabar are prevalent in parts of Bengal also (Crooke, 1925).

Studies conducted by Menon (1935) deals with importance of *Ammadeyvaradhana* or worship of mother goddess in *Theyyam*.

Manthras which pray to the "Goddess of Rain" to shower upon the agricultural land can be seen in *Atharva veda* (Acharya, 1973).

The concept of devoting Earth as mother Goddess might have originated from the fact that earth, who is the provider of the food necessary for one's existence finally merges him into herself, once life goes out of him. So the worship of Mother Goddess in *Theyyam* is nothing else, but the devotion towards nature/earth (Leelavathi, 1976).

In *Theyyam*, there is a practice of placing '*Kalasham*' which is a decorated vessel that symbolizes the womb of the mother Goddess which brings prosperity, longevity and happiness. Toddy or arrack is filled in the vessel as a symbolic representation (Kurup, 1973). He also indicated that the concept of devoting Earth as Mother Goddess in *Theyyam* is a product of the Aryan influence.

Nature was considered as the mother of all. This is the basis of many 'Amma Deyvangal' in *Theyyam* (Nambiar, 1979).

Uchaaral in North Malabar is a ritual during the period following harvest of second crop. The belief is that the land which is compared with 'mother God is supposed to take rest during this period (Nambiar, 1990).

Latex bearing trees like *Plumeria*, *Champaka*, *Ficus* etc. are considered as Mother Gods in *Kolathunadu*. (Nambiar, 1980).

The concept of mother God was prevalent in ancient period, from the banks of Nile to the banks of Sindhu River (Bharathan, 2000b)

2.6. Specific elements in farming culture that influence folk arts and rituals

2.6.1. Agricultural crops and practices

In *Chimmaanakkali*, all aspects of *Ponamkrishi*' or shift cultivation are dealt in detail. The newly cultivated crops in burnt forest include Thinai, Paddy, Maize, Cucurbits, etc. the season of conducting shift cultivation and the different steps are also elaborated in the song (Namboodiri, 1982).

Marar (1999) opined that several festivals, rituals and folk arts are conducted with the hope of getting number harvest of crops in the succeeding seasons.

2.6.2. Livestock sector

Kalichaan Theyyam is one performed for the prosperity of cattle. The objective behind this ritual-cum-art form is to get rid of all possible diseases of cattle population. Namboodiri (1992) has mentioned that in olden days, this was done as a prophylactic measure during periods when a specific disease of cattle was likely to occur.

According to Marar (1999), certain folk arts and rituals are being conducted for the well being of cattle and other livestock.

Marar (1999) recollected the ritual of taking bullocks to every house in a locality during the off seasons, with the objective of bringing prosperity to crops and livestock in those houses. '*Aadi vedan*', *Kothaammoori* etc. are examples for such rituals.

2.6.3. Recreation

Fairchild (1977) defined cultural recreation as a type of leisure activity engaged in for pleasure that embodies a high standard of refinement and excellence, such as art, music, folk dances, etc.

Chimmaanakkali was a recreative innovation added to the ritual '*Kenthonpaattu*' of the *Pulaya* community, so as to break the monotony of the ritual and to impart more attraction to it (Nambiar, 1989).

Marar (1999) has made mention of certain folk art forms performed in connection with *Theyyaattom*, which represent the joy and recreation following the harvest of crops in a particular season.

2.6.4. Indigenous knowledge

According to Carter (1988), indigenous knowledge is highly localized and restricted - Local environmental factors and cultural conditions govern the evolution of indigenous knowledge.

Wang (1988) has defined indigenous knowledge as the sum total of knowledge and practices which are based on peoples accumulated experience in dealing with situations and problems in various aspects of life and such knowledge and practices are special of a particular culture.

Panchagavyam is another product of the indigenous knowledge of the people of *Kolathunadu* (Nambiar, 1990).

Verma and Dhukia (1991) states that indigenous knowledge is perpetuated through indigenous beliefs, attitudes, customs, rituals, etc. Indigenous knowledge is maintained through oral traditions, folktales, proverbs etc.

According to Chittiraichelvan and Raman (1991), indigenous knowledge was passed on from generation to generation by word of mouth. It includes various social and religions taboos, beliefs and

customs, communication patterns, music, ecology, vegetation, climate and so on.

Reijntjes (1992) has opined that the knowledge of a farming population living in a specific area is derived from the local peoples past experience, both that are handed from previous generations and that of the present generation.

Balasubramaniam *et al.* (1994) has stated that the farmer-initiated technology does not occur by accident, but there is a farmer based method of research, similar to scientific method. It relies strongly on intuition, historical experiences and directly perceivable evidence.

Researches by Nambiar (1994) has identified *Pulikudi* and *Pulinkathal Kollal* as two valuable sets of indigenous knowledge in relation with tamarind, practised as rituals in North Malabar.

Rajagopal (2000) has mentioned about *Karkitaka Kanji* which is a valuable indigenous know how practiced in connection with the ritual '*Pathaamudayam*'.

In the light of this available literature, the following assumptions have been made:

- 1) Every folk art and ritual will have influence by the basic activity of rural life *ie* farming.

- 2) Type of farming activity in existence in each region or location will have influence on the specific elements of folk arts and rituals of that region.
- 3) There is some scientific rationale in designing the folklores and rituals in the context of farming culture.



Methodology

3. METHODOLOGY

This chapter deals with a brief description of the methods and procedures followed in conducting this research. The various aspects are furnished under the following sub headings.

3.1. Research Design

3.2. Locale of study

4.3. Selection of sample.

4.4. Method of data collection.

3.1. Research design

This research aims to trace back to the history of an agrarian society that prevailed in the past. In the light of available literature and keeping in view the objectives, it could be well inferred that most of the attributes included in the study are exploratory in nature. Therefore, the study is conceived to have an Exploratory Survey Design. It is intended mainly to yield qualitative data and ethno history narrations.

According to Fairchild (1977), Exploratory research is a preliminary and unrepresentative sampling study of any social unit in order to ascertain the chief elements composing it and, as a rule, to

prepare the way either for a systematic general survey or for some intensive enquiry respecting one or more aspects of the unit.

The method has its own limitations. In Exploratory Design, it is assumed that the investigator has very little or no knowledge about the problem or situation under investigation. It serves primarily to acquaint the researcher with the characteristics of his research target (Moser,1971).

In Exploratory research, the general unfamiliarity with a research target does not provide the researcher with much opportunity to focus upon specific aspects of the social situation. This limitation of the research design has reflected all along this thesis work.

Its chief merit is the ability to discover potentially significant factors that might be assessed in detail and depth at a later date and with more sophisticated type of research design (Black, 1976).

3.2. Locale of study

The study was conducted in erstwhile '*Kolathunadu*' of North Malabar region of Kerala state. The area extends over parts of Kozhikode, Kannur and Kasaragod districts of North Kerala. (The map showing the location of study is given as Fig 1)

Kolathunadu has a river, Korapuzha near Quilandy as its Southern boundary and Chandragiri river near Nileswaram in Kasaragod district as its Northern boundary. The rituals and folk art forms show a peak concentration in Kannur, Payyannur and Nileswaram areas. Kannur is said to be the “land of looms and lores”

3.3. Selection of samples

With reference to the results of exploratory researches conducted by Namboodiri (1985), the study was conducted with focus on the three major folk art forms, viz *Theyyam*, *Chimmaanakkali* and *Kothaammoori*, and one ritual, viz., *Pathaamudayam*.

The respondents of the study included purposively selected individuals belonging to the following categories;

- 1) Members of the families which are traditionally connected to the performances of the selected folk arts and rituals.
- 2) Social workers of the region.
- 3) Members of the cultural and voluntary organizations connected to the performance of selected art forms and rituals.
- 4) Researchers belonging to different organizations who conduct investigations on different dimensions of folk arts and rituals.

5) Professionals and experts in agriculture and allied sectors

The conceived sample size was flexible since the data collection would make use of individual respondents and groups in different locations under different situations. However, the number of respondents covered by the study was more than two hundred.

3.4. Methods of data collection

As the research design was an exploratory type, the different methods like participatory appraisal, oral history narrations by elder and experienced respondents as well as consultations with folk artists and experts in folklore were made use of in the research. This involved extensive travel, overnight observations of several performances of folk arts forms, detailed discussions with respondents and so on. Interviews with veterans in these fields were recorded in audio cassettes as far as possible, fortified with folk songs sung by the experts themselves. Live performances of *Theyyam* were recorded in videotapes and those of *Chimmaanakkali*, *Kothaammoori* and many other rituals were photographed.

1) Participatory Appraisal Techniques

The study was dependent upon primary sources as far as possible. Live performance of *Theyyam*, *Chimmaanakkali* and *Kothaammoori* were observed, followed by interesting discussions in which the performers, researchers in folklore, social workers of the area, etc. participated actively. Performance of *Theyyam* begins by dusk, continues althrough the night and ends by dawn. Keen effort was taken to observe live performances as far as possible. The veteran grandsires in various fields of folklore expressed their viewpoints with great enthusiasm- however wild they may be.

