

**Religion, Society and Economy: The
Koodalmanikyam Temple**

**Project submitted to the University of Calicut
in partial fulfilment for the award of the degree
of**

Bachelor of Arts in English & History

By

Ashiq K Anil

Reg. No. CCASADER20



Department of English & History

Christ College (Autonomous)

Irinjalakuda

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Certificate

This is to certify that the project entitled **Religion, Social and Economy: The Koodalmanikyam Temple** is a bonafide research work carried out by Mr. **Ashiq K Anil** under my supervision and guidance in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of **Bachelor of Arts in English & History** submitted to the University of Calicut.

Dr. George Alex

Coordinator

Department of English &History

Christ College (Autonomous)

Irinjalakuda

Sagive Varghese

Assistant Professor &

Supervising Teacher

Department of English &History

Christ College (Autonomous)

Irinjalakuda

Place: Irinjalakuda

April 9 2021

Declaration

I, Ashiq K Anil, hereby declare that the project entitled **Religion, Social and Economy: The Koodalmanikyam Temple**, submitted to the University of Calicut in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the **Degree of Bachelor of Arts in English & History**, is a bonafide record of original research work carried out by me under the supervision and guidance of Dr. George Alex, Coordinator, Department of B.A. English & History (Double Main) Christ College (Autonomous), Irinjalakuda.

Ashiq K Anil

Reg.No. CCASADER20

Department of English & History

Christ College (Autonomous)

Irinjalakuda - 680125

Place: Irinjalakuda

April 9 2021

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Introduction

Local history is the study of regions in the past which concerns villages or few villages or a geographical area. It incorporates cultural and social aspects of history. Local history is not merely national history writ small but a study of past events in a given geographical but one that is based on a wide variety of documentary evidence both regional and national. Local history is often documented by local historical societies or groups that form to preserve a local historic building or other historic site. Many works of local history are compiled by amateur historians working independently or archivists employed by various organizations. An important aspect of local history is the publication and cataloguing of documents preserved in local or national records which relate to particular areas

Anyone with trained or untrained can write a local history. But he/she should need a genuine interest on a selected topic. Most common researchers follow a path in which to collect basic available evidences and their own thirsty for more detailed enquiries lead to explore more and analysis on selected topic.

The ancient Koodalmanikyam temple holds a unique position among the temples of Kerala. It is Located in a serene green pocket, the surrounding trees and ponds give the temple a sacred aura which inspires tranquility and at the same time, awe at its amazing architecture.

It is the only temple in India dedicated to Lord Bharata, and also known as Lord Sangameswara, the brother of Sree Rama. It is believed that the temple belonged to the Jains but with the decline of Jainism, it was taken over by the Hindus. The earliest

recorded reference to this temple is in stone inscriptions relating to the king of Chera Stanu Ravi Varma, dating back to 854 AD. It mentions the donation of a vast tract of land by the king to the temple. By this it can be inferred that the temple existed before this time and was of significance even in those days.

There is a folklore existing about the idol in this temple. It's believed that the idols' forehead began to shine brightly one day. A piece of quartz (manikyam) owned by the raja of Kayamkulam was brought to compare the brightness emanating from the idol's head. In the process, the quartz slipped and fell, merging with the brightness of the idols' forehead. A similar brightness was again manifested in the idol hundreds of years later in 1907.

Unlike all other temples there is a strange fact about this temple is that there is only one deity here – where Lord Vigneshwara idol can be found. The deity here is believed to have such strong powers that even fatal diseases of the faithful devotees can be cured. And interestingly enough is that, there is no Thulasi growing in this temple – unlike other temples.

Review of Literature

There is an authentic works remain regarding the historical background of Koodalmanikyam Temple and the well being of present Irijnalakuda. There is a tremendous changes occur in the socio-economic cultural changes in livelihood of Irijnalakuda with some newspaper reports.

Objectives of the Study

To understand about the socio-economic cultural changes in Irijnalakuda.

To understand about the origin of the temple.

To understand about the structure of temple.

Evaluating the socio-economic conditions of temple.

Scope

The study of socio-economic cultural factors includes all its aspects. Various economic background of temple is discussed in the topic. And the study of origin of temple helps to understand more about the practices in invalid in the locality.

Sources

The primary and secondary sources support the development of this study. The literature reviews are the main evidence of this study. And other than literature reviews, the various newspaper reports such as reports from The Hindu are also used for this study. And the information's are also collected from various websites.

