

The Advent of Christianity in Kerala with reference to Koratty

Project submitted to the University Of Calicut in partial fulfillment of

the requirements for the degree of

Bachelor of Arts

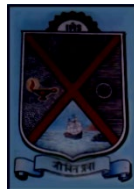
In

English and History

by

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Declaration

I, Ashin Joy, hereby declare that this project entitled **The Advent of Christianity in Kerala with reference to Koratty** submitted to the University of Calicut in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Bachelor of Arts in English and History, is a bonafide research work done by me under the supervision and guidance of Dr. George Alex, Coordinator, Department of English and History, Christ College (Autonomous), Irinjalakuda.

Irinjalakuda

March 2021

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Certificate

This is to certify that this project entitled **The Advent of Christianity in Kerala with reference to Koratty** is a record of research work carried out by Mr. Ashin Joy under my supervision and guidance in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Bachelor of Arts in English Language and Literature submitted to the University of Calicut.

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Acknowledgement

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INTRODUCTION

What is local history?

History is the study of change over time, and it covers all aspects of human society. Political, social, economic, scientific, technological, medical, cultural, intellectual, religious and military developments are all part of history. History is of tremendous value and importance to all of us everywhere. History isn't just a collection of meaningless dates on a calendar, and dusty old artifacts in cases. It produces a great deal of value and it does indeed serve both a useful and a practical purpose.

Local history is an attempt to reconstruct the history of a geographically local place, to understand the way people lived and how it connects to the community's present and future.

Local history reflects the reality that our lives are shaped by, the particular places and how our physical place in the world is a major determinant to how our lives are lived. Local history is the study of the everyday struggles and triumphs of the ordinary people. The study of local topics allows for the in-depth research to connect the past with the present, which is done more simply and with more meaning than studying the national, faceless masses. It allows for greater depth in studying the history of our communities and the relations to the people within them.

Studying local history is of great importance especially for the younger generations. This is because, history is typically taught with a focus on national and international events, but always ignores the places a student be it any ages, engage with most, which is their neighborhoods.

Involving students in local history helps them to learn to analyze their place in the larger events. By understanding their part in history, people become directly involved in their studies of the

past. By focusing on local history, students will learn to question history as it has been taught and history as it is being made around them.

History of formation of Kerala

Before formation of Kerala, it was part of two kingdoms, Travancore and Cochin. The two kingdoms of Travancore and Cochin joined the Union of India after independence in Nineteen Forty Seven. On the First of July Nineteen Forty Nine, the two states were merged to form Travancore-Cochin. On the First of January Nineteen Fifty, Travancore-Cochin was recognized as a state. The Madras Presidency was reorganized to form Madras State in Nineteen Forty Seven. On the First November Nineteen Fifty Six, the state of Kerala was formed by the States Reorganisation Act merging the Malabar district, Travancore-Cochin, and the taluk of Kasargod, South Kanara. In Nineteen Fifty Seven, elections for the new Kerala Legislative Assembly were held, and a reformist, Communist-led government came to power, under E. M. S. Namboodiripad.

This works discusses about the history of Koratty Muthy of the famous Christian pilgrimage centre in Kerala in the Thrissur district, the Koratty Church. A church which is an epitome of an ancient era, dating back to the fourteenth century, that was established on the Eighth of September, Eighteen thirty one, with an annual festival, where people from every caste and creed from Koratty and its nearby places join together. The flow of pilgrims from different parts of India is also an unforgettable experience.

Location and Landmark

Koratty, a small village in the Thrissur district, is famous for its pilgrimage centre, St. Mary's

Forane Church. The village belongs to the Chalakudy taluk in Thrissur, Kerala, India. The location of the church is fifteen kilometers north of Cochin International Airport, five kilometers north of Angamaly Junction, three kilometers south of Divine Retreat Centre, Muringoor. One hundred meters west of National Highway forty seven, Koratty Junction. Hailing from South, after entering Thrissur District have to travel further one and a half kilometers and take the road that goes left towards pulikakkadavu to reach Marian Pilgrim Centre. Hailing from North have to travel three kilometers south of Muringoor Divine Retreat Centre and take the road that goes right before Vaigai Processors (Madura Coats) which shall lead to the Marian Pilgrim Centre.