Chimmaanakkali and *Kothaammoori* were confined to on-stage performances since in the normal course, their conductance is very limited now-a-days. Audio recording of live recitals of *Kothaamoorippaattu* has also been done.

2) Oral history narrations

These were the secondary sources of information. In the case of certain rituals and myths behind certain folk art form, their conductance in present society as well as available literature about them were very limited; or almost nil. In such situations, the only means of information

was the valuable oral history narrations by elder and experienced respondents.

3) Consultations with folk artists and experts in folklore

Different methods like interviews, discussions, etc. were conducted with the intention of gathering maximum information possible on specific elements selected for study. Performing artists and experts in each field, viz., folk arts like *Theyyam*, *Chimmaanakkali* and *Kothaammoori*; and rituals like *Chakkakothu*, *Pathaamudayam* etc. were identified with the help and guidance of previous researchers in folklore as well as members of cultural and voluntary organizations connected to folklore. Elaborate discussions and interviews were conducted with these personalities; which were audio-recorded then and there.

Details of live performances of folk arts and rituals were collected via District Tourism Promotion Council, Cultural and Voluntary Organisations etc. Live video-recording and photography of these performances as well as collection of pre-recorded video-cassettes were done.

Compilation of parts of songs related to folk arts & rituals viz., *Thottampaattu*, *Chimmaanakkalippaattu*, *Kothaamoorippaattu*, etc.-

which are almost in a endangered state- has also been done. Only those portions relevant to agriculture has been highlighted in the thesis.

The qualitative data thus generated, relating to folklore elements influenced by the farming culture or season-bound practices was subjected to a scientific scrutiny for assessment of its rationale by experts who have established their competence in the related fields.

KERALA – DISTRICTS

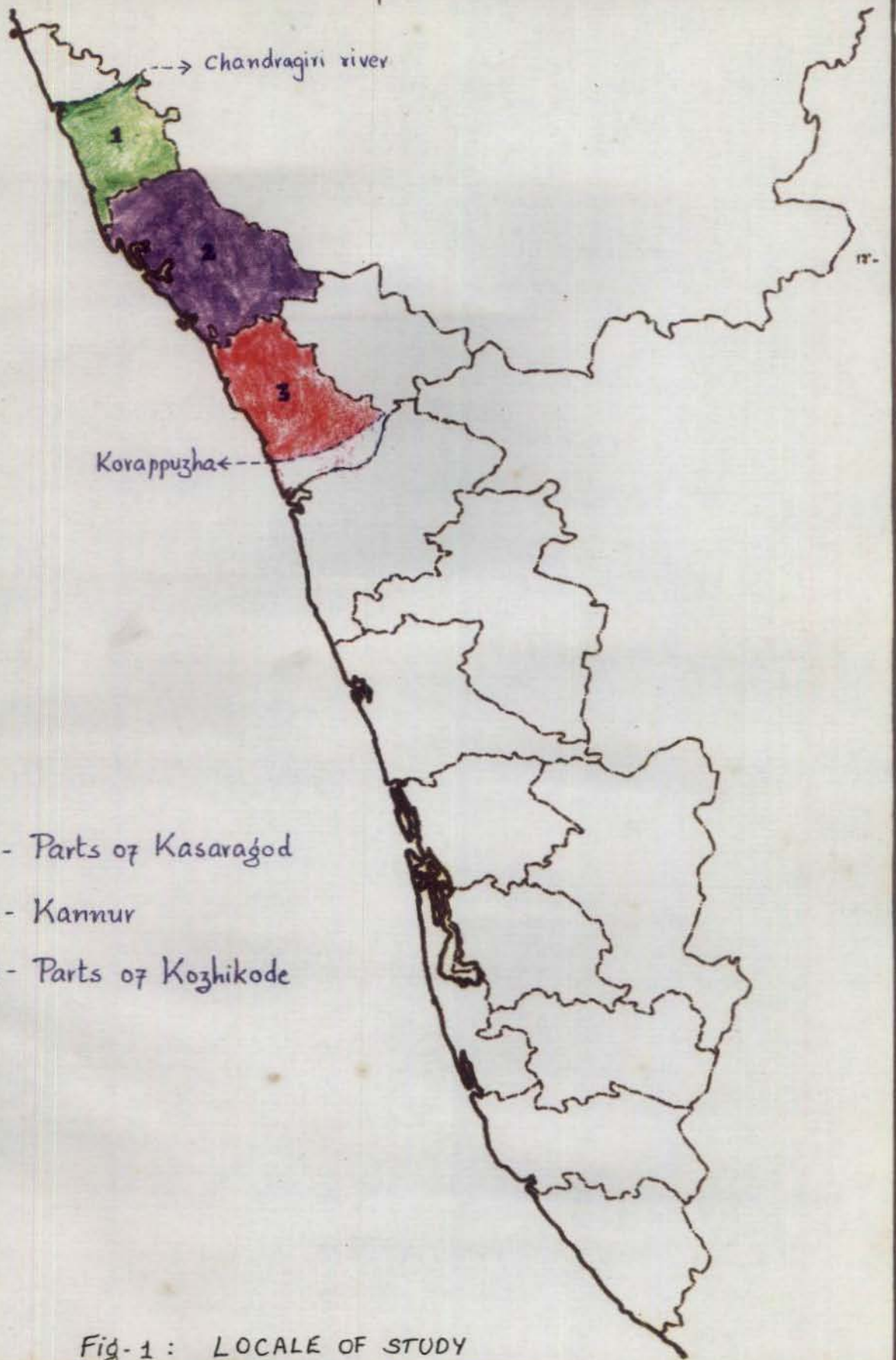


Fig-1 : LOCALE OF STUDY

Results and Discussion

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study was conducted with major focus on two folk art forms viz., *Theyyam* and *Chimmaanakkali* and one ritual viz., *Pathaamudayam*, specific to *Kolathunadu*, the selected locale of study. Researches by Namboodiri (1990) have formed the motive behind selection of the above-mentioned items in particular.

Quite distinct from the experimental or ex post facto research styles, the qualitative data gathered through exhaustive survey, oral history narrations, observations of the performance of folk arts and participatory appraisals were analyzed by the subjective rationale of different experts in the field. Such revelations are logically compiled to yield meaningful conclusions in line with objectives of the study.

The study was conducted mainly focusing on two major folk art forms *Theyyam*, *Chimmaanakkali* and a ritual *Pathaamudayam*, though additional information could be gathered on *Kothaammoori*, *Chakkakothu* and certain other rituals, which were found to have relevance to the topic of research. Brief descriptions on each of the folk art forms including the mythology, context of performance and relationship with farming culture are being provided here facilitating inferences and conclusions.

Those observations through all the above-mentioned methods formed the findings for the study. This was supplemented by valid informations offered by experts and researchers who have already conducted an exhaustive hunt in the field of folklore. This sum total of findings and discussion is presented under the following heads.

4.1 *Theyyam*

4.2 *Chimmaanakkali*

4.3 *Pathaamudayam*

4.4 *Kothaammoori*

4.5 Rituals

4.6 Fertility rituals and Agriculture

4.7 Rituals contribute to Greenery

4.1. *Theyyam*

Theyyam is the most important ritualistic performing folk art in Northern Kerala. It is a perfect blend of ritual, vocal and instrumental music, dance, painting and literature. There are more than 400 *Theyyams*

and they carry the tradition that originated in the primordial past to the present day.

“*Theyyam*” is the crude form of the word “*Deyvam*” which means God in Malayalam. They are performed annually from December to May - the months of harvest and festivals - in “*Kavus*” (or shrines) or in open paddy fields. Quite often, *Theyyam* is performed ritualistically as an agrarian festival. Performance of *Theyyam* has three steps:

- 1) *Thottam* (Song describing the myth behind the particular *Theyyam*)
- 2) *Vellattom* (Model/ replica of the actual *Theyyam*)
- 3) *Theyyattom* (Final complete form).

Apart from yearly ritualistic *Theyyams* there are mega festivals of “*Perumkaliyaattoms*” held once in a decade or two decades. In short, *Theyyam* is a part of the life of the tradition conscious simple people of *Kolathunadu*.

4.1.1 Background and agrarian relations

Theyyam and allied arts of Kerala had been contributed by an agrarian society. The society then, was organized in a caste-hierarchical system (Thurstone,1970). The caste determined the social status and position of a person. Thus, those who controlled the land claimed

superior caste status and those who cultivated the soil as labourers belonged to the inferior caste. Such inferior caste members had patronized their own *Theyyam* deities. Likewise certain *Theyyams* are specific to certain castes and communities.