Methodology

Historical methodology is used in this study. This work is based on primary sources and secondary sources. The methodology and technique used in this study is local history

Chapterisation

The project is divided into five chapters, including introduction and conclusion. The introduction includes the overview of this project. In the first chapter it deals with the origin of the Koodalmanikyam Temple. The second chapter deals with the structure of the Temple. The third chapter discuss about the socio economic relevance of the temple, followed by conclusion.

CHAPTER 1

Origin of the Koodalmanikyam Temple

Historical Background of the Temple

Koodalmanikyam temple or Koodai Manikyam situated at Irinjalakuda in Thrissur district, Kerala, it is the only temple in India dedicated to Bharata, the brother of Lord Rama. One of the distinctive feature of Koodalmanikyam temple is that there is only one single Prathista (single deity).

According to the legend, thousands of years ago, Irinjalakuda¹ was a dense forest. Kulipini Maharshi and some other maharshis did a great Yagna to please Lord Vishnu. Pleased with their devotion, the Lord Vishnu appeared before them. As boon, Kulipini Maharshi and other sages wanted the eternal presence of the Lord at that place. The Lord readily agreed. Happy with the presence of the Lord, all the sages prayed to Goddess Ganga to bless the sacred Yagnabhoomi with her presence. All the sages immersed themselves in the sacred waters and became one with the Lord. The temple itself was not built immediately after the incident. The place was not inhabited for many hundred years probably. According to the legends, a local Chieftain, Vakkay Kaimal, had a dream one night in which some mysterious person appeared before him and told him that the four idols have been washed ashore and that these idols are to be consecrated at such and such places. Next day, Kaimal hastened to the seashore and he saw four idols laying there as indicated in the dream. As per the instructions in the dream, the four idols were duly installed in four temples. Lord Rama at Thriprayar (22 Km North West of

¹ For more details see Irinjalakuda-Wikipedia

Irinjalakuda), Bharata at Irinjalakuda, Lakshmana at Moozhikulam (30 KM south west of Irinjalakuda) and Shatrughna at Payammal (5 KM south of Irinjalakuda). It is believed that worshipping at these four temples on the same day is especially meritorious. This temple is part of the famous Nalambalam Darshana Yatra. The eastern gate way (Gopuram) is an impressive structure in the typical Kerala style of architecture with tiled roof and white washed walls.

The Lord is also known as Sangameswara. There is a folklore relating to the name Sangameswara. One saintly person belonging to Talipparambu was on a strange mission. His objective was to collect the chaithanya of idols of important temples in Kerala for being transferred to the idol of the temple in his village. This he did by entering the Sanctum Sanctorum of the temples he visited and transferring the Chaithanya on to the conch in his possession. When he did the same in Irinjalakuda he accidentally fell down and the conch was broken instantly transferring the divinity of all idols he had acquired on to the idol at Irinjalakuda. Thus the idol in which merged the divine Chaithanya of several idols came to be known as Sangameswara

There are beautiful mythologies regarding the origin of the name “Koodal Manikyam”. The idol of this temple radiated magnificent light that excelled manikyam (a mythological precious stone believed to be kept and protected by divine serpents). A manikyam kept in the palace of Kayamkulam palace was brought to this temple to compare with the idol and to see which emits more light! This was brought in the front of the king of Kayamkulam on promise to return after comparison. When the Manikyam was brought near the idol it got merged with the idol! (Koodal manikyam means merger of manikyam).and thus the name.

Curiosity turned out to be a nightmare as the manikyam vanished. The whole temple had to be handed over to the king of Kayamkulam as compensation. Due to the administrative difficulty the king of Kayamkulam handed over the right of the temple administration to one Thatchudaya Kaimal it was his family which handled the temple till 1971.

In the temple there are only three Poojas and no Siveli. The deity is taken out for ceremonial procession only during the Annual Festival. There is no Deeparadhana. The floral offerings to the deity consist of Lotus, Thulasi and Chethi. No other flower is taken for Pooja or for making garlands

The Saint of Healing

The deity of Koodalmanikyam is considered as the incarnation of “Dhanvanthari moorthi” The saint of healing. Hence many people approach to the temple expecting cure of their ailments.

