

Secular Realm of Theyyam; A Study on Art Form of Kerala

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ABSTRACT

The realm of Theyyam extends beyond its religious and cultural aspects to encompass a significant secular dimension that influences various aspects of life within the communities that practice and celebrate this traditional art form. While Theyyam is deeply rooted in religious beliefs and mythology, it also serves as a social, political, and economic force in the secular domain. Theyyam in the face of changing social and economic dynamics requires a multi-faceted approach. This includes raising awareness and enthusiasm among the younger generation through educational activities, cultural exchange programs, and integrating Theyyam into Kerala's greater cultural and tourism environment. By embracing these efforts, Theyyam can overcome the challenges it faces and continue to thrive as a vibrant and cherished cultural tradition in Kerala and beyond. Folklore, or the traditional values, traditions, and narratives of a group, is an important component of cultural legacy in any country. However, due to historical and intellectual forces that created the academic environment of the nation, the study of folklore in India got off to a very late start. Indian scholars were inspired by the intellectual climate and educational system of the colonial powers to value Western knowledge over their own distinctive cultural expressions. As a result, traditional education and indigenous knowledge were disregarded or even denigrated as antiquated and outdated. Theyyam is not just a religious and cultural celebration but also gives the participating communities a sense of social and economic empowerment. The Theyyakkars (players of Theyyam), who are members of lower castes and socially excluded groups, are admired and appreciated by the audience throughout the performances.

Keywords: Theyyam, Caste, Folklore, Empowerment, Tradition and Culture.

The folklore's ability to influence people's ideas and identities was recognized by the colonial authorities. They understood that in order to establish influence and authority over the indigenous community, they needed to comprehend and take use of their deeply embedded folklore. As a result, the West made a purposeful effort to spread the notion that tradition and culture should be studied as active subjects. Even though some Indian academics wanted to study and preserve their culture, folklore research was also used to spread religious ideas. To further their own agendas and ideologies, the colonial powers strove to mould and redefine religious myths and rituals. Chandran T. V., in his article *Religious Other & 'Secular realm' of Theyyam* says, "From a certain point in history, the

whole cultic practice of theyyam was used as a symbolic strategy to disseminate a certain message rooted in the social and political consciousness of the lower caste people who fell prey to the dominance of caste hierarchy and related violence” (5).

Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Jainism, Buddhism and Brahminism have played a decisive role in forming a common culture in Kerala society. From the 3rd century to the 6th century, there was a strong phase of Buddhism in Kerala. The influence of Buddhism can be seen in the forms of worship in the Kerala state. 'Ezhunnallath', 'rathamvali' and 'kettukazcha' are worshippers derived from Buddhism. There are many centres of Buddhist influence in Northern Kerala. The lands where the church was located were also centres of Buddhism. Pallikunn, Pallikkulam, Pallipuram and Pallikkara are examples. Dharmadam was a prominent Buddhist centre in North Kerala.

The region of North Kerala where Jainism is most noticeable is Wayanad. Jains also had a presence in Tulunad. At Karkala, the Gomateshwara statue is a reminder of the former Jain splendour. In ancient Kerala's intellectual and spiritual spheres, Brahmins were the masters of Sanketam. It resulted from the universalisation of Hinduism and the dominance of the Namboothiris. The other social groups that existed in ancient Kerala were the property-owning classes, which included merchants, ploughmen, Velalars, chantors, etc.

According to historians, Kerala experienced an old-class society during the first and sixth centuries AD. Up to the seventh century, this was the situation and there were seven different occupational castes in early South India, including Thudian (beater), Parayan (beater), Panan (singer), Valayar (singer), Vanikar (merchant), and Uzhavar (farmer). One of the factors leading to a unique condition in the caste communities in Northern Kerala was the Theyyam movement. The number of Theiyyas increased as the position of Theiyya spread across the household and nation. Furthermore, castes specifically created for tying 'kolams' were created. Along with Malayan, Panan, Vanna, and Velan, other heirs who tied Theyam included Kopalan Mavilan, Nalkitthaya, Chinkathan, Tan, and Munnutan. Some castes had to act as caste castes in the caste-based social structure. Theyyaam tie castes and other castes associated with Theyyam in Uttara Kerala are mentioned here (fourth level). Theyattakars Kerala Northern Peruvannan communities that tie Theyam together are Perumalayan, Panan, Anjutan, Munnutan, Kalanadis, Mavilan, Kopalan, Nalkitthaya, Thulumalayala Velan, and Pulayar. They could be categorised as generic miscreants. Dirt and soil belong to the same community.