In North Kerala, the cult of *Theyyam* was converted to regulate the agrarian relations as a part of a feudal system (Kurup, 1986). The cultivating lower class tenants were organized in particular cult centers. Those centers were controlled by the landlords and the Brahmin-temples who extracted the surplus of their agricultural production by way of rent, levies and customary payments. The illiterate peasant, who was bound on all sides with social taboos, norms, religions, superstitions, etc. could not liberate himself out of this burden of feudalism. For eg., the agricultural labourers of the '*Pulaya*' community strongly believed that the *Theyyam* deities would cause them disease, calamity, etc. if they failed to work properly and sincerely for their landlords. Therefore, they worked hard to boost up agricultural production even in ailing conditions. Meanwhile, the dominant class exploited this surplus labour. In the 20th century, when the Peasant Movement started in this region, it was even directed against the *Theyyam* cult in several places (Kurup, 1986). In Malabar, this art

form has been exploited for perpetuating the feudal agrarian relations by the dominant class.

The “*Thottampaattu*” of “*Pottan Theyyam*” is a marked example of this mentally stressed situation of the lower class. (It is attached in Annexure – I).

In another *Theyyam*, *Nellukuthippothe*, (crude form of *Nellukuthi Bhagavathi*), the performer beautifully enacts the various stages of paddy processing.

Today, after various transformations in society, this art form has attained salvation and is viewed with much devotion from peoples of all walks of life, in North Malabar. *Theyyam* is performed during the gap between the harvest of one crop and the sowing of next crop. If the venue for the performance is a fallow field, then it is called *Vayalthira* (*Vayal* = field, *Thira* = *Theyyam*). Belief is that people of the area welcome God or the *Theyyam* deity to their fallow fields to mark their gratitude for previous harvest as well as to get their land blessed for a bumper harvest in the coming season.

Among the different *Theyyams*, ‘*Kurathi*’ *Theyyam*, especially ‘*Kunjar kurathi*’ is said to be the Goddess of Agriculture. Every *Theyyam* will have its own weapons in connection with their respective myth.

Likewise, '*Kurathi*' has sickle and '*muram*' as its weapons, the latter being a device used for winnowing food grains after harvest. This denotes its strong bond with agriculture. '*Pullikkurathi*' is also considered as Goddess of Agriculture. In the *Thottampaattu* of *Kunjar kurathi*, names of several agricultural products are mentioned. It seems that *Kurathi* evaluates the quality of the various harvested products. *Thottampaattu* of *Kurathi* is appended in Annexure II.

Kurathi is also considered to be the Goddess of soil fertility and plant fertility. This deity of prosperity is believed to have been originated from lord Shiva.

4.1.2. Use of Agricultural products in *Theyyam*

In connection with *Theyyaattom*, the *Kavu* and premises are decorated with tender leaves of coconut palm, various agricultural products like arecanut, *Coccinia* etc. There is a practice of decorating the pillars of the '*Utsavappanthal*' with closely arranged arecanuts. Pseudostem of banana is used to symbolically represent *Chemmarathi*, the heroine of the myth behind the *theyyam*, *Kathivanoor Veeran*.

Perumkaliyaattom is a grand festival, which is celebrated once in eighteen to twenty five years in certain *Kazhakams*. A mega feast involving the whole people in the locality is a characteristic feature of the

same (*Samootha sadya*). The peculiarity is that no vegetable is bought from the market. Each and every family in the area donates a share of their harvested agricultural products to the feast. It is believed that once they do this, prosperity is assured to their crops until the next *Perumkaliyaattom*. There is a ritual called “*Kaazhchavaravu*” in connection with this. People of the locality tie the agricultural products like vegetables, fruits, etc. on to a long stick and carry them to the *Kavu* in large processions. These are given as offerings to God. There, the superior priest sprays blessed or sacred turmeric powder over the heaped agricultural products. The rationale behind this activity could be that the medicinal property of turmeric has the potential to prevent decay of these products.

The trunk and fronds of arecanut palm cut to various artistic forms are used as adornments for many *Theyyams*. Most of them have their crowns or the head ornaments decorated with *Ixora*, thulasi etc.

Moreover, coconut – both in tender as well as mature forms – and food grains (*dhaanyam* in Malayalam) enjoy unbeatable positions in *Theyyam* and many other rituals and folk art forms. ‘*Dhaanyaraadhana*’ or worship of food grains itself forms a major event in *Theyyam*.

4.1.3 Role of recreative events in *Theyyam*

There are recreative events in connection with *Theyyattam* or *Kaliyaatta mahotsavam*. These were originally meant exclusively for the toiling youth to express their joy. Through these events, they celebrated the freedom that followed the continuous toil in the agricultural fields and expressed their physical strength. These usually occur in *Kavus* following the performance of *Theyyam*. Examples for such events are “*Adiyutsavam*” at Maavilaakkavu, “*Thikkutsavam*” at Andaloorkkavu and “*Thengapidi*” at Paduvilaikkavu in Kannur district.

4.1.4. *Theyyam* for the prosperity of livestock

Kaalichaan Theyyam is the one performed for the prosperity of cattle. The objective behind this ritual cum art form is to get rid of all possible diseases of the cattle population (Premnath,1956). In olden days, this was done as a prophylactic measure during the period when a specific disease of cattle was likely to occur.

4.1.5. Terminology related to *Theyyam*

1. *Kavus/cult* centres: Small shrines dedicated in favour of the mother goddess where *Theyyam* is conducted. They are also

known as *Sthaanam*, *Ara*, *Mundy*, *Kottam* and *Kazhakam*. Inside the shrine, there won't be any idol; but only small sacred swords to represent the deity. It is a continuation of the Neolithic tradition of weapon worship (Kurup, 1986).

2 *Kalam* in *Theyyam*: The magical square prepared for *Theyyam* performance. Cereals and food items are offered herein. Cocks, etc. are sacrificed in front of this square. The square is subdivided into smaller units by small pieces of banana pseudostem.

3 *Kalasam*: This is a decorated vessel. It symbolizes the womb of the mother Goddess that brings prosperity, longevity and happiness. Toddy or arrack is filled in the vessel and placed in front of the *Kalam*. This system has its roots in the *sangha* period for worship of hero stones or *Veerakkallukal* (Kurup, 1986).

4. *Thottampaattu*: The song, which precedes the actual performance of *Theyyam*. The respective myths in connection with each *Theyyam* is elaborated beautifully in this song. This is sung by a man dressed in a crude form of the

succeeding *Theyyam*. The word is said to be a corrupt form of “ *Sthothrampaattu*” which means praising God.

4.1.6. Regional variations in *Theyyam*

In Northern parts of *Kolathunadu* and in Kasaragod district, *Theyyam* is known by the name ‘*Kaliyaattom*’ or ‘*Kolam*’. From Thalassery (south of Kannur) to Korapuzha in Kozhikode district, it is known as ‘*Thira*’; and in extreme North Kerala, apart from the annual *Theyyattom*, there occurs *Perumkaliyaattom* which is conducted once in several years. Similarly, there is significant difference in the offerings accepted at various ‘*Kavus*’, depending upon the predominant crop in the locality.

Example: Banana is the major offering accepted at *Kakkoth kavu* in Kannur district. In certain other kavu, viz. *Andaloor kavu* and *Kappattu kavu* jack fruit or ‘*chakka*’ as it is called in Malayalam, is the major offering. *Chakkakothu* is a very famous ritual in these shrines. The custom followed is that, people of the locality offer any number of jack fruit to the conductance of this ritual, by way of which they mark their respect to the jack tree which bears the nourishing fruit. It is surprising to see that the people of that area won’t harvest jack fruit from their

homesteads unless and until the '*Chakkakothu*' ritual (harvesting and cutting of jack fruit) at the '*kavu*' has been commenced.

4.2. *Chimmanakkali*

Chimmaanakkali is a folk art form popular in the extreme North of Kerala, especially near Payangadi. It is actually a part of yet another ritual cum folk art form called '*Kenthron paattu*' ('*Gandharvan paattu*'). *Kenthron paattu* is a ritual conducted to exorcise the witches. *Chimmaanakkali* has both ritualistic and recreative values. It is usually performed by the *Pulaya* community of North Kerala, in the form of a drama accompanied by songs which describe the myth behind it. The myth denotes its strong bond with agriculture. It is as follows:

Lordess *Annapoorna* dreams of herself being invited to *Kolathunadu*. Immediately she leaves for *Kolathunadu* in a boat. On her way, people of several communities join her. They include the *Choyee* and *Maayilar* communities. After a lot of constraints, the boat reaches a place called *Aayiramthengu*. All of them alight there. After a series of events, *Annapoorneswari* later becomes the deity at *Cherukunnu* (the present *Cherukunnu Sree Annapoorneswari Kshethram*).