Long ago one aged devotee was sitting in Bhajanam at the Temple. He was a victim of chronic stomachache. One night he had a dream in which the Lord appeared before him and advised him to pluck out 101 brinjals from his garden and offer the same as Nivedya. This was done and he was totally relieved of stomachache. From that day onwards Brinjal Nivedyam became a special Nivedyam at the Temple.

Chembai Vaidyanatha Bhagavatar having heard the curative effect of Brinjal Nivedya visited the temple in 1972 and made an offering of Brinjal Nivedya. Since then he was relieved of a stomach pain he was suffering for quite a long period.

Single *Prathista*

The lord at Koodalmanikyam is Chathurbahu Vishnu with Conch, Chakra, Gada and Japamaala. The general belief is that the Lord is Bharata the brother of Sree Rama. He anxiously and devotedly awaited the return of Rama from exile for fourteen years and then learnt from Hanuman that Rama has reached the outskirts of Ayodhya. He was much relieved and happy. Baratha in that mood is worshipped here. Naturally Hanuman is also present at Thidappilly². A distinctive feature of Koodalmanikyam temple is that there is only one single Prathista. Even Vigneshwara, usually found in all temples dose not find place here. Usually when Thulasi leaves are offered to the deity, its seeds invariably sprout in the premises. This has not at any time happened in this temple is a mystery. One explanation is that Thulasi plant being sacred; it is worshipped wherever it is found. Probably it is to forbid even such an object of secondary worship in the temple precincts that Thulasi is not allowed to grow by some unforeseen power.

Irinjalakuda in former days is believed to have the confluence of two rivers, the place name suggesting such a conjecture. The Lord at the confluence is thus known as Sangameswara. Though the two rivers (Kurumali River and Chalakudy River) have changed course and Irinjalakuda is no longer on any river bank, Arattu³, is held alternatively in these two rivers suggesting a previous connection with these rivers. There is a folklore relating to the name Sangameswara. One saintly person belonging to Talipparambu was on a strange mission. His objective was to collect the chaithanya of idols of important temples in Kerala for being transferred to the idol of the temple in his village. This he did by entering the Sanctum Sanctorum of the temples he visited and

² The Holy Kitchen

³ The Holy dip of the idol at the close of the Annual Festival

transferring the Chaithanya on to the conch in his possession. When he did the same in Irinjalakuda he accidentally fell down and the conch was broken instantly transferring the divinity of all idols he had acquired on to the idol at Irinjalakuda. Thus the idol in which merged the divine Chaithanya of several idols came to be known as Sangameswara. The Namboodiri Brahmins associated with the temple still make all their Sevas in the name of Siva, Vishnu and Devi at Sangamesa Sannidhi itself.

CHAPTER 2

Structure of the Temple

Koodalmanikyam Temple or Kudal Manikkam Temple is a Hindu temple which is situated in Irinjalakuda, Thrissur district, Kerala state, India. The temple comprises the main structure, walled compound with citadels, four ponds around the main structure where in one of the ponds is situated within the walled structure. Koodalmanikyam Temple is the only temple in India dedicated to the worship of Bharata, the third brother of Srirama. The presiding deity of Koodalmanikyam Temple near Irinjalakuda is Bharata, the brother of Ram. The temple is one of four in Kerala state that form a set called "Nalambalam", each temple dedicated to one of the four brothers in Ramayana: Rama, Bharata, Lakshmana and Shatrughna. The temple is about 1 Km from the bus stand in the straight road.

The eastern gate way (gopuram) is an impressive structure in the typical Kerala architectural style with tiled roof and white washed walls and protected monument of the Archeological Department. Numerous carvings are delicate on the front walls of the gate way. The next of gopuram is the outer quadrangle. The temple is situated inside a well walled 10 acre plot with attractive gateways on the east, south and west. The huge porches on the eastern and the western approaches ways to the inner temple can accommodate not less than 21 elephants. The Southern courtyard is the well-known Koothambalam (Temple theatre) the Natyagruha for Koothu and Koodiyattam circular Sanctum Sanctorum is round shaped and is covered with copper plates. A six-foot

Thaazhikakudam (final) at the pinnacle adds to the beauty and majesty of the total temple complex.