Sources

The work is based on both the primary and secondary sources of data. Online resources are mainly used to gather the necessary information regarding the topic. Interviews from the families whose ancestors have been involved with the history had also been conducted. Other secondary sources were also used to find valid proofs regarding the information obtained.

Chapterisation

The work is divided into the introduction, three main chapters and the conclusion. The topic is introduced in the introduction, the first chapter discusses about the rise of Christianity in Kerala, the second chapter deals with Koratty Muthy, the history of the church and other events and the final chapter talks about the buildings associated to the church. The division finally ends with the conclusion.

CHAPTER ONE

Advent of Christianity in Kerala

Historians still has major disputes regarding the actual way of how Christianity spread in Kerala. There are two possible ways through which Christianity spread into Kerala. The first by trade and the second by St. Thomas the apostle.

Trade and Religion

Kerala had foreign trade links even before the age of Christ. Prominent among the traders were Jews, Arabs, Babylonians, Assyrians, Phoenicians, Greeks, Chinese, and Romans. Phoenicians had reached the coast of Kerala in BCE 2000¹. Since then, Arabs, Persians, and Egyptians started concentrating on the ports in Kerala for trade. Yachts used to reach Kerala from various destinations in forty days. Arabs' monopoly over the trade came to an end with Hippalus, a Greek mariner, detecting the course of the south-western wind on a sea route, which was kept a secret by the Arabs. However, until the arrival of Vasco da Gama, Arab traders maintained their supremacy in the trade with Kerala. It was the Greeks and Romans who popularized the use of pepper in Europe. They used pepper for preserving food and also as a medicine. Though in Kerala, it was a crop used only for medicinal purposes, it had a much more important place in Europe. People of Europe needed the help of pepper to survive the winter. It was used with salt for preserving meat for consumption during the four winter months. Pepper trade was almost as important as gold trade. It is no exaggeration to say that Europeans started colonization for procuring pepper from Kerala. Pepper was mainly exported from Muziris.

¹ Ramakrishnan, S., The History and Culture of the Indian People, Vol. II,p.611

Migration of Jews

Many Jewish colonies existed in the precincts of the present Kodungalloor during those days. Later the Jews got converted to Christianity. Most of the trade relations were established with those who embraced Christianity. The religious ties between West Asia and South India gave more energy to the trade. Documents² say that during the first century there was a church of Augustus in Muziris and about a thousand Roman soldiers were posted there for the protection of trade. This was at a time when Christianity was gaining ground in the State. Trade groups were constituted by merchants, missionaries, and soldiers. Religion too was spread along with the trade. It is widely believed that when Romans destroyed the Jerusalem Church in CE Sixty Eight, a band of Jews migrated to Kerala. Certain historic documents confirm the presence of Jews in Kerala even before that. Frankincense, cinnamon and other spices used as offerings in Jewish synagogues were produced in Kerala. The destruction of the Jerusalem Church and religious persecutions had prompted them to migrate to Kerala in large numbers. It must have been from Palestine that thousands of Jews migrated to Kerala, set up markets, and started living here. The first propagation of Christianity might have taken place among them.

Arrival of St. Thomas

The original Christian tradition, followed by the Syrian Christians of Kerala, is described as the path of St. Thomas. In order to establish their distinct identity, they reiterated that the tradition of St. Thomas, which they followed, was different from that of St. Peter, which was introduced by the Portuguese at the Synod of Diamper in Fifteen Ninety Nine, by which most of the Christians of Kerala were brought under Rome. The Syrian Christians of Kerala were known by that name

² Ramakrishnan, S., The History and Culture of the Indian People, Vol. II, p.679

because Syriac was the language they used for their holy rites. They were also called Nasrani Mappilahs. The word 'Mappilah' was used only for those from abroad. Jews were known as Mappilah Jews. In North Malabar, Muslims were also known as Mappilah Muslims. 'Nasrani' means those who follow Nazarene, a name of Christ who was born in Nazareth.

It is the churches established by St. Thomas which act as the affidavit for his gospel activities.