Following the orders of the Goddess, the *Choyees* and *Maayilar* move to the forest to make their livelihood. They finally reach a place

called *Ekathiri*. There they are ordered by the *Thampuran* or landlord for practising '*Ponamkrishi*' or shift cultivation in the forest. As such they clear the forest and start cultivating crops there. The crops included paddy, maize, thina, cucurbits, etc. during monsoon (March - April). All the crops yield very well. The *Thampuran* leaves these poor agricultural labourers in utter despair by not paying them at all. Instead, he gives them the chaff from the harvested produce as reward. The *Thampuran* appoints one of the *Mayilar* named Kannan as watchman to safeguard the harvested products. There is a market middleman named Mammu in that locality. In the course of time, Mammu falls in love with Kannan's wife, Kumba. Kannan, one day dreams of this at his workplace and rushes to his hut. There he sees both Mammu and Kumba together. Finally he sets fire to the hut and kills both of them. This is the climax of the story. This art form is based on the song "*Chothiyum pidayum*". This whole story is expressed in a very attractive and beautiful manner in *Chimmaanakkali*.

4.2.1. Relevance to agriculture

In *Chimmaanakkali*, all the aspects of *Ponamkrishi* or shift cultivation are elaborated dramatically. The way the *Choyees* clear the forests, the way they set fire to the vegetation, plough the land, sow the seeds, harvest the grains- each and every aspect is dealt with in detail.

Before starting cultivation in the cleared forests, there is a custom of pleasing and satisfying the *Vanadevatha* or Forest Goddess. Accordingly people exhort in advance that they would be clearing the forest within a few days. The belief is that by doing so, all the snakes and other supernatural powers would move to another place where the forest remains undisturbed.

Chimmaanakkali gives us a picture of an ancient period when shift cultivation (*Ponamkrishi*) was in regular practice. It further gives an idea of the marketing structure of the agricultural products that was in practice, during olden days. Role of a market middle-man is mentioned. It also gives a clear picture of feudalism that existed then. Accordingly, three classes of people are clearly seen,

- 1) the low class labourers- the *Choyees* and *Mayilar*
- 2) the middle man *Mammu* who deceives the labour class and
- 3) the landlord or the *Thampuran* whose orders are followed by the working class.

There is mention of several crops being grown in the same area, together as well as in rotation

It also gives us the impression that farmers never let the land to exhaust or get depleted of its richness. They used to change the place of cultivation at regular intervals. All these mark the period when agriculture had its development. The song of *Chimmaanakkali* gives a beautiful description of its strong bond with agriculture. Those portions with high relevance to agriculture are attached in Appendix-IV.

There is evidence of seeds of various crops being introduced to our area from other places. They include sorghum, maize, thina etc.

The name of the Goddess in its Myth itself gives a picture of grain worship (*Annapoorneswary*- where *annam* = rice grain in Malayalam).

The season of conducting shift cultivation (i.e, *Kumbham 22nd*), process of setting fire to the forests, seeking permission for the same from the goddess of forest, etc. and further such details of shift cultivation or *Ponamkrishi* are described beautifully in the song of *Chimmaanakkali*.

In *Chimmaanakkali*, the myth says that seeds of crops originated in 'Mel lokam', which is an area between heaven and earth. This was believed to be the area where the sages, sculpturers and carpenters of heaven resided. It seems from there, a girl (belonging to *Pulaya* community) named *Annan Cherukili* brought the seeds down to Earth.

4.3. *Pathaamudayam*

Pathaamudayam is a ritual conducted during the months of October-November. (The month of “*Thulam*” in Malayalam). Worship of Sun God and Goddess Earth forms the basis of this ritual. In Malayalam, the word “*Pathaamudayam*” means “the tenth sunrise”. Actually *Pathaamudayam* refers to two days viz., 10th of *Thulam* and 10th of *Medam* (ie, October 26th and April 23rd). 10th of *Medam* is not celebrated in North Malabar; whereas 10th of *Thulam*, “*Pathaamudayam*” as it is called is celebrated with much pomp and glory. Instead of 10th of *Medam*, 1st of *Medam* is celebrated here in a grand manner as “*Vishu*”. In South Kerala, both 10th of *Thulam* and 10th of *Medam* are celebrated ritualistically.

The movement of sun, as the ancient people believed, forms the basis of this ritual. It is believed that on these two days ie, *Thulam* 10th and *Medam* 10th, sun rises exactly in the East and shines exactly vertical at noon ie, the sun rays are exactly perpendicular in the morning and noon, being perfectly horizontal and vertical respectively. It is believed as follows:-

- (1). On *Medam* 10th (April 23rd) sun starts its movement from equatorial line towards North.

(2). It reaches North by 18th of *Karkitakam* (i.e. August 3rd)

(3). On *Karkitakam* 18th Sun starts its movement back to South

(4). It reaches South by 10th of *Thulam* (i.e. October 26th)

On *Medam* 1st farmers sow the new crop, accompanied by ritualistic *poojas* in the field to please the Goddess Earth before sowing the seeds. This observance is called “*Chaal*” (furrow).

By August 3rd sun reaches North. The day coincides with *Ayilyam Njattuvelaarambham*. On *Karkitakam* eighteenth, Sun starts its movement back to South. In *Karkkitakam*, *Theyyam* is conducted in different *Kavus* to exorcise the witch of scarcity. *Edavam*, *Mithunam* and *Karkitakam* are said to be the months of scarcity or “*Varuthi*” in Malayalam. ‘*Aadi-Vedan*’ is another ritual during the month of *Karkkitakam* ie, July-August. Here also, the objective is to exorcise the witch of scarcity and to welcome the Goddess of prosperity. ‘*Karkitaka Kanji*’ a sort of rice porridge fortified with several medicinal herbs is consumed by the people all over North Malabar during *Karkitakam*. On 30th of *Karkitakam*, ie, last day of the month, again *Theyyam* is conducted in *Kavus*. It is believed that from the next day, ie first of *Chingam*, it is the period of prosperity. Towards the end of *Karkkitakam* there is another event called ‘*Nira*’. The fully ripened paddy inflorescence or the

“*Nelkkathir*” is tied along with leaves of *Ficus*, *Poluvalli*, mango-tree, jack tree and *Strychnos nuxvomica* (*Kanjiram*), and this is hung in every temple and *tharawad* (ancestral house) in the locality. This gives an indication that new paddy grains are getting ready for harvest.

Harvest of grains starts in *Kanni*, ie the month previous to *Thulam*. These harvested grains are taken to the store or ‘*Pathaayam*’ on 10th of *Thulam*. On this day, the ground called ‘*Kalam*’ is prepared by pasting with cow dung slurry, which is treated as a holy material by Hindus. The rationale behind this activity could be the pesticidal effect of cow dung. The harvested grains are heaped in a place; from which they are measured and transferred to the prepared ground using a measuring device called ‘*Para*’. This is then taken to the ‘*Pathaayam*’ for storage.

The same day, there is another event called ‘*Puthariyoottu*’ in which rice is prepared out of these newly harvested paddy grains. On that day, all family members join at the ancestral house or *Tharawad* to attend *Puthariyoottu*.

It is again remarkable that every year, the first ‘*Theyyamkettu*’ of *Kolathunadu* starts on this day 10th of *Thulam*, in *Anjoottambalam Veerarkavu* at Nileswar in Kasaragod district.

Following the harvest in *Kanni*, there is another fertility play called ‘*Seethakkali*’ conducted for the prosperity of crops in the current season. This is common among the tribals called *Karimbalar* who dwell in the hill areas of North Kerala.

Kayarum Vadiyum Edukkal is another important event on the 1st of *Medam* itself. This is the activity of authorizing the crop protection practices of that year to a group of people in locality.

From the above details, it could be observed that ethnometeorological calendar forms the basis for this ritual, *Pathaamudayam*. The ethnometeorological calendar is connected with the movement of earth relative to sun. Instead, people then described it on the basis of “movement of Sun”. The basic assumption on the “movement of Sun”(as they say) influencing the crop stand is taken into consideration for the ritual.

4.4. *Kothaammoori*

This is a ritualistic folk art form performed by the Malaya community of North Kerala. Cherukunnu in Kannur district is famous for this art form. It is performed for the prosperity of livestock.

The name '*Kothaammoori*' is said to be derived from the word '*Godavari*'. The myth behind this artform-cum-ritual is that *Godavari* (Nandini) the sacred cow, is sent from heaven to earth by her mother *Kamadhenu* (symbol of prosperity) in order to bring all sorts of prosperity here.

It is usually performed after the first harvest of paddy crop. *Godavari* is taken to each and every house in the locality, where they welcome her with the harvested agricultural products. This practice is called "*Kazhcha Vaippu*". The oldest woman member of the house is the one who generally does this. It is believed that once *Godavari* comes to their place, the area gets rid of its '*Panjam*' or scarcity. Even though this is the belief, what actually happens is that the group of people (*Paniyanmar*) who accompany this *Godavari* makes this an opportunity to make their livelihood and thus get rid of their scarcity.

Wood is carved out into the shape of a cow (*Godavari*). A small boy enters within this hollow structure and assumes himself to be the cow. He performs a peculiar dance or movements rather, as the followers sing songs in praise of *Annapoorneswari*, the Goddess of Food. *Annapoorneswari*, the deity of *Cherukunnu Annapoorneswari Kshetram* is again mentioned in *Chimmaanakkali*, all these denoting that a group of

people or society who considered grain (*annam*) as their goddess were the cause behind the origin of such art forms.