Vannan

In Northern Kerala, this caste name (Vannan) has a unique character. Vannan can refer to a person who has colour. Here, we need to remember the 'Vannathi Mat' tradition. This mat is gorgeous. Different hues are used to depict Vannan. One of the groups that ties Theyyam together is Vannan. The term 'Benichonkans' is used by Pulays to refer to Vannas, who dress in Theiyat's vibrant summer garb. In the dialect of rural North Keralites, summer is referred to as Benikalam. It also alludes to Theiyat's season. The Vannans are related to Tulunadu, just like the Thiyyars. It is also important to understand that there are eight Vannans. They are known as Peruvannan in caste society. It is Peru-Periya-Teya's traditional

name. a title granted to Atta Praveenas by an Arachna, a noble, a positional leader, or a community. This degree eventually turned into a caste name. Their primary line of work is weaving. The Vannas were medicine specialists, particularly paediatrics. Some people still follow this custom. They are skilled sewers and tailors. Making Theiyam's clothing, hair, etc., requires tailoring. The Vannans also installed curtains in Shornur and other locations. As the soil, Bhairavan and Pookutty Chatan are likewise linked.

Malays

The Malays are better witches than the Vanna, and Mantramurtis are the most significant of their Theiyas. The Malayan musical movement is still going strong today. The Vannans' songs also feature Malayar instrumentalists. However, the Vannans are prohibited from playing any part in the Malayan Theiyyas. It is not outdated because it is a dance performed in that land. It should be mentioned, though, that no humans are being sacrificed. The Malayan completes the sacrifice with an injection of his blood from the wrist. Malaysian women also dance. 'Tachu Mantri song' is sung by Malayalam women, who make us cry. Another name for it is Aranmula Shastra. According to legend, Malayan was born to heal Shiva after he experienced an ailment firsthand. The Malayan woman gained this Bhagamanra, song, and karma. Even God is plagued; the shadow cannot save people. Malaya is in charge of getting rid of the shadow.

Vannas

Vannas are generally responsible for tying Bhagavathiyams and dead human bodies. Perumannans forage in Kozhikode. The Vannans also put-up curtains in Shornur and other regions. Mannans are also tied to Malaya, Bhairavan, and Pookutty Chatan. Layer has exclusive permission to perform these Theiyams in Kerala. Malayan Peruma Lairs are caste groups near the hill that work in the arts. These are not hill people. Those who reside in the country's heart. Periya is a common name in Malayan Peru. It afterwards became a caste name. The Malays are superior to the Vannas in witchcraft. The most important are the Mantramurthys. The Malayan project in instrumental arts is still going on today.

Songs, mantras, rituals, and Kolamketta are all part of Malayan Ket. This ritual is only conducted, when necessary, by family members. However, neighbours also take part. Such ceremonies have become common in modern times. The 'Uchabali' of Malaya is likewise significant. It is a Theiya ritual dance that has remained relevant. This Human crucifixion is a part of the ceremony. It should be stressed, however, that this is not a human sacrifice. The Malayan completes the sacrifice by injecting his own blood from the wrist. It is also known as Aranmula Shastra. The Malaya woman gained this Bhagamanra, song, and karma. Even God is shrouded in shadow, pestilence, and the shadow cannot rescue people. The Malay woman is in charge of eradicating the shadow.