Places of worship during CE first century were not huge constructions. Churches were meant as meeting places for small communities. While huge palaces and temples existed under the kings in Tamil Nadu and Karnataka, it was not the case in Kerala. Due to the climatic conditions of the state constructions did not last long. Churches were identified by the cross installed in front of them. St. Thomas had built seven and about half of a church at his time in Kerala. Later they were famously known as Seven and a Half Churches³. The churches were built at, Kodungalloor, Kollam,

Niranam, Nilakkal, Kokkamangalam, Kottakkavu, Palayoor and Arappalikal.

St. Thomas during his stay at different parts of Kerala is said to have converted many into Christians and built up smaller shrines to pray to Jesus Christ. After his time many missionaries who followed the same goal about spreading Christianity also came around Kerala and were successful in their journeys.

The Arrival of the Portuguese

The Renaissance witnessed a spurt in sea journeys in Europe driven by a quest for knowledge, and new lands. Venice, Milan and Rome became rich cities following their spice trade with India. Most

³ A. E. Medylcott, India and the Apostle Thomas

of the huge churches in Rome were made with the wealth amassed by this trade. It was the competition with Venice, which was then, as the center of spice trade with India, the richest city in Europe, which prompted the Portuguese to discover a sea route to India. Portugal, the smallest

country in Europe, was trying to vie with Spain to conquer the world. The colonial rule of India began when Vasco da Gama, at the head of a Portuguese navy, set out to conquer the world, and arrived in Kappadu near Kozhikode in four ships with hundred and seventy people, in May, Fourteen Ninety Eight, having started his journey from Lisbon, the capital of Portugal in April, Fourteen Ninety Seven. Before the advent of da Gama, the ships of Bartolomeu Dias had circumnavigated the Cape of Good Hope in Fourteen Eighty Eight , but could not reach India. The first sea journey of da Gama changed the course of world history. The Portuguese established their sway over the waters of India, Persia, and South China and set the course for colonization.

When the Portuguese reached India, the control of the spice trade was in the hands of the Nasranis. As many as thirty thousand Christian families lived in twenty cities in Kerala during those days, as per records. The Portuguese wanted to expand their trade base among them using religion. Portuguese trade was managed by the official navy of the King of Portugal. Their first mission was to break the Arab's trade monopoly in the Western Coast. As many as seventy five Portuguese, including five priests, were killed in the first attack under Cabral in Fifteen Hundred. Da Gama wreaked vengeance on his second visit in Fifteen Thousand and Two. The Portuguese were able to make the Arabs flee from the Arabian Sea and end the monopoly of the king too.

Missionary Role

During the first half of the sixteenth century itself, various Portuguese missionaries reached Kerala and worked actively among the St. Thomas Christians. They did not have even a faint knowledge of Malayalam or Syriac and hence could not understand the difference between rituals and

ideology. The Jesuits, on the other hand, took an effort to learn Malayalam and Syriac. The Portuguese king gave maximum support to the Jesuits for spreading religion. St. Francis Xavier, a Jesuit, reached India in CE Fifteen Forty Two. His followers spread missionary activities from

Mozambique to Japan. The Society of Jesus was founded by Ignatius Loyola in CE Fifteen Thirty Four. Peter Faber and Francis Xavier were among the pioneers of this movement. Pope Paul III gave recognition to the movement in Fifteen Thousand and Forty. The Portugal King, who got permission for missionary activities in India through Padroado, designated the Society of Jesus for the purpose. They had missions in different parts of the world.

Synod of Diamper

The Greek word Synod means a conference, a group or a congregation of religious leaders for discussing general issues concerning the church. Presently the meaning of Synod is a gathering of Bishops only. The Synod held at the Church named after all the Saints, at Udayamperoor, in Fifteen thousand Ninety Nine, is a landmark in the history of the Christian Churches in India.

After the death of Mar Abraham, the last Metropolitan appointed by the Chaldean Patriarch, in Fifteen thousand Ninety Seven, Archdeacon Geevargese took over the reins of the Angamaly Arch Diocese as per its tradition. Archbishop Menezes, started work for merging Angamaly Diocese with the Goa Diocese within the next two years.

As per the preference of the Archdeacon, it was decided to conduct the Synod at Angamaly first. But Archbishop Menezes opposed it, as there was little support for him at Angamaly. Menezes selected Udayamperoor where he would have the support of the local rulers, the ruler of Kochi, and of the Portuguese soldiers garrisoned in Kochi. On the other hand at Angamaly, he might have to deal with the resistance of the Christian soldiers and also of the feudal lords of Angamaly who were not favorably disposed to the Portuguese. Menezes issued a circular from Chendamangalam

in May Fifteen thousand Ninety Nine about holding the Synod.