The songs include *Vithupolippaattu*, *Pashuppattu*, and several such folksongs in praise of crop seeds and livestock. Some portions of the song are attached in Annexure-V.

Generally in *Kolathunadu*, there is a belief that cow is a symbol of fertility and prosperity. This is the basis of *Kothaamoorippaattu*. The fertility potential of cow (*Godavari*) is believed to be imparted to the crops in the house to which it is welcome.

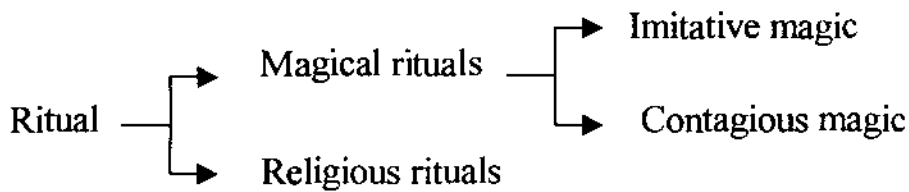
Another belief related to *Kothaamoori* is as follows: Usually bullocks are employed for ploughing the agricultural land. So, during the off seasons, these bullocks are taken to every house in the locality in certain states, with the objective of bringing prosperity to crops and livestock. Perhaps, this might be the image behind *Kothaamoori* of North Kerala also.

4.5. Rituals

Belief has been the building block of many a ritual. Based on several beliefs related to magic and religion, two groups of activities have

evolved viz., positive rituals or the “do’s” and negative taboos or the “don’ts”

4.5.1 Classification of rituals:



As far as North Malabar is concerned, the rituals here are not exclusively magical or religious instead, they are “magicoreligious rituals” (Nambiar, 2000)

“ Magic is a false science and an abortive art” says Frazer (1976b) He adds “ if at all it proves fruitful, then there is science in it and never can be called as exclusive magic. Suggestions, illusions and perceptions form the base for magic and thereby rituals. Any intentional activity in connection with a wish, which might have resulted in incidental success transforms to rituals in the society in course of time.

4.5.1.a. Imitative magic

The principle behind imitative magic is that through imitation of similar events or processes, which already exists in nature, the desired results could be achieved.

Examples of imitative magical rituals are:

1. Rain dance among certain tribals called *Mayorees*.
2. In North Kerala, during periods of severe drought a ritual called “*Thenga udakkal*” used to be performed in certain “*Kavus*”.

In Kunnumoolom temple at Cheruthazham in Kannur district, earlier there was a ritual of breaking tender coconuts by throwing them against a rock. They get shattered. The sound and resultant trickling of water down the rocky hill resembles the much awaited rain and thunder. There are many more examples for imitative magical rituals in several parts of the world.

An example of imitative magical ritual is still prevalent in North Malabar. This is in connection with promoting the fecundity of jack tree. It is as follows: On the day of solar eclipse, small boys in nude form gather around the shy-bearing jack tree. They hit the trunk of the tree with

a sort of wooden log. This is an imitative magical ritual done with the expectation of imparting fecundity to the jack tree (Nambiar,1990).

4.5.1.b Contagious magic

The principle behind contagious magic is that objects which were once in contact with each other can later on create direct or reciprocal (positive or negative) effects on one another, on being subjected to magical rituals.

4.5.2. How rituals came to be popular

“Science generates from experiences and experiments, while magic generates from traditional beliefs”- states Malinowski (1954).

Magic has helped primitive man in his struggle for existence to a great extent. It was an invention out of necessity. When agriculture evolved as an occupation, these rituals gained popularity. The rituals started imparting confidence in man in the sense, he started believing that he needn't fear the natural calamities as much as he did before the invention of these rituals (Nambiar,1990).

Later man realized that by mere magic or ordering, he couldn't bring nature to his line. This gave way to devotion of nature. Nature was

considered as the mother of all. This is the basis of many “*Amma Deyvangal*” or Mother Goddesses in *Theyyam*. *Manthras* which pray to the “Goddess of rains” to shower upon the ploughed agricultural lands can be seen in *Atharva veda*.

4.6. Fertility rituals and agriculture

Art and culture are reflections of the fertility cult. During ancient period the vast majority of people who depended on agriculture for their livelihood did not have much knowledge about germination of seeds, growth of plants, etc. They believed that through magical rituals, agriculture would flourish and give bumper yields. These types of rituals were prevalent even in different parts of Europe (Frazer, 1976b). The strong belief, which prevailed then, was that the causes behind human fertility and crop fertility were the same. In this background, people used to conduct ritualistic sexual intercourse at the time of initial sowing of crops with the aim of boosting up agricultural production. This was conducted as a part of rituals preceding the sowing of crops, in the cropland itself.

Narrowing down to North Malabar, the people have believed that fecundity of plants and trees can influence human beings also. On this basis, different fertility festivals like *Nira*, *Puthari*,

Kothaamoorippaattu, etc. are conducted here. Even *Onam* is said to be a fertility festival.

In North Malabar as well as Valluvanad region “*Uchaaralvelakal*” are prevalent even now. The period following harvest of second crop is known as “*Uchaara*”. The belief is that the land (on which cultivation is to be done), is compared with “Mother God” or a female, rather. She is supposed to take rest during this period which is the symbolic representation of the cyclic menstrual period of any female. This continues until the coming monsoon. So during the first week of ‘*Karkidakam*’, soil should’nt be manipulated in any way. Ploughing is strictly prohibited during this period. It seems the ploughing implements are also attributed symbolic resemblance with male sex organs. Even though the emic interpretations behind this are based on symbolic comparisons with human activities, the rationale is that during this period of heavy rains, ploughing of land may lead to severe soil erosion, uprooting of trees, etc. Crooke (1925) has stated that this belief is prevalent in parts of Bengal also.

Food grains were considered as gods by the people of *Kolathunadu*. Paddy grains were seen as symbol of prosperity. The paddy inflorescence is believed to be “*Shree Bhagavathi*” or Goddess of

Prosperity, still today. On the day of *Chinga Sankramam*, there is a ritual of welcoming the goddess of prosperity i.e. “*Shree Bhagavathi*” (*Seevothi* as it is colloquially called) and exorcising “*Chetta*” the symbol of scarcity. The former is in the month of *Chingam* and latter in the month of *Karkidakam*. The activities in this ritual are as follows: Girls from every house collect materials like some dried grass, broom stick, wooden spoon, etc. and put them into a clay pot. These materials are then boiled in this pot in a solution made by washing rice grains in water. The whole stuff is then poured beneath the *Strychnos* tree in the homestead. Meanwhile the girls chant the following lines:

“*Karaa karkita Maase, po*

Manikya chinga maase, vaa “

The people of *Kolathunadu* believe that fertility potential of many plants and trees can influence the same in human beings also. Tamarind is believed to have this property. Based on this, several rituals are conducted here. Women belonging to the Nair community, after marriage, conduct a ritual in relation with tamarind. She nails a metal piece on to the trunk of the tree and walks around the tree encircling it thrice. This is to get the fertility potential of the tamarind imparted to this lady. This is ‘*Pulinkaathel kollal*’.

There is another ritual in connection with tamarind, for the same cause, but following conception. This is called “*Pulikudi*”. During the fifth, seventh and ninth month of conception, the pregnant woman is supposed to consume a tablet prepared out of the seeds of several species of tamarind. They include *Vaalanpuli*, *Panachippuli*, *Chuthappulli*, *Njerinjanpuli*, *Bilmbipuli* and *Puliyaaral*. The rationale behind this could be that most of them are medicinal and may promote the health conditions of both the intrauterine foetus as well as the expectant mother.

In the livestock sector, cow is believed to possess this property as that of tamarind. Based on this, there is a ritual called ‘*Panchagavyam Sevikkal*’. This is conducted during the fifth month of pregnancy. The pregnant woman consumes a mixture made out of five products from the cows body viz., milk, ghee, curd, dung and urine (Nambiar,1990).

The same belief forms the base for the famous ritual, *Kothaamoorippaattu*; but this is for the prosperity of livestock and agriculture.

4.7. Rituals contribute to Greenery

Rituals and the related taboos play a great role in maintaining the rich forest wealth. Most ‘*Kavus*’ or the places where rituals like *Theyyam* are conducted stay amidst a rich collection of rare trees in dense

population. Along with their deep roots go the belief of the people here, that the tree is nothing less than their Mother. Latex-bearing trees like *Plumeria*, *Chempaka*, *Ficus*, etc. are considered as mother Gods.

The celebration of “*Naalpaamaram*” (*Athi*, *Ithi*, *Aal*, *Arayaal*) as sacred trees is well known to any Keralite. There exists a taboo that these trees should not be cut at any cause..