Classic Construction

Koodalmanikyam Temple is a marvel in architectural beauty. Almost square in shape, the Koothambalam of this temple is unique in many ways. Three different rows of circumambulating pillars support the magnificent edifice-32 stone pillars in the outer ring, 22 wooden pillars in middle row and 14 huge wooden pillars in the inner circle. The circumference of the Koothambalam is 8x64 meter with 42 pillars supporting the roof. The entire wooden structure, including the main doors and the doors to Nepathya (dressing room), is made of teak. The impressive gateways, round shaped Sanctum Sanctorum, the majestic Koothambalam and the Carvings in wood and stone on the walls are the main attraction of Art and Architecture. The murals on the walls on either side of the Eastern entry to Chuttambalam also deserve special mention.

The stage has 4 cylindrical pillars made of pazhukkai supporting a panel on which seems from the ramanayam, 'paalazhimathanam' and Ashtathitadikhpaalakas are engraved. Numerous other intricate carvings adorn the pillars and the whole roof is covered with copper plates. The space for the audience is also close to this stage, thereby enhancing the visual treat for the audience.

The Koothambalam was sanctified with tantric rites as there is a spiritual connection with the temple and they were performed in the Shaivite tradition, irrespective of the presiding deity. This is because this place is conceptualized as Nandikeswara, the vehicle of Lord Siva. A five – day Koodiyattam fete has been planned this year from December 27 to December 31. The last act of the Abhishekanatakam by Bhasa will be

enacted with the propped on the first day, Nirvahanam on the second and third day and Koodiyattam on the concluding days.

This act encompasses the portion of the Ramayana from Ravana's death to Pattabhishekam and Agnipravesam of Sita. The character of 'Fire' (Agni), with its unique costume is a part to watch out for on the final day as Kuttan Chakyar dons this role. Also worth seeing is the role of Ascharya Lakshmanan on the fourth day. The earliest reference to the Koodalmanikyam temple dates back to 854AD in the form of a stone inscription attributed to the Chera king, Stanu Ravi Varma. But there is hardly any reference to the Koothambalam in any inscription.

It is believed to be built by Perumthachan 5000 years ago, both priest and devotees treat the Koothambalam on par with sanctum Santorum of the temple. Sculpted seems from the Ramayana and Santhanagopalam adorne the interiors of the roof. Ashtadikpalakas (guardian gods of the eight directions) too are located there. The total height of the Natyagriha comes to 15.45 meters and width 25.47 meter. The height of the roof is estimated at 12.98 meter. The measurements provide excellent acoustics to the Koothambalam. The top of the Koothambalam slants on all sides like a pyramid. There are three diadems attracting positive energy and adding to the opulence of the entire structure. Copper sheet covering the edifice carries a distinct tone.

Art and Architecture

The Temple had also been an important centre of nourishment of the Temple Arts like Kathakali, Koothu, Koodiyattam and Thullal. Koothambalam stage had the rare fortune to witness historic stage shows by the masters of Ammannoor Chakyar family.

Unnai Warriar, the author of Nalacharitham was a native of Irinjalakuda and an ardent devotee of Sangameswara. He has also composed a Sanskrit poem – Sree Rama Pancha Sathi that is an abridged version of Ramayana in fifty dasaka dedicated to Lord Sangameswara.

Temple Pond

There are four ponds that are located in and around the Koodalmanikyam temple. The largest of the four are "Kuttan Kulam", located outside the compound on the eastern side, and called "Kulipini Teertham", located inside the compound. Kulipini Teertham is believed to have been sanctified by the sage (*maharishi*) Kulipini, who held a great ritual sacrifice," *yajna* ", at the spot. Water from this source is used for rituals and ceremonies within the temple.

Priests are allowed to take part in the ceremonies after cleansing themselves at the "Kuttan Kulam" outside the temple and then have to take a dip in Kulipini Teertham before entering sanctum sanctorum. The pond outside the compound located at the western side is called "Padinjare Kulam" and the pond outside the compound located at the southern side is called "Thekke Kulam". These three water bodies constitute a significant area as much as the size of the temple itself. Except Kulipini Teertham the other three water bodies are open to the public.

A few interesting relics, featuring idols, shaligram stones and coins have been recovered from the pond of Koodalmanikyam Temple at Irinjalakuda in Kerala on May 10. Bharat, the younger brother of Hindu deity Rama, is the presiding deity of the temple. According to the TOI, the relics were discovered when the sacred "theertha Kulam" (pond) was drained. While a senior devaswom official said that the relics were from the *yagyashala*

of Maharishi *Kuleepini*, where he had performed a home ceremony about 5000 years ago, a seasoned historian denied the claim. The locals believe that the ancient sages including Maharishi Kuleepini had stayed and performed penance in the area which was a forest in those days.