All the things related to faith, including rites such as baptism, sthairyalepanam, the Holy

Communion, thaksa, confession, last rites etc. were discussed at the Synod. The proposal to change the language of Chaldean and Canonical prayers from Syriac to Latin, on the pretext that they contained many blunders, had to be given up due to the resistance of the clergy. However it was resolved to rectify the errors.

The Synod also discussed transfer of property, untouchability, right to inheritance, ordination, marriage, traditions, style of dressing, celebration of Onam and other Hindu festivals, communal distinctions, and such others and passed twenty four decrees dealing with social life.

Latinization of the Churches

Moves were afoot for the spiritual renaissance of the St. Thomas Christians and also to take over their spiritual leadership. The first move was the introduction of Latin rites. But the bid to force them to give up Syriac did not work. In CE Sixteen Hundred and One, Goa received a Papal Bull from Pope Clement VIII appointing Francis Ross as the Archbishop of Angamaly. This again, was a step aimed at bringing St. Thomas Christians under the Latin regime. Once the Portuguese gained control over the Persian Gulf, they were able to block the journey of Arab traders as well as of the Bishops from Mesopotamia. The Christians in Kerala were forced to break their ties with Persia. Bishops had to come to Kerala in disguise. Those who came under the protection of Rome were also imprisoned by the Portuguese. At the same time, the Franciscan Churches came up in Kochi and Vypin Fort with Kodungalloor as the mission centre. Franciscans were much ahead of others in missionary activities. Dominicans and Jesuits also functioned in Kochi and Kollam under the protection of the Portuguese. The Portuguese were also encouraged to marry Kerala women.

Portuguese family names became popular in the coastal areas and Kochi. Their children were known as Eurasians, Topasis and Anglo Indians. But they could not influence most majority of the St. Thomas Nasranis.

Koonan Cross Oath

Along with the Portuguese, Augustinians, Franciscans, Jesuits, and Carmelites reached Kerala for missionary activities and converted many to Christianity. The Latin priests were unwilling to accept the St. Thomas Christians who followed the Syrian Rites. The Synod of Diamper was an attempt to bring them under the Pope. After the Synod, churches were reorganized in the Latin style and the service in churches was also changed to the Latin system. Francis Ross was succeeded by Stephen Britto and Francis Garsia. When Garsia was governing the Archdiocese, Syrian Rite changed to Latin Rite.

In protest against the domination of the Portuguese, the St. Thomas Christians tied a long rope on a 'standing cross' on the northern side of the Mattancherry Church on Friday, Third January Sixteen Fifty Three and took an oath, "as long as this cross exists, we will not submit to the priests of Samballoor." The Koonan Cross Oath which was a turning point in the case of the Christians, who held Angamaly as their headquarters, is considered to be a reaction to the Synod of Diamper. At a meeting held at Alangad on Twenty Second of May Sixteen Fifty Three, one faction swore that they would not accept Francis Garcia Metropolitan.

Thus St. Thomas Christians split into two groups. Subsequently, twelve priests met under the leadership of Anjilimoottil Itty Thoman Kathanar the same year and ordained Archdeacon Thoma as Metropolitan. His followers were known as Puthan kuttukar and others as Pazhaya kuttukar. Archdeacon Thoma who was known as Mar Thoma I, started communicating with the Jacobite Patriarch of Antioch and the Jacobite Church was established with Angamaly as its headquarters.

Developments with Christian Missionaries

Activities of the Christian Missions brought major progress in the cultural and political arena of the State. Their missionary activities could be classified as Catholic and Protestant with various sects and denominations under them. While the Catholic missionaries functioned under Rome, the Protestants had various groups with their own leaders and approaches to questions of faith. Jesuits focused on educational activities, Carmelites on spirituality and Capuchins on the service of the sick. The Protestant Mission that started functioning at Thanjavur in Tamil Nadu in Seventeen hundred and Six, conducted prayer meetings, Bible translation, moral education and publications with a special thrust on education. Protestant missionaries who arrived from Germany and Denmark, started work with Tharangambady on the Coromandel Coast as their base. Both Catholics and Protestants came forward to set up hospitals, schools, colleges, orphanages, and poor homes. The leadership emerged from priests and sisters. Though the seminaries and convents were founded for the advancement of those who embraced Christianity, it led to the overall development of the society. Reaching Christ through service of the humanity is the uniqueness of Christian perception. The teaching of Christ that the service to the afflicted would be considered as a service to Him, was the strength behind such activities. Mission centers came up all over India. Studies prove that it was Christianity that rescued the underdog from the clutches of the caste system