Vrikshaaraadhana is of utmost importance in *Theyyam*. In ancient days, man found his food, shelter and clothing in the trees of the forests. It is believed that long before the concept of *Kavu*, God (perceived in their own ways by different groups of people), resided beneath certain trees. This crude idea gained certain shape and form along with the development and progress of human brains. They gave colours to their own imaginations. This is one among the many factors, which led to the present ritualistic art form – *Theyyam* (Choondal, 1979).

Before the commencement of ‘*Theyyam*’ performance, there is a custom called ‘*Varavili*’ where the performer seeks permission as well as blessings from the sacred tree, which is supposed to be the dwelling place of the God, which he represents. In their terminology, the tree is called “*Shreemoolasthanam*”.

In North Malabar, we could hear interesting stories in connection with bestowing sacred status to trees. One such is as follows. During the 'Sangha' period, the place called Ezhimala was ruled by Emperor Udayan Venmmen Nannan. He had Neem tree as his kingdom's emblem. It was believed that the enemy could kill the emperor only after cutting a neem tree, and it seems, likewise was his end. These stories were intended to create a deep rooted devotion towards the trees in the minds of the people (Nambiar,1989).

In *Gandharva pooja* (of which *Chimmaanakkali* forms a part), there is a practice of devoting *Alstonia scholaris* ('Paala' in Malayalam), a latex oozing tree. It is believed that these trees are the shrines of several supernatural powers including *Gandharvas* and Snake Gods. In North Malabar, the practice of exorcising the witches by nailing them on to the trunk of latex oozing trees is very common.

Thuvvakkali, *Vasoorimaala*, etc. are believed to be witches, which cause diseases like small pox, chickenpox, measles, etc. according to the mythology. As a curative measure, a ritual is practiced. In it, the victim's body is massaged with leafy twigs of neem tree. This is to impart the supernatural power in neem tree to the person's body. The rationale

behind this could be the action of the unbeatable medicinal property of neem tree. This is a curative- measure ritual.

As a prophylactic measure, there is yet another ritual of pleasing the witches *Thoovakkali* and *Vasoorimaala*. For this, they are given the status of *Theyyam* and performed of course. During the performance, leaves of several trees are gathered and tied at both ends of a rod and deposited beneath a *Strychnos tree*. *Strychnos nuxvomica* is a tree, which yields strychnine (*'kaanjiram'*), which is a poisonous chemical. Might be due to this poisonous property that the tree was believed to be the shrine of the witches, *Vasoorimala* and *Thuvvakkali*.

Chempakam (*Michaelia chempaka*), *Kanjiram* (*Strychnos nuxvomica*), *Arayaal*, *Peraal* (*Ficus spp.*) and *Neem* (*Azadirachta indica*) and *Paala* (*Alstonia scholaris*) are the trees commonly seen in '*kavus*'. The very objective behind the origin of *kavus* is believed to be *Vrikshaaraadhana* (worship of trees) and hence the maintenance of the rich greenery.

It is believed that the *Theyyam* called "*Panchuruli*" dwells in *Ficus* trees. During the performance of *Panchurulitheyyam*, the first step is "*Marathil-ninnirakkal*" (i.e. to conjure the super natural power from the

tree to the performer) and concluding step is “*Marathil kayattal*” or “*Marathilettal*” (i.e. entry of the power back to the tree).

There is a *Theyyam* called “*Poomaala Bhagavathi*” which represents forest- Goddess or ‘*Vanadevatha*’. The adornment for this *Theyyam* is quite different from others, especially the crown which is made of beautiful flowers. It also holds a basket of beautiful flowers. This discription is as opined by Marar. But contradictory to this, Nambo^{di}o_{ri} (1998) has stated that the *Theyyam Poomalabhagavathi* exists only a concept, and that it does not possess a form for performance.



Plate-1 *Theyyam*



Plate - 2 · Banana pseudostem arranged in artistic manner to symbolically represent '*Chemmarathi*' the heroine of the myth, *Kathivanoor Veeran*



'Mudi' of a theyyam made of arecanut trunk and fronds. This tall head adornment is supported with bamboo poles by the priests accompanying the theyyam



Kalasam filled with toddy (symbolically the womb of mother Goddess) decorated with arecanut inflorescence

Plate-3. **Use of Arecanut inflorescence in Theyyam**

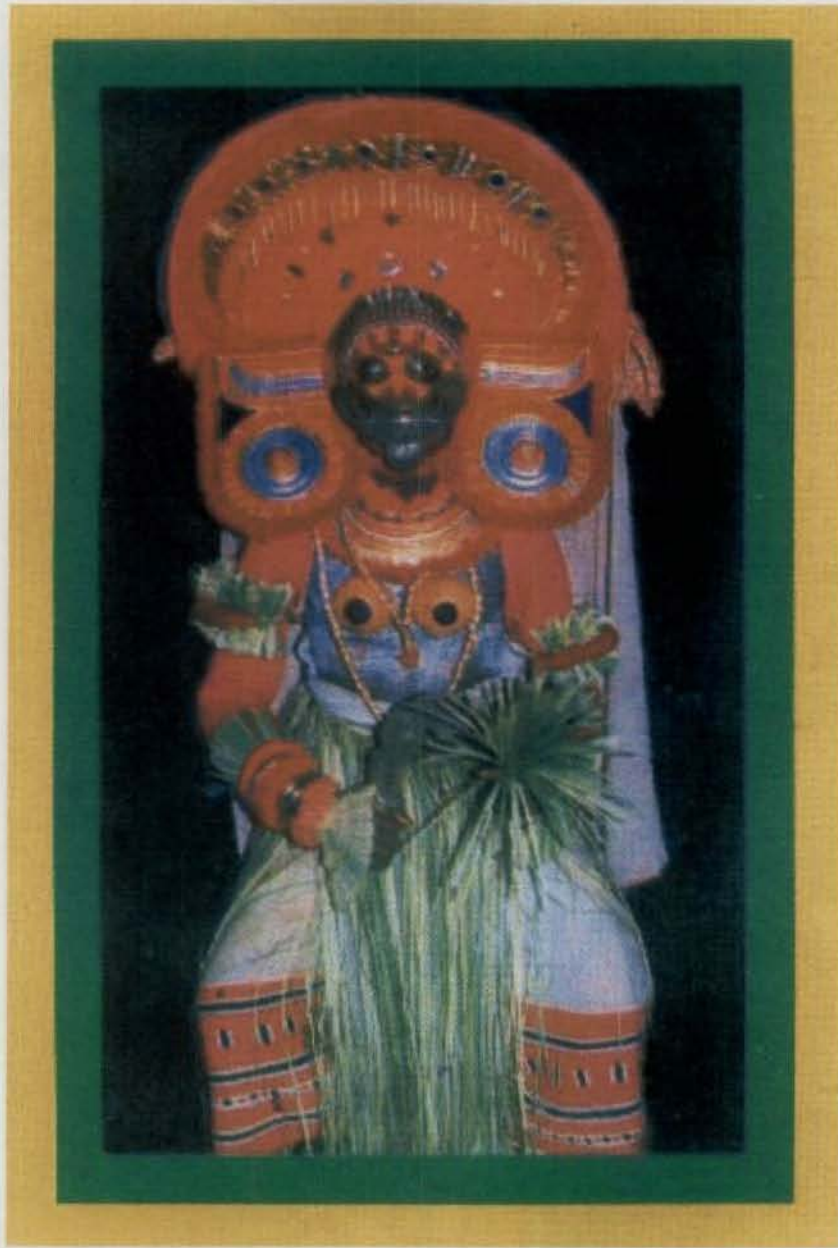


Plate-4. **Kurathi Theyyam**
The Goddess of Agriculture



Plate- 5. *Dhaanyaraadhana* or grain worship



Plate . G . **‘Vriksharadhana’**
or Tree worship in Theyyam.
The super natural believed to reside in the tree is conjured
by the performer



Plate-7. "**Chakkakothu**"
The offered jackfruits being cut open at *Kapattukavu*



Plate-8. '**Kaazcha Varavu**'
Agricultural products being taken in procession to *Kavu*