Panans

The Panans are the Malayan class of wanderers. Makkataika Kunnu is their name. Patti is the name of the cook. Patti was never used as a female name. Paruti Patti, Parukutty. Patti in Panan - (Jati Samjna translates as a caste girl who performs a song. Panan is the

creator of the song Kulava. Thirayattam joined in as well. The origin narrative of Panans differs from the Malayan birth story. Adipanan is the one who received Thiruvarkan's blessing. This story may be found in the Pacanars' story (Paripeta Pantirukulam). There is only a distinction between Panan and Malayan in the creation narrative. Adipanan is the one who received Thiruvarkan's blessing. This story may be found in the Pacanars' story (Paripeta Pantirukulam). There is only a distinction between Panan and Malayan in the creation narrative. Gamund used the name Adiperumalayan in the defeat of the Panars. As a result, it is established that both groups are tied to the mountain. The Pananas are mentioned in the Sangam writings Akananur and Purananur. Mani vars are healers, magicians, and artists. They can perform magic rituals such as Uchabali, Ninabali, and Kanner.

Kalanadis

The Kalanadis are a weaving community in the Wat. Kalanadis is also known as Kalanadi Kalanadiyan. Cheyambam, Thelampara, Pulpalli, Poo Chitalam, Malavyal, and Pakam are some of the names. Polam is where the Kalanadi people live. The primary Theiyams drawn and made in places like Poothadi, Thelampu, Manikav, Porakkadi, Echakunna, Chiri Ponkuzhi, Chullikode, Masur, Kurumpat, Kundanur, and so on are Pakam Theiyam, Poothaditheiyam, Malayan Karinkali Kandapuli, Kalimalathampuran, and Purakadi. Kalanadis are swinging their arms. If the kalanadi who weaves them dies, the body is covered with a washed Kodi, the face of the dead body is covered with a mana yola (put on the face), and a kolam of them is placed near the corpse with one or two spikes stuck in the grave. This extremely rare practice is still practised in Wayanad. The Kalanadis, like the Idanadu karkitaka Theyyam, have a custom of singing 'Kanti' to the karkitaka. It is a song written to satisfy Pakabhagavati. The Theyyas are being tied by 300 individuals.

Mavilan

The Mavilan community consists of Tulumavilan, Edamavilan, and Malayalamavila. It is classified as three. Vishnu Murthy, Kurathi, and Kara Mavilers used to tie the idols of Varateyam, Kattumatanta and Kapalathi Elerithut, Malom, Vellarikund and Chittarikka in Kasaragod district Ennapadi, Timiri, Pulingom, Wayakkara, Tadikkadav, Padia in Kannur district. The eastern highlands of Uttara Kerala are Nediyinga and Alakot. Mavilar resides in Mavilane (Mavilare), which is also known as a Malian village. It is referred to in the language. Nat Mavilan and Katt Mavilan are their names!! It is said that Tulavelan is also known as Mavilan in some locations.

Kopalan

The theyanga who weave the theyyam in the Kasaragod region of North Kerala include Kopalanamar, Kundur Chamundi, Kunjan Kurathi, Dhumabhadhagavathy, Gulika Kallurutti, Panchuruli, Annapanchuruli, Babbara, and Nemambaghavathi. The Kopalas originated in Tulunat. Tulu is also common in their Theyathottam. They can also communicate in Malayalam. The Kopalas are proficient at producing kotu pala (palate), which the cultivators wear on their heads.

Nalkittaya

There is a Theyatta caste named Nalkittaya in Tuludesam. They are claimed to be a Kopala sub-caste. Tulu is a Tulu word that means 'dancer'. The main concept of the provided sect is Dhumabhagavatiya - Kerala's southernmost region.