CHAPTER TWO

Town of Koratty and Koratty Muthy

Koratty Muthy is the locally known name of Mother Mary in Kerala, India. Here she is also known as 'Poovankuala Matha', 'Our Lady of Poovan Bananas'. Mother Mary, also known as 'St. Mary the Virgin', the 'Blessed Virgin Mary', 'Saint Mary', 'Mary Mother of Jesus'. 'Virgin Mary' is believed by many to be the greatest of all Christian saints. The Virgin Mother "was, after her Son, exalted by divine grace above all angels and men." Mary has been venerated since early Christianity, and is considered by millions to be the most meritorious saint of the religion. She is said to have miraculously appeared to believers many times over the centuries.

St. Mary's Koratty Church

The Church, was called so because of the miracles that occurred in the name of St. Mary. Many popular myths surround and is in support of tis miracle. The main one is the Poovankula Nercha, where a pilgrim from Meloor near Koratty was carrying a bunch of a special variety of plantain fruit, namely 'Poovan Bananas', as an offering to the Koratty Muthy. On the way, he had to pass through a paddy field where a rich landlord was supervising his laborers. On seeing the basket of bananas, he ordered the pilgrim to hand him two bananas. The pilgrim refused, explaining that it was an offering to be placed before the Koratty Muthy. This irked the landlord and he forcibly took out two bananas from the basket and ate them. As soon as he had eaten the bananas, the landlord started writhing with intense pain in his stomach. Medicines could not cure the pain and

the landlord realized that it had been some divine intervention; he immediately gave away half of the paddy field as an offering to the Koratty Muthy. The moment he did this, the pain subsided. Since that day, pilgrims come from all over Kerala with bananas as an offering to the Koratty Muthy.

Other Myths

Back in the 13th Century, while a coffin was being carried to Ambazhakkadu for burial in the Church there, because of the absence of Churches in that part, the pallbearers had to rest for a while at Koratty. Later it was seen that the coffin had got stuck hard to the ground, where it was laid during their stopover. The Elders then prayed for divine help and it is believed that they had a profound insight of divine intervention and they made a makeshift Church and Cemetery at that spot. The ruler of that place lavishly helped the dwindling Church by assigning tax-free lands. Later on there was considerable support from various quarters as well, in rebuilding the Church.

Another myth is regarding the Koratty Angadi Railway Station is also part of a Folklore. During one of the Annual feast and Festival of Koratty Muthy, a train which never had a stop in Koratty, came to a mysterious halt when it reached Koratty. Neither could any Mechanical snag be found out, not could anyone restart the train. The Passengers also joined in the Celebrations at the Koratty Muthy Church and gave offerings to the Muthy. Later when they came back into the train, the mechanical snag was rectified mysteriously and the train proceeded. Sensing divine intervention, the authorities immediately made arrangements for a Railway Station at Koratty and that is how the present day Koratty Angadi Railway Station came into existence.

The Madura coats factory is believed to have been constructed in the land which was initially assigned for an airport but because of regular interventions of someone like Madonna with a child Jesus in her hand, the work could never be done and the idea of the airport had been abandoned. In that place is the factory situated now situate in.

The Origin of the Church

The origin of the church is believed to have happened in the fourteenth century Kerala, where the land was divided into provinces by the king. Two of such neighboring landlords were Koratty Kaimal and Kodassery Kartha. Under the feudal lord, Koratty Kaimal, many Christians served in his army. Sri Kavalakkadan Kochu Vareed, the commander of Kaimal's army was one among the dead. At the time the Catholics had only one church in that area the Ambazhakkad Church.