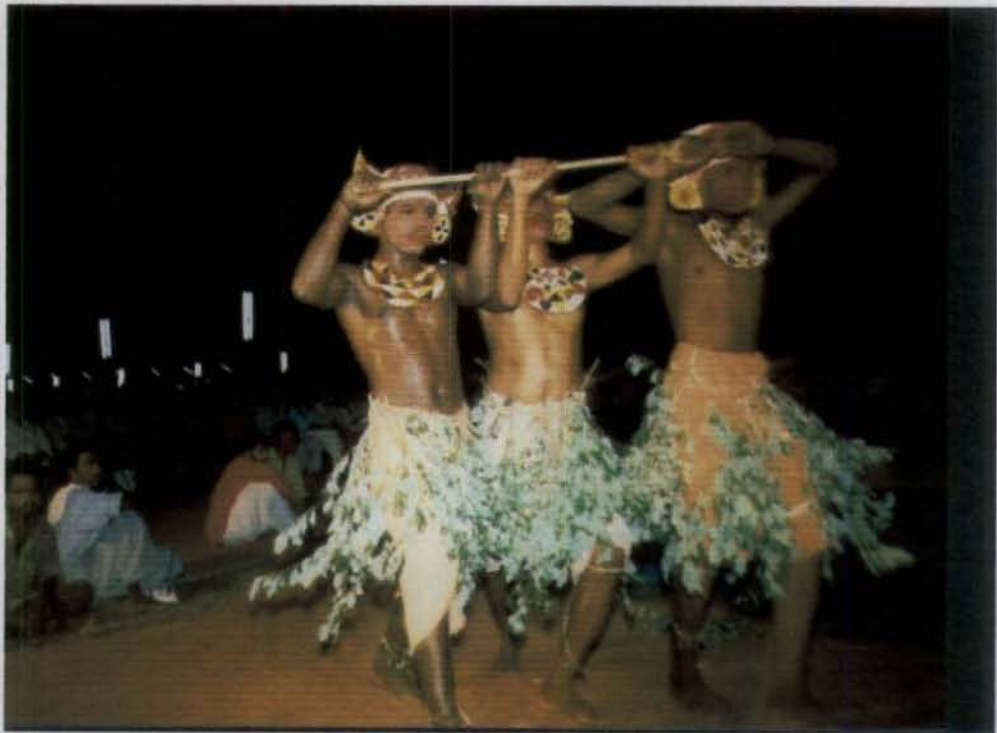


Plate-9. 'Chimmanakkali'

Summary

5. SUMMARY

Kerala state, with its highly diversified farming systems and cropping patterns, possesses a rural population with varied cultural settings and value systems. The farming practices in each locality have deep rooted influence by the traditions and beliefs of the community, simultaneously maintaining a reverse influence as well. The folklores and indigenous knowledge have always been observed to be the accumulations of the ancestral wisdom carried over through generations. In the same way, many of the folk art forms are also embedded in the traditional wisdom with sufficient rationale, generally related to the rural life activity, particularly the farming sector.

Though several studies have been conducted on the historical or cultural dimensions of folklore, no investigation has been carried out so far in Kerala state, which is the land of diversities, on the influence of or the inter-relationship of the agrarian systems and the popular folk art forms and rituals. Having indications of such a mutual influence, it was thought to be worthwhile to investigate on and identify the rationale, if any, for furtherance of studies.

The research project entitled ‘Influence of farming culture on the Folk arts and Rituals of North Malabar Region of Kerala State’ was carried out with the following specific objectives:

1. To study the influence of farming culture on folk arts and rituals of North Malabar region of Kerala.
2. To identify the specific elements in folk arts and rituals as influenced by the various farming practices.
3. To assess the scientific rationale of the folklore elements in the context of farming culture.
4. To analyze the locational and contextual differences in folklore elements as influenced by farming systems and practices.

Since the study had to depend on participatory appraisals, oral history narrations, expert ratings and observations, an Exploratory Research Design was resorted to, with much scope of flexibility in the data collection process. A wide canvas of respondent categories including members of the families which are traditionally connected to the performance of the selected folk arts and rituals, social workers of the region, members of the cultural and voluntary organizations connected to the performance of selected art forms and rituals, researchers belonging to different organizations who conduct investigations on folklore and

finally professionals and experts in agriculture and allied sectors was utilized for the generation of qualitative data needed for the study.

The erstwhile *Kolathunadu* comprising of Kozhikode, Kannur and Kasaragod districts was selected as the locale of study, since this region is considered to be a repository of folk art forms and rituals, as indicated by available literature. The folk art forms and rituals such as *Theyyam*, *Chimmaanakkali*, *Pathaamudayam* and *Kothaammoori*, which are considered to have more links with farming seasons, were subjected for analysis in this study.

The necessary information could be gathered by overnight observations and discussions with the performers as well as other respondents. Audio and video recordings, photographic documentations as well as detailed and open-ended data collection were done to fulfill the purpose of the study.

The study could give very meaningful revelations with regard to the linkages between popular folk art forms and rituals with farming practices prevailing in the locality. In the case of *Theyyam*, it was clearly observed that the art form was an outcome of the feudal agrarian relations that prevailed in the society during the past. This art form, generally performed by the lower communities, reinforced the feudal

agrarian relations, wherein the lower class agricultural labourers were made to believe that they should work hard and sincerely on the land for the benefit of the landlords.

This apart, the myth behind certain *Theyyams* like *Kurathi Theyyam*, *Nellukuthippothe*, etc. reveals strong footing in agriculture. *Kurathi* is said to be the Goddess of agriculture, the weapons used by the *Theyyam* being sickle and *muram*. This is probably an attempt made by the lower class performers to attribute an elevated status to the agricultural labour, attaching an element of divinity to it.

Reinforcing the assumption of strong linkages between the folk art forms and farming culture of the locality, it could be observed that different forms of *Theyyam* were using various agricultural produce for their rituals. Close observations revealed several examples of significant roles of agricultural products like vegetables and fruits or even the food grains in the performance of their rituals. The ritual '*Kaazhcha Varavu*' is a large procession by the devotees, carrying various agricultural produce, which becomes their offering to God at the time of the event. Certain *Theyyam* performances could be identified, meant for the prosperity of livestock or even the farm in general.

Chimmaanakkali is another folk art, the myth of which reflects its strong bond with 'Ponamkrishi' or the primitive shift cultivation in the forest area. It also reflects the feudal agrarian relations depicting three classes of people, viz; the landlord, trader/middlemen and the labourers. The steps in shift cultivation indicating the environmental reactions are also found to have an important place in the song of this folk art.

Pathaamudayam is a ritual with strong foundations in agricultural practices. The ethnometeorological calendar is the basis for the observance of *Pathaamudayam* twice a year. The ethnometeorological calendar is connected to the assumptions on the movements of Earth in relation to Sun. The basic assumption on the "movement of Sun" (as they say) influencing the crop stand is taken into consideration for the ritual. The farming operations from sowing of the seed till harvest are found to be scheduled based on this ethnometeorological calendar.

Kothaammoori is still another ritual which is intended for the prosperity of the livestock. Certain rituals are based on the beliefs about the relationship between the fertility of crops and human beings. Rituals and related taboos play a great role in maintaining the rich forest wealth, attributing sacred status to several trees, especially latex bearing ones.

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Annexure- 1

“ചന്ദനം ചാർത്തി നടപ്പുണ്ട് ചൊവ്വറ്”
ചേരമണിഞ്ഞെ നടപ്പുണ്ട് നാകൾ
വെറ്റില തിന്ന് നടപ്പുണ്ട് ചൊവ്വറ്
അല്ലിക്ക തിന്ന് നടപ്പുണ്ട് നാകൾ
ആനപ്പുറത്തറി ചൊവ്വറ് വരമ്പം
പോത്തിൻ പുറത്തറി നാകൾ വരുവൻ” -----

-----“നാകളെകുപ്പയിൽ നട്ടൊരുവാഴ-
-പ്പഴമല്ലെ നീകളെ തേവന പൂജ” -----
-----” നാകളെക്കൊത്തുയാലുമൊന്നലെ ചോര
നീകളെക്കൊത്തുയാലുമൊന്നലെ ചോര
അവിടേക്ക നാകളും നീകളുമൊക്കെ
പിന്നെന്തിനി ചൊവ്വറ് കലം പിശകിന്”

Annexure II

Eg.- “കെപ്പക്ക കണ്ടിനാളേ കുറത്തി
കൈപ്പ മുതിഞ്ഞിനാളേ കുറത്തി
കക്കിരി കണ്ടിനാളേ കുറത്തി
കുറത്തിട്ടു കണ്ടിനാളേ കുറത്തി
വെള്ളരി കണ്ടിനാളേ കുറത്തി
വെട്ടുകൈച്ചിരിച്ചുകൊണ്ടാടിനാളേ കുറത്തി “ -----

-----“കൊറത്തു്യാളേ കൊറത്തു്യാളേ
ഭൂമ്യന്ത്ര പൊലിയുന്നോളേ
വെള്ളരിപ്പന്തലൊടുവാ കുറത്തി
വെട്ടുകൈച്ചിരിച്ചവളാ കുറത്തി
കക്കിരിപ്പന്തലൊടുവാ കുറത്തി
കുറക്കച്ചിരിച്ചവളാ കുറത്തി“

Annexure- III.

കവിതയ്ക്കു ഞാനുമാ കടിയിരുന്നാലോ
കറകൻ പൂവുമാ കിളിക്കയ്യില്ലെ താൻ!
മലർന്നു താനിവിടെ കടിയിരുന്നാലോ
മുറികൂടാതെയോ വിരിവു വിളവുണ്ടാകും!

മുറികൂടാതെയോ വിരിവു വിളവുണ്ടായാൽ
എളിവർക്കേ താനപ്പൊരിയവരില്ലെ താൻ!
ഓരോയി താനിവിടെ കടിയിരുന്നാലോ
തൈവണ്ണമോ വിരിവു വിളവുണ്ടാകും!