Rajan Gurukkal, Historian and Ex Vice-Chancellor of Mahatma Gandhi University claimed that there is no temple in India as old as 5000 years. As per an inscription, which has the mention of Raja Sthanu, the temple dates back to the year 854 AD.

Gurukkal was further quoted by saying that *Maharishi Kuleepini* is a legend. The relics found from the pond are consecrated offerings thrown by the devotees, or those thrown by the local temples or Brahmin homes.

Reportedly, historian Dr Kesavan Veluthat has recognized the idols as *Somaskandha*, dancing Krishna, Lord Vishnu with Sri Devi and Bhoomidevi. While, a few objects could be used for worship in Namboodiri houses, which were handed down to the temples afterward.

CHAPTER 3

Socio-Economic Relevance of the Temple

The Koothambalam or the Natyagriha has been the privileged space for staging *Koothu*, *Koodiyattam* and *NangyarKoothu* for centuries in the temple. Although Sanskrit theatre tradition existed in the different parts of India it could not stand the test of time except in Kerala. The late *Killimangalam Vasudevan Namboothirippad*, scholar and aesthete, attributes the Kerala Brahmins fixation with temple rituals as the sole reason for the survival of *Koodiyattam* and therefore it continued existence of its hallowed venue, for the *Koothambalam*.

“To the more important temples were attached the *Natyamandapa*, (temple theatres) where *nritya* (dance) and *natya* (drama) were performed as rituals to propitiate the gods. These also provided moral education and aesthetic enjoyment to the sophisticated and the cultured as also to the common man” says Govardhan Panchal.

Of the architecturally exquisite Koothambalam, the one at Koodalmanikyam temple, Irijnalakuda, stands out in terms of structure aesthetic ambience and ritualistic significance. As one enters to the eastern portal of the temple, on the left side is the Koothambalam facing the sanctum sanctorum. In the expansive compound of the temple, the Natyagriha bears a forlorn look. Devotees-cum-resikas congregate by dusk, on the days Ammannoor Kuttan Chakyar or Rajaneesh Chakyar perform *Koothu* or *Koodiyattam*.

Unforgettable Evenings

An anecdote about the poet laureate Unnai Warrior (latter part of the 17th century) and the Chakyar on his time are recollected even today. On day Unnai Warrior, author of Nalacharitham kathakali, walked into the Koothambalam. Chakyar greeted him and commenced that 'I have not seen you for the Koodiyattam at the Koothambalam all these years'. In no time Warrior retorted: 'I have been making garlands for the deity all these years in the Nalambalam. I too have not seen you there to watch my work'.

The Ammannoor Chakyar family has been enjoying the exclusive right to perform at Natyagriha. An outstanding lineage of Chakyar, including the legend Chachu Chakyar, he had enlivened the Natyamandapa time and again with Koothu and Koodiyattam in the far not distant past.

Octogenarian resikas precincts of the temple fondly remember the magnificence of the Madhava Chakyar in his verbal renditions of the Ramanayam Prabandham and the dexterity of his Satwikabhinya in enactment of plays such as Thoranayudham, Balivadham and Asokavanikankam and so on.

Change in Ownership

One of the main characteristic features of Koothambalam is that the pillars seldom intercept the vision of the Chakyar or the audience. Hence the communication between the performer and the beholder becomes direct, intimate and spontaneous. The ownership of the Koodalmanikyam temple and its Kootambalam was with the king of Travancore. For a long period Thachudeki Kaimal was its custodian as the representative of the king.

In 1970, the govt of Kerala took over the administration of the temple and Kaimal was appointed as the chairman of the board of administration. K N Narayana Moosath, who has a traditional ritual right, occupies a certain spiritual authority too in the temple. Even today expenses of the first performance of Koodiyattam at the Koothambalam every year are met by Travancore Royal family. While the Koodalmanikyam Devaswom bears the expenses of the Ramanayam Prabandham Koothu held each year. Year after year the Koothambalam has been holding Chakyar Koothu for 28 days and anguleeyankam for 12 days of the onam festival.