Kaimal made all arrangements for the funeral of Sri. Kochu Vareed to be held in full military honors and religious rituals at the Ambazhakkad church. But his rival, Kodassery Kartha interfered and the burial could not take place there. The funeral procession had to return. In between, the pall-bearers had to rest and they placed the coffin down in Koratty. When they tried to lift the coffin again they found to their astonishment, that it was firmly stuck to the ground and they could not lift. They believed it was the wish of the God and Kochu Vareed. Knowing this, Koratty Kaimal made all arrangements for the burial there itself and gave command to build a church for the welfare of his Christian subjects.

It was the Thampuratty who constructed a church near the place where she buried their chief commander, and gave the land to the Christians as she understood that it was not easy to accomplish the spiritual need from Ambazhakkadu church for the Christians living in that region. Hence by her request, Kaimal gave away lots of land, free from tax, to sustain the rituals in the church. This church gradually was known as the Marian Pilgrim Centre of Koratty Muthy. And today at that spot of burial stands a granite stone cross of around twenty feet height as proof of the incident. The descendants of these two feudal lords live in Koratty even now, and this adds on to the authenticity of this belief about the origin of the Koratty Church.

Construction

Construction of the church was completed and consecrated on Eighth of September, Thirteen Eighty Two. The church constructed at the time of establishment of Koratty parish was small and with less decorative works.

Tipu Sultan's invasion⁴ had an adverse impact on the Syrian Malabar Nasrani community of the Malabar Coast. Many churches in Malabar and Cochin were damaged. Tipu's army set fire to the church at Palayoor and attacked the Ollur Church in Seventeen Ninety. Furthermore, the Arthat church and the Ambazhakkad seminary was also destroyed. Over the course of this invasion, many Syrian Malabar Nasrani were killed or forcibly converted to Islam. Most of the coconut, areca nut, pepper and cashew plantations held by the Syrian Malabar farmers were also indiscriminately destroyed by the invading army.

It is said that in, seventeen ninety, Koratty church was attacked during Tipu Sultan's military conquest in Travancore and Kochi Kingdoms. Tipu's army set fire to the church. The roof of the church had been burned down in the fire, but there was no damage to the walls. The same walls were maintained and the roof and altar were newly constructed. The same church which was demolished on Nineteen Eighty Five, was re-constructed on Eighth of September Nineteen Eighty Seven.

The church then had three parts, namely, the Madbaha, the Hykala, and the Nadapura. Besides, there was podium named 'Pushpam' inside the church, for delivering the speeches. The altar which is seen now is the same as the old one. 'Ratal' with branches of grapevine, the statue of the Sacred Heart with extol by angels underneath, is placed in the center.

⁴ <https://toshkhana.wordpress.com/2012/11/08/the-tiger-and-the-syrian-christians-tipu-sultans-padayottam-in-kerala/>

Above that, a full size picture of Virgin Mary accompanied by angels, and the statues of twelve apostles are seen. Beneath those statues, the statues of Sacred Heart, Koratty Muthy, St. Joseph, and St. Rosa are placed in the Roopa Koodu in two rows.

Feasts an Events

The feast of Koratty Muthy is a Local Festival for all the people irrespective of caste and creed. Every year Annual Feast is celebrated on Saturday and Sunday following Tenth of October, and Octave on next Saturday and Sunday. Earlier the feast of St. Rose was celebrated in the month of October. That is why the statue of St. Rose is also taken for procession.

It was after Nineteen Twenty One that The Metropolitan Mar Augustine Kandathil, gave permission to celebrate the Octave. The feast of Koratty Muthy is the festival of all people from every caste and creed from Koratty and its nearby places. The flow of pilgrims from different parts of India is an unforgettable experience for Koratty. The occasion filled with relatives and guests. The path is filled with street vendors. There is great pomp and fanfare everywhere in the month of October.

Thousands of people intercede before Koratty Muthy for getting children, normal delivery, healing, marriage, getting jobs, success in examination, peace in family life, recovery from debts, release from habitual sins etc. Newly married couples come near Muthy to pay offering and homage for their marital success. Dedication of children as 'adima' to Koratty Muthy is a specialty here. Those who are troubled with family problems offer 'Bhajana' and sits in front of Muthy in fasting, reciting rosary and prayers. Poovankula is the main offering here. 'Thulabharam' with 'Poovankula'⁵ is also done here.