“വടക്കു കാലുമായ് അങ്ങനെ തെക്കു തലയുമായ്.....
.....ശ്രീ മലനാട്ടുകൽ നീലയറച്ചേതാൻ ”

Annexure IV

അന്നേരമോ കല്പിച്ചു ഏകാതിരി തമ്പുരാൻ
ന്നെങ്ങോ കേൾക്കണം നിങ്ങളോടൊപ്പം
എന്നിങ്ങ് പതിന്നെട്ട് തൊട്ടിയല്ലേ ഉമ്പുമുണ്ടിവിടെ
കൊത്തിവയക്കി നിങ്ങളുടേതേ വേണം.....

—ഊമ്പനം മുത്തമുണ്ട് വള്ളിയൊക്കെ ഉണ്ടെന്ന്
—തീ വെക്കുവാനായല്ലോ കേരം പിറന്നതാണ്—

—ഓര് കാട്ടി കറുത്തുണ്ട് ഒക്കെ കഴിച്ചുവല്ലോ
—കുക്കോസിന്ദപത്തിരിങ്ങം തീയതിക്ക്

ഞങ്ങളുമുനത്തിനൊക്കെ തീയും കൊടുക്കുവല്ലോ

—തീയടുത്തുവല്ലെ ഓര് വിറകെടുത്തു വല്ലെ ഓര്

ഊമ്പനത്തിനൊന്നല്ലെ തീ കൊടുപ്പാൻനിന്നുവല്ലോ

ഇവമാസം പത്തും പിറന്നോരു നേരത്ത്

കത്തിയുരായല്ലെ പുനത്തിലും കേറുന്നതാ
ഊമ്പനത്തിൽ വന്നുവല്ലെ തോലും കളയെടുത്തു—

—ചിങ്ങവും കന്നിയും തിങ്ങും പിറന്നുവല്ലോ

ചോളവുംനെല്ലൊക്കെ നന്നായി നന്നായി വന്നുവല്ലെ
ക്കൈവിമന്തെ വിളഞ്ഞെ നിക്കണ്

അന്നേരമോ കല്പിച്ചു ഏകാതിരി തമ്പുരാൻ

ചോളത്തിനും നല്ലെ തുവരക്ക് ഒക്കെയും

കാലിന്ദം കാവലായി നിങ്ങളുടേ വേണമല്ലോ

കുക്കോസിന്ദപത്തിരിങ്ങംതീയതിക്ക്

ഞങ്ങളുമുനത്തിനൊക്കെ തീയും കൊടുക്കുവല്ലോ

കാട്ടിലും പുനത്തിലും കല്ലുടയിലും

ആരാനടുക്കെങ്കിലു നിങ്ങളു നീങ്ങിയങ്ങു നിന്നോളേ

മണ്ണിലും പുറ്റിലും സർപ്പങ്ങളുക്കെങ്കിൽ

പുറ്റും നാഗവും നീങ്ങിയങ്ങു നിന്നോളേ

കല്ലെത്തുവതില്ലു കണ്ടങ്ങുറിയുവില്ലു

നീനും ഞങ്ങളു കണ്ടില്ലു നോക്കിയങ്ങുറിയുവാൻ

എന്നു പറഞ്ഞവർ കൈകുപ്പിയൊഴുതുവല്ലെ

ഓര് ഊമ്പനത്തിനൊന്നല്ലെ തീകൊടുപ്പാൻ നിന്നുവല്ലോ

Annexure-V

മേല് ലോകത്തു്നും പോന്നു ഭൂമിലോകത്തിലുകിഴിഞ്ഞു്
 ഭൂമിയിലോട്ടുങ്ങിഴിവതിനായി തേരം തട്ടു്ചലേ താനു്
 കാവേരിതീർത്ഥവുമാടി പിന്നെ കനകാതീർത്ഥങ്ങളാടി
 കനകാതീർത്ഥങ്ങളാടി അവൾ പോരുന്നവളല്ലെ ഗോദാവരി
 പുഞ്ചയിൽ പൂക്കുവതുവോ, നല്ല പുഞ്ചക്കതിരുകുടിച്ച്
 പുഞ്ചക്കതിരുകുടിക്കുന്ന നേരത്തു് വയലേരി രാമൻ കണ്ടു
 വയലേരി രാമൻ കണ്ടു, ചാട്ടു വലിച്ചവർ തല്ലി
 ചാട്ടു വലിച്ചവർ തല്ലുന്ന നേരത്തു് വാല് തെറ്റുത്തവൾ പാഞ്ഞു
 വാല് തെറ്റുത്തവൾ പായുന്ന നേരത്തു് വരമ്പു് തടഞ്ഞവൾ വീണു
 വരമ്പു് തടഞ്ഞവൾ വീഴുന്ന നേരത്തു് ആകാശം നോക്കിക്കരഞ്ഞു
 ആകാശം നോക്കിക്കരയുന്ന നേരത്തു് ഭൂമിയിൽ കണ്ണുനീർ വീണു
 ഭൂമിയിൽ കണ്ണുനീർ വീണു, അതു് പാൽക്കടലിൽ പോയിപുകുതു്

.....എന്നിട്ടും കേട്ടില്ല പശു പിന്നെ കാളയാർ ഇട്ടത്തു് ഇടി

പതിനെട്ടു് വിത്തു്കൾ പാടിപ്പൊലിക്കാം മേല് ലോകത്തു്നുകിഴിഞ്ഞു
 ഭൂമിയിലോട്ടുല കിഴിവതിനായി തേരത്തട്ടു്ചലേ താനു്
 എന്തെല്ലാം വിത്തു് പൊലികാ, കനകാ വിത്തു് പൊലിക!
 കനകാ വിത്തു് പൊലിക, നല്ല ചിറ്റേനി വിത്തു് പൊലിക!

ചിറ്റേനി വിത്തു് പൊലിക, പിന്നെ ഓഗചിറ്റേനി പൊലിക!
 ഓഗചിറ്റേനി പൊലിക, നല്ല കഴുങ്ങു് പൂത്താട പൊലിക!
 കഴുങ്ങു് പൂത്താട പൊലിക, മുണ്ടോൻ വിത്തു് പൊലിക!
 മുണ്ടോൻ വിത്തു് പൊലിക, മുണ്ടകൻ തന്നപ്പൊലിക!
 വേലിവിൽ നോക്കി പൊലിക, കഴക്കച്ചാട പൊലിക!

പതിനെട്ടു് വിത്തു് പാടിപ്പൊലിച്ചു് മേല് ലോകത്തു്നുകിഴിഞ്ഞു്

കോതാവരിപ്പശു വാണിടമെല്ലാം സാനന്ദരവാടം വർദ്ദിച്ചിരിക്കാം
 കോതാവരിപ്പശു വാണിടമെല്ലാം കന്നോട് കാലികൾ വർദ്ദിച്ചിരിക്കാം
 കോതാവരിപ്പശു വാണിടമെല്ലാം കഞ്ഞിങ്ങൾ കട്ടികൾ വർദ്ദിച്ചിരിക്കാം

**INFLUENCE OF FARMING CULTURE ON
THE FOLK ARTS AND RITUALS
OF NORTH MALABAR REGION OF KERALA STATE**

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ABSTRACT OF THESIS

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ABSTRACT

The research project entitled “ Influence of Farming Culture on the Folk arts and Rituals of North Malabar region of Kerala state” had the following as its objectives, viz; to study the overall influence of farming culture on folk arts and rituals, to identify the specific elements as influenced by farming culture, to assess their scientific rationale and to analyze the locational and contextual differences in folklore elements, if any. The study was conducted in the apt location for the purpose, ‘*Kolathunadu*’ , which is hailed to be the repository of folk art forms and rituals in the available literature.

The study followed an exploratory research design with much scope of flexibility in the data collection process, since the methods involved were participatory appraisals, oral history narrations, expert opinions, observations, etc. The qualitative data gathered through these methods were again subjected to qualitative analysis and the findings were put to test their rationality by experts in the fields of folklore, agriculture and allied sectors. The conclusion thus reached, or the observations made rather, throw light upon the strong bonds between farming culture and the folk arts and rituals. They further pave way for furtherance of the research in future by probing deeper into several aspects left untouched to this date.

The study reveals that most folk art forms like *Theyyam*, *Chimmaankkali* etc. have evidently been originated from an ancient agrarian society, which had a deep rooted stand in farming culture. The lyrics of their songs, the content of their myth, the season of the performance – all show the strong bond with farming culture. To the negative side, folk arts and rituals had once upon a time catered to protect the feudal agrarian relations. But still, another plus point of these rituals in connection with farming culture is that they prompt the public to conserve the ecosystems may be through superstitions, taboos, etc. By hook or crook, they promote eco-friendly farming, supplementing our endeavor towards a “Greener Kerala”.