NangyarKoothu, the counter part of Koodiyattam is combined to a ritualistic recital during the annual festival at the temple. Kunhikuttyapilla Nangiar and Subhdra Nangiar had enjoyed the privilege to perform Nangiar Koothu at the Koothambalam for a long period. Unlike in the Koothambalam at the Vadakkunnathan temple, Thrissur or the Vengallur temple, Chelakara, the right to perform at the Koodalmanikyam Koothambalam is restricted to the Ammannoor family. ‘Same is the case with the Koothambalam at the Kottiyoor temple where the Mani [Mani Madhava Chakyar] family alone has the prerogative to perform’, comments Ammannoor Kuttan Chakyar

N P Parameshwaran Namboothirippad, member of executive committee of the devasam, underlines the significance of the Koothambalam as a space of sanctity. He says “all the kriyas (rituals) in the sanctum-sanctorum of the Koodalmanikyam temple are to be executed in the Koothambalam and vice versa. Before the renovation, there was the invocation (avahanam) of Nandikeswara from the Koothambalam “thalakkallu” inside the sanctum – sanctorum. After that the kriyas were repeated and Nandikeswara was reinstalled at the Koothambalam”.

Venu G, Koodiyattam exponent, recalls on Ammannoor Madhava Chakyar and mentioned the incidents in the connection with the presentation of Asoka Vanikankam Koodiyattam at the Koodalmanikyam temple. “The slightly raised platform space for the audience within the Koothambalam is reserved for Namboodiries. Yet not more than a hand full of Namboodiri attend Koodiyattam recital. The rest of space is almost always vacant. The cultural activist of Irinjalakuda and even Ammannoor Parameswara Chakyar raised the issue before the thantri (high priest). From then onwards, non Namboodiries have been allowed to occupy space within the Koothambalam.

Since the main stream culture of the day embraces kitschy exhibitionism, the conservatism and sense of purity retained in and around the performance space such as Koothambalam wins acceptance and legitimacy. The esoteric ambience of the Koodalmanikyam Koothambalam has proved to a consolation for all those capable of identifying with the meditative vein of Indian classical arts notwithstanding its social and political implications.

Rises of the Workshops to Educate Participants on Appreciation of Classical Art Forms and Music

For centuries many of the classical art forms of India took shape in quadrangles and courtyards of temples. They were sustained supported by the temples and their patrons until changing social and economic equations severed that umbilical cord, forcing the art forms to seek sustenance outside its walls. Now a day, the only remaining connection between the temples and the art forms has been limited to programs during the temple festivals. However, over the years, many temples have turned towards populist

programs, pushing the classical art forms to the corner. Only a handful of temples in Kerala still provide a significant space for chaste classical art form these days.

In the context that Kalabodhini, a series of classical art appreciation workshops that organized by Koodalmanikyam devaswom, Irijnalakuda, assumes significant. From last year onwards the devaswom had started conducting cultural programs as part of the annual festival of the temple, as a national music, dance and rhythm festival, lining up master performers of all genres from all over the nation.

Excellence in Art

“Along with bringing the master performers to Kerala, it is also important to educate audiences on how to appreciate the classical art forms and that’s what prompted us to organize this workshop series,” explains U Pradeep Menon, chairman of Koodalmanikyam Devaswom managing committee.

With two – day’s session the workshops spread out over four weekends and opened, focusing on classical music, which was led by NM Anoop Krishnan, assistant professor at Indian Institute of Technology, New Delhi, who is also a Carnatic musician. Supported by violinist Brahmadatgan NM Krishnan introduced participants of the workshop to the nuances of Hinduism Music, Carnatic music and desi traditions of Indian Music.

He explained that the basic notions of sruti, tala, the concepts of Indian melody, the raga concept, the alapana of ragas and stylistic differences between concert patterns of Hindustani and Carnatic systems and the Tranquil atmosphere at the Ammannoor Gurukulam provided the ambience for the workshops. The workshop will introduce

participants on the basic motions of classical dance, including margam, allarippu, thodayam, varnam, javelin, padam, thillana and daruvu as well as to the desi traditions of dance. The workshop introduce such as akshrakalam and matra, structure of melams, methods of using different instruments for various stages of the melams and aesthetic of melams.

The last of the series will be a three day long workshop on Kathakali, to be held on may 3 to 5 and led by experienced Kathakali artistants Kalanilayam Gopi and Peeshapilli Rjeevan, the workshop will highlight various elements of Kathakali such as Mudras, Talam, Kalasam, structure of place in Kathakali, music, pakarnattam, elakiyattam, sathwikabhinaya and manodharma. They will throw light on the attaprakaras of Kathakali performances scheduled for this year's festival.