⁵ <https://www.newindianexpress.com/cities/kochi/2011/oct/17/thousands-attend-koratty-muthys-feast-301116.html>

CHAPTER THREE

Missions and Institutions

Schools

Education in Kerala had been promoted during British rule in India as part of their policy and also by Christian missionaries who were willing to provide education to all sections of society and on to the strengthening of women, without any kind of discrimination. The contributions of Catholic priests and nuns has been crucial and has played a major role in the education of women and members of lower strata of society, resulting in the surpassing of many social hurdles. A significant figure in the Nineteenth century was Rev.Fr. Kuriakose Elias Chavara⁶ who started a system called "A school along with every church" to make education available for both poor and rich.

In Koratty too, the church played an important role in bringing up educational institutions that helped the children. First a lower primary school named "Church Lower Primary" School was established in Eighteen Ninety Four. Presently the school has a strength of about four hundred fifty students. About five decades later, the church also established an upper primary school in the name of Mar. Augustine Kandathil.

Archbishop Augustine Kandathil was the first and longest serving Metropolitan and Head of the Syro-Malabar Catholic Church, he was the first Indian to assume powers and reign as an Archbishop of the Catholic Church. He was born in Chempu, he was ordained Bishop and

⁶ <http://saintchavara.blogspot.com/2014/08/kuriakose-elias-chavara-ahead-of-his.html>

appointed Coadjutor to Bishop Aloysius Pazheparambil. He became Archbishop and Head of the Syro-Malabar Church when the Syro-Malabar Hierarchy was founded, he participated in the

canonisation of the Little Flower. He was the founder of the Congregation of the Sisters of Nazareth, he died in Ernakulam.

The Mar Augustine Memorial High School was established in the year Nineteen Forty Five. Presently this school has a strength of nearly a thousand eight hundred students with about sixty five members inclusive of teaching and non-teaching staff. About two hundred students have been attending the SSLC examination in which the school have been acquiring hundred percent passing outs for many years. The Higher Secondary School was established and inaugurated on

the Tenth of August, Two Thousand Ten. It presently has three streams, Bio-science, Computer-science and a Commerce stream. The school has a strength of three hundred sixty students and is one of the top school in the Thissur district.

The school is much praised for its achievements in field of arts and sports. The countless medals and trophies won by our students are proof for its success. The school is proud to have an activity functioning parents and alumni associations. They are the back bone of this institution .they are always in the forefront to support its every venture.

Hospital

The Devamatha hospital⁷ was established by the church in the year Nineteen Sixty Eight. The hospital, as the premier project of St. Mary's Forane Church, Koratty is owned and managed by the same. It aims at rendering quality medical service to all irrespective of caste, color, creed and religion. A fully qualified and experienced team of doctors, a battalion of committed religious

sisters, a group of trained nurses, and a group of committed staff together with an expert body of management makes the hospital unique in the field of health care. The qualitative and quantitative service at an affordable rate is made possible through the valuable help of innumerable generous people who collaborate with the charitable initiatives of the hospital.

Parishes

As a Forane church, it also has main three parishes and four chapels working for it.

St. Sebastian Church, Vazhichal

The beginning of this church was the donation of nine cents of land and construction of a building at own expense to the church by Mr. Kunjipaulo Kochupaulo, Mukrappilly, at Vazhichal, near the Railway station at Koratty, for teaching the children 'nilathezhuthu'. Later some more land was donated. Holy Mass was started here from Nineteen Sixty Four onwards. Then the parish purchased some more land adjacent to the chapel.

St. Joseph's Church, Attappadam

A chapel was constructed in Nineteen Sventy Eight in the two and a half cents of land which was

⁷ <https://devamathakoratty.wordpress.com/vision/>

donated by Mr. Ouseph Thoman Vadakkumpadan. With the help of Koratty parish, eighteen more cents of land was purchased in Nineteen Ninety One and about fifty cents of land was purchased in Nineteen Ninety Three. From Nineteen Ninety Two onwards Holy Mass on every Sunday.

Holy Family Church, Kattappuram

The foundation stone for Holy Family Church was laid on Eighth of September, Nineteen Ninety Seven in a land owned by the parish at a place called Kattappuram, which is one and a half kilometers west to the Koratty church. The construction of the church was completed within fifteen months as a result of the tireless efforts and cooperation of the parishioners and plentiful help of the Koratty church.