Tulu Malayalam Velans

Tulu Malayalam Velans are similar to Tamil Nadu's Sangha-style Velans, also known as Kundura Velans. They claim to be the descendants of Belacharya. It is worth noting that these Velans from Tulu Nadu who moved to Malayalam (Northern Kerala) do not assume ritual positions from Kola Thiri, Allataraja, or nobility. In Tulunadu, Kundur Tantri (Brahmin) used to perform rituals for them. The guideline is that the Kundur vegans shall be honoured by the Tantri family wherever they come. It is still in use today. Their primary team is Kundur Chamundi. (Bhadrakali) had initially tested the Mother Goddess's might by casting the Kundur tantric ritual and burying her in a copper tent. Devi escaped after stealing the copper kettle. Tantri worshipped the goddess as she grew powerful. As a result, this Kundur God was renamed Kundur Chamundi. Their principal Theiyas are the agricultural deities Kurathi, Nelli Kuthipothi, and Turkarathi. Tulu Malayalam Velan's sub-occupations include fortification and murram construction.

Pulayar

Uttara Kerala's Pulayar Pulayars tie theyam. Their clans are named Pulimaranja Thondachan by the Karigurus. This Theiyam is referred to as "Tondachachan" by the locals. Pon Vekum Kall is a restaurant in Mataikkavil, just outside Kavi. The Badochatana Theiyam is connected to Pulayar's houses from here on the sixteenth day of the Karkitaka month. Many Pulayar folk tunes have spread throughout North Kerala. In Uttara Kerala, there are no Pulayars. Pulayar only has Theiyams, who are Sangh members. Teyatta among the Pulayars, the people, not their idols. Pulakottam and Mandapam are the names of their respective locations.

Thiyyar.

According to historical records, this Thiyyar was born in Ceylon. The belief that the Ezhavas of southern Kerala originated in Ezhathunadu can also be linked to this. A comparable labour structure exists in Ezhavan in southern Kerala and Thiyyan in northern Kerala. They were not, however, married to each other. Ezhavan and Thiyyan eventually acquired the same caste name. Theyaprasthana is intricately tied with the caste system and Marumakkathaya. It is a unique bond, particularly between Theiya and Theiya. Tiyan's genesis cannot be shown by adding it to Tiyo. However, the prominence of fire play in Thiyyan Theiyat grows significantly. It is necessary to prepare firewood for the fire. The Thiyyan's responsible for bringing the Ouachita to be ignited (lit). Thiyyakan is a member of the Thiyyar tribe. He is the protagonist of a story. He takes the lead in building the upper classes' funeral pyres. Theiya is the Theiyas' authority to put the Kalash. 'Kalashkaran' is the traditional name for this authority. Kesari Bala Krishna Pillai opined that:

The Ezhas, Chantans, Theiyars and Billas of Kerala migrated from Ceylon. There is no evidence to establish a connection with the island of Theiyars of North Kerala.

Theiyars are close to Tulunadu. Chanchera says that the Billas of Tuluvam (South Karnataka) came to Uttara Kerala and settled there. They are called Theiyam Ettillam Karumana'. Karumana means Karumanat (Karnataka Nadu). This theory of fire is supported by the fact that the Tulubillas are eight-legged. They are one in order. Marumakkathayam. (65)

Mukayan

There is a sub-caste of fishermen known as Mukayan, and they are fishermen by trade. They showed more interest in river fish. In later times, like the Mukkus, the Mukais travelled to the sea to catch fish, and their occupation was canoe-making and rowing. They migrated from Karnataka to Uttara, Kerala.

Valluvars

When the Peruvannan is bound, the Valluvar sings the piercing song of this ancestor. The community members are supposed to be able to summon the God Perumpuzhayachan from the higher realm. It is an unusual occurrence in the Theyathotta ceremony. Valluva people were found in Kattampally, Kandy Param, and Puyallup. Valluvan Pier is the name of the pier here. In the Valapattanam Kalari Vathukkal Kalasapperungaliyattam, Valluvas used to offer Meenamrit. The Mukaya community provides Meenamrit in Kavil, Mannampuram, and Nileswaram.