“we are trying to attract the young generations toward classical art forms and our wish is that all the youngsters growing up in Irijnalakuda should be able to nurture and interest in the classical art forms, the town being the seat of classical art form for centuries” says Pradeep.

Purity in and of the Temple

The temple and town in Irinjalakuda, Thrissur district of Kerala is a recent addition to this re-opening of the old wounds. The temple authorities have unilaterally blocked a public motor able road through the temple complex for unstated reasons. People who have used this road for decades now became confused as to how to bring their vehicles home from work.

Recently the road was opened to the public after the Kootambulam agitation in 1946. The famous Unnai Varyar memorial, an institute for teaching Kathakali built in honor of the eponymous poet in his hometown, was also located in this very road. About 60 days back this sign board showing the way to the memorial was removed and a barricade was built on the southern end of the road.

Such a decision presumed to form of a reaction to the 50-year old landmark agitation that got the road opened initially. The people who have the barrier claimed that the road was always open for passengers, but never for vehicles. The vehicles are held responsible for bringing in impurity to the precincts of the temple. However this stance hides deep-seated bias against the poor and Dalits—it is their cars which the temple authorities are against. There is no doubt that some of the erstwhile marginalized are prosperous enough to own a vehicle. The Kerala Pulaya Mahasbha (KPMS) has therefore started an agitation to get the motor able road reopened.

Caste is an indulgent route for masculine modernity in Kerala to establish its privileged place in all forms of discourse. Historical accounts relate that Alummootil Channar, an Izhava landlord, had to dismount the elephant when he reached the Vaikom temple road. However his mahouts, who were higher caste Nair men, passed through with the elephant. The Vaikom Satyagraha—an agitation of 1924 for freedom to use the temple's roads for all, put an end to this practice of extreme caste-based discrimination. Media has not seriously addressed the issue, apart from a few reports and photos in local editions of Malayalam dailies. It could be because political parties are not involved so far, or that it has not yet succeeded to impress the rationale of a middle class bias who think that the temple premises should be out of bounds for certain kinds of people. It may be

also due to stiff resistance from the temple administration which has the moral support of the Hindu devotees here represented as a common public. Staking a claim to purity has indeed paid off in the efforts of the temple authorities to master wide appeal in sealing the road for motorists.

Conclusion

This is the study about the history related to the socio-economic and structure of the Koodalmanikyam Temple located at Irinjalakuda in Kerala. Koodalmanikyam temple or Koodai Manikyam is the only temple in India dedicated to Bharata, the brother of Lord Rama. One of the distinctive feature of Koodalmanikyam temple is that there is only one single Prathista (single deity). A large number of news paper reports and several historical books helped to complete this study.

The various chapters help to understand more details about the ritualistic and cultural practices in and outside of the temple. Historical background of the temple the distinct it's with other temples with beautiful mythologies. Lord is also known as Sangameswara. The idol of this temple radiated magnificent light that excelled manikyam (a mythological precious stone believed to be kept and protected by divine serpents). The deity of KoodalManikyam is considered as the incarnation of "Dhanvanthari moorthi" The saint of healing.

Built with an impressive structure with numerous carvings in the typical Kerala architecture style and thus protected by Archeological department a classic construction of Koothambalam and art forms that practices the next generation to move on with the culture. The Temple had also been an important centre of nourishment of the Temple Arts like Kathakali, Koothu, Koodiyattam and Thullal.

This is the study of local history of Koodalmanikyam Temple, Irinjalakuda, and Kerala. This study of various rituals, festivals, art and architecture may help the others to understand more about the relevance of temple in this present world, were all such events

are slowly eroding in the waves of modernization. The deity of Koodalmanikyam is considered as the incarnation of “Dhanvanthari moorthi” (The saint of healing). Hence many people approach to the temple expecting cure of their ailments.

In 1970, the govt of Kerala took over the administration of the temple and Kaimal was appointed as the chairman of the board of administration. K N Narayana Moosath, who has a traditional ritual right, occupies a certain spiritual authority too in the temple. Even today expenses of the first performance of Koodiyattam at the Koothambalam every year are met by Travancore Royal family. While the Koodalmanikyam Devaswom bears the expenses of the Ramanayam Prabandham Koothu held each year. Year after year the Koothambalam has been holding Chakyar Koothu for 28 days and anguleeyankam for 12 days of the onam festival.

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