The four chapels at four extends of the Koartty town which are in the name of St. Antony at Kizhakke Angadi, Chapel of Koratty Muthi at Koratty Junction, The chapel of St. Little Theresa constructed in Nineteen Eighty Three at Padinjare Angadi, The chapel of St. Joseph constructed in 2006 at Cheruvaloor.

CONCLUSION

By understanding their part in history, people become directly involved in their studies of the past. By focusing on local history, students will learn to question history as it has been taught and history as it is being made around them. Hence studying local history is of great importance especially for the younger generations.

The work focuses on the history of the church of Koratty, near Chalakudy in Thrissur district of the state of Kerala. It also discussed about how the church came into existence and how it was named after Mary Mother of Jesus. Even though there are many myths surrounding the church about how it is blessed by Mary, there are evidences about the church being dated back to the Eighteen Hundreds.

Discussing about the summary of the work presented, we see that the church came into existence because of the feudal lord Koratty Kaimal and his commander Kavalakkadan Kochu Vareed who died in the battle against Kodassery Kartha. Here we also see that Kochu Vareed was a Christian and hence know that Christianity was spread into the local parts of Kerala, which was a result of St. Thomas and other Christian traders who entered the Malabar coasts. After Kochu Vareed had died, Kaimal wanted to bury his body with full military honors and with the correct Christian rituals, but the nearest church was at Ambazhakkad which was under Kodassery Kartha. As of not getting permission from him for the burial, Kaimal granted the Christians tax free land for a church at Koratty.

There is also proof that the church was established on Eighth of September, Thirteen Eighty Two. But after Synod of Diampher, when the influence of Portuguese was enforced on the Marthoma Christians, their influence also appeared in the construction of the churches. As a part

of church renovation, a church was built with high walls, wide doors and with high gothic style frontage.

In the Seventeen Hundreds, Tipu Sultan of Mysore attacked the Marthoma Christians who were killed or forcibly converted to other religions. The Koratty church too was a part that tragedy but only the roof was burned down. The same walls were maintained and the roof and altar were newly constructed. The same church which was demolished on Nineteen Eighty Five, was re-constructed on Eighth of September Nineteen Eighty Seven. The church then had three parts, namely, the Madbaha, the Hykala, and the Nadapura. The same building is still maintained with extreme glory, even today.

The feast of Koratty Muthy is a Local Festival for all the people irrespective of caste and creed. Every year Annual Feast is celebrated on Saturday and Sunday following Tenth of October, and Octave on next Saturday and Sunday. The feast of Koratty Muthy is the festival of all people from every caste and creed from Koratty and its nearby places. The flow of pilgrims from different parts of India is an unforgettable experience for Koratty. The occasion filled with relatives and guests. The path is filled with street vendors. There is great pomp and fanfare everywhere in the month of October. Those who are troubled with family problems offer 'Bhajana' and sits in front of Muthy in fasting, reciting rosary and prayers. Poovankula is the main offering here. 'Thulabharam' with 'Poovan Kula' is also done here.

The contributions of Catholic priests and nuns has been crucial and has played a major role in the education of women and members of lower strata of society, resulting in the surpassing of many social hurdles. A significant figure in the 19th century was Rev.Fr. Kuriakose Elias Chavara who started a system called "A school along with every church" to make education available for both poor and rich. This made the church think of the idea of starting a school for educating the

children of the localities. The church started with a lowery primary school in Eighteen Ninety Four. Then the upper primary section was added after about five decades In Nineteen Forty Five the school started its high school section and the higher secondary section was started in Two Thousand Ten. The school presently is one of the best school in the whole of Thrissur district.

The church also built a hospital in the aid of the locals in Nineteen Sixty Eight named Deva Matha hospital. It aims at rendering quality medical service to all irrespective of caste, color, creed and religion. . The qualitative and quantitative service at an affordable rate is made possible through the valuable help of innumerable generous people who collaborate with the charitable initiatives of the hospital.

The church being a Forane church, has others churches under its control. The main three parishes are, St. Sebastian Church at Vazhichal, St. Joseph's Church at Attappadam, and Holy Family Church at Kattappuram. The church also has four chapels at four extends on of the Koratty town.

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