Mowaris

The three Mowaris are a group of people that live in and around Cherukunni in Kolathunadu. Cherukunnilamma is a deity who descended from Kashi on a wooden vessel (ship). Among the different communities affiliated with the Annapurneswari shrine are the Mowaris. They have a total of twelve in-laws. Moowaris were Poowaris who made Pujapusham at Cherukunn Annapoorneshwari Temple. Mowari temples may be found in Kuttikara, Kishkekara, Vengara, Neelangai, Korom, and Yulasteng. Their devotion idol is Rakta Chamundi. This Theyam is known as Veerachamundi (Durga Sankalpam) in Annapurneshwari's region. Legend has it that when Annapurneshwari landed on the coast (a thousand palm trees on a little hill), the Mowaris were the first to meet her mother and send her away.

Paradeshi

During the Cherukunnilamma festival, the males of this caste hold the flags at Ezhunna. Initially, their women were Cherukunnilamma collectors. The family honours the goddess by entering the house with a bag (Pokinam) embroidered into a unique shoulder shape and a stick in her hand that says "Mother Annapoorneshwari" and giving charity. The Annapoorneshwari temple receives a portion of the alms. Nonetheless, there was a nightly ritual of tying poti chor to a Vada tree before the Cherukun shrine because no one who came should go hungry. Even robbers appreciate the poti chor. It is customary to provide food to worshippers at the Annapurneshwari temple. The ootupura (where foods are served) is only closed when no one can eat. Potichor is chained to a tree outside due to dissatisfaction.

Foreigners' begging rice was also utilised for this food source. Begging and hanging Potichor is now a myth. However, the foreign community remains in Cherukunn and Karivellur.

Yogi

Yogi, also known as Choi, is a cult stretching from Kumbalasarupa to Nediiripi swarupa (a Yogi community in Palakkad district). They do not have any Theiya here. Yogis in Palakkad belong to the Katupatar sect, tied to Tamil Nadu. Tulunadu yogis relocated to Uttara, Kerala. They are referred to as men in Tulu. These individuals are known as yogis in Karnataka. They are Shiva worshippers. The tale of Shiva urging him to atone for the sin of Brahmanicide is tied to the birth of yogis. They have separate shelters. The family deity is Bhairavan Theiya. The main sanctuaries of the Yogi community are Kasargod, Kanhangad Nileswaram, Chantera, Payyannur, Azhikode, Koodali, and Vadakara. They are relatives.

Yogi is a cult that runs from Kumbalasarupa to Nediiripi swarupa (a Yogi community in Palakkad district). There is no Theiya present. Yogis in Palakkad adhere to the Tamil Nadu-based Katupatar sect. Yogis from Tulunadu moved to Uttara, Kerala. In Tulu, they are referred to as "men." In Karnataka, these people are known as yogis. They are Shiva devotees. The birth of yogis is linked to the story of Shiva encouraging him to atone for the sin of Brahmanicide. They have their shelters. Bhairavan Theiya is the family deity. Kasargod, Kanhangad Nileswaram, Chantera, Payyannur, Azhikode, Koodali, and Vadakara are the main sanctuaries of the Yogi community. They are related.

In samadhista, the dead body is buried in Padmasana. Although that practice has evolved, resting in samadhi is still prevalent today. In the vernacular, yogis are called Choi and Gurus (Kurus). Gurus are simply titles. The ritual position is obtained from the Kadi temple, a Mangalore shrine. Locals refer to Yogis who do not hold posts as Gurus. It is an example of a title being transformed into a caste name. Yogis were also there with the mother in the origin story of Cherukun Annapurneshwari. In front of the Annapurneshwari temple, there is also a Yoga Math. Yogis who are Shiva devotees are expected to wear a pleading Shiva costume known as Kelipatram. Keli program is currently popular.

Pitarars

Pitarars are priests brought from Bengal by the Kolathiri rulers for Shakteya Puja. Pitara Illams may be found in Nileswaram, Old Ngadi, Valapatnam, North Kottayam (Koothuparamba), Irgur, Vadakara, North Kollam (Koilandi), and Kozhikode. They are also known as Kavil Musat. They consume honey and meat. This diet is motivated by Shakti worshippers. In the puja, tofu and chicken are used. The goddess of the caverns, whom they adore, is the clan deity of the Swarupathi rulers. Pitarasakteya kavs may be found in Nileswaram Mannampurat Kav (Allatasvarupam), Matai Thiruvarkatkav, and Valapatnam Kalarivatukkal Kav (Kolasvarupam). This festival takes place every year. It is referred to as Kalasapperungaliyattam. They may also be found in Koilandi and Kollam Pisharikav. However, the event in Pishari Kav follows a different procedure from the Kalash Kaliat in Nileswaram and Valapatnam Kav.

Pallichan

Pallichans, also known as Panchal-doli carriers, are an integral part of Uttara Kerala's religious and cultural traditions, particularly in Kolathiri and Allattaraja. They play a significant role in the observance of Payatyal Bhagavati, a major theme associated with Pallichan rituals. The Pallichans carry the church staff, known as the Panchal-doli, during processions and ceremonies. The Panchal-doli is a symbolic representation of the deity, and its transportation by the Pallichans is considered a sacred duty. The term "Pallichan" is derived from the Malayalam word "pallichal," which means "to carry." There are several notable Pallichan sanctuaries in North Kerala where these rituals take place. These include North Kottayam, Chirakkal Puzhathi, Cherukunn, Pashiangadi, Taliparam, and Nileswaram. These sanctuaries serve as centers for Payatyal Bhagavati veneration and worship, a crucial aspect of Pallichan ceremonies. Payatyal Bhagavati is a divine entity worshipped as the presiding deity during Pallichan rituals. Bhagavati is often associated with the goddess Durga or Kali, representing feminine power and protection. Pallichan ceremonies and processions are dedicated to Bhagavati, seeking her blessings and divine intervention. During Pallichan processions, the Pallichans dress in traditional attire, often wearing white dhotis and shirts with turbans adorned with flowers and jewelry. They carry the Panchal-doli, which is usually a decorated wooden staff with intricate carvings and embellishments, symbolizing the deity's presence.

Pallichan rituals are accompanied by music, drumming, and chanting, creating a vibrant and festive atmosphere. The rhythmic beats of traditional percussion instruments like chenda and elathalam accompany the processions, adding to the spiritual fervor and energy of the event. These rituals are deeply rooted in the history and mythology of the region. They serve as a means of connecting with the divine and seeking protection and blessings. The Pallichans are respected members of the community who are entrusted with the responsibility of upholding and performing these sacred rituals. They pass down the tradition from generation to generation. Local community participation and involvement are essential to Pallichan ritual continuation. Devotees actively support and engage in these ceremonies, offering reverence and seeking Payatyal Bhagavati's divine grace. Pallichans are significant beyond religious practices.

These rituals play a vital role in maintaining and preserving Uttara Kerala's cultural heritage and traditions. They serve as a source of identity and pride for the community, instilling a sense of belonging and reinforcing shared cultural values. In conclusion, Pallichans, church staff carriers, are an integral part of Uttara Kerala's religious and cultural landscape. Their role in observing Payatyal Bhagavati and participating in sacred rituals is deeply revered and cherished by local communities. The Pallichan sanctuaries in North Kerala serve as prominent centers for deity veneration and the preservation of this rich cultural tradition.

Chempoti

Kannur, a vibrant city in Kerala, has a bustling marketplace called Chempoti Bazaar. This market has its own prestigious significance and historical background, closely tied to the

region's cultural fabric. Additionally, Kannur and its surrounding areas, known as Kannur district or Kannurjilla, are renowned for a distinct group called the Chempots. These Chempots have a connection to Theiyam. Moreover, Uttara Kerala is home to another distinct sect known as the Unithiri community. Chempoti Bazaar in Kannur is a lively marketplace where people gather to engage in various commercial activities. Traders, merchants, and locals come together to buy and sell a diverse range of goods, including fresh produce, spices, textiles, handicrafts, and household items. The bazaar is a vibrant hub of economic and social activity, providing a glimpse into the daily life and commerce of the region. In Cholari, a town in Kannur district, there is a unique group known as the Chempots. The Chempots are a community of Tamil Nadu immigrants who settled in the area. They have a distinct cultural identity and are closely associated with Theiyam, an ancient ritualistic art form prevalent in Kerala. Theiyam is characterized by elaborate performances, where artists embody deities and enact mythical stories through dance, music, and rituals. The Chempots have a historical connection to Theiyam and have played a significant role in its preservation and practice in the region.

Furthermore, Uttara Kerala is home to a distinct sect known as the Unithiri community. This community has its own unique customs, traditions, and cultural practices that set them apart from other groups in the region. The Unithiri community is known for its specific rituals, religious beliefs, and social customs, which have been passed down through generations. Their practices often revolve around the worship of local deities and ancestral spirits, reflecting a strong connection to Uttara Kerala's spiritual and mythological traditions. The Chempots and the Unithiri community contribute to the diverse cultural landscape of Kannur and Uttara Kerala. Their presence adds to the richness and depth of the region's artistic heritage, preserving unique customs and practices passed down through generations. These communities serve as a reminder of the historical migrations, the intermingling of cultures, and the assimilation of different traditions that have shaped Kerala's cultural tapestry.

In conclusion, Chempoti Bazaar in Kannur is a bustling marketplace that reflects the region's economic and social vibrancy. The Chempots, a rare group of Tamil Nadu immigrants, are connected to Theiyam. They have preserved this ancient art form in Kannurjilla. Meanwhile, the Unithiri community in Uttara Kerala has its own distinct customs and practices, contributing to the diverse social fabric of the region. Together, these communities enrich the cultural heritage of Kannur and Uttara Kerala. They highlight the historical connections, migrations, and cultural exchanges that have shaped the region over time.

Unithiri

Unithiri is claimed to be the line of Kshatriya children born to a Nair mother. They are relatives. Mythology also connects Kolathiri with Unithiri. Karivellur is their headquarters. Ammon is the name given to men of the Unithiri caste. They are well-known in the medical industry. (Famous astrologer Shankaranatha astrologer Karivellur Vengat is a member of the Unithiri family).

Thirumbali Ammons

The Thirumbambams are a Brahmin sub-caste. They married and had daughters-in-law. According to legend, these Payyannur Kazhak Namboothiris are Kai Rama, who took up arms like the Illi Nampyathiri, who took up arms among the Kerala Brahmins. Parasuraman requested that coca be accepted. However, the Brahmins were of that colour, and only their forefathers obeyed Parasurama. Payyannur Perumal, who is under His Highness' authority concerning Payyannur Subrahmanyaswamy Temple) This document also states that Nileswaram was the realm of Rajaka (Allatasvarupa), who seized the kingdom. According to legend, the temple keeper Theyam meditated on the Payyannur Perumal for a Jupiter cycle.

A ceremony to remember that relationship is ongoing today is held during the festival of Udinur Koolothe (Kshetrapalaka Temple), the primary seat of the temple keeper Theyam. In the temples, the Kitarars paint wooden sculptures and tea sculptures. The Kitaranars are a sect that is predominantly found in Kunhimangalam and Payyannur. In southern Kerala, kittens are categorised as Thol Kolla. Theiya in Kerala's northwestern region The Kitaras' main message is to stay connected. The calves are a rare breed in the Nair society. Sectarrians plotted in Koduvalli, Balussery, and Vadakara in Kozhikode district to hunt at home in Balussery.

Theyambadi

Theyambadi Thampan is a Nambiar Hath sub-group that performs kalam kalamezhuth and singing in Theyambadi temples. They are members of the IT Sathava Kali Kalam writing Theyambadis Ti Thik Kalamezhut Kurupanam community. It is not hunting season in North Kerala. Kay noticed that if Kurup accepts, Vettakkara's name will be written in the kalam instead of his son's. Theyambadi people live in Cherukunn, Mattannur, and Iriti. The Nayans, a significant segment of Kerala society, have a distinct history in North Kerala. Nayan's tharkutta and kavu are well-known. This tradition is invoked in Kadatta Patt and Northern Patt. Pramukh Nair Padaveeran is Thacholi Othenan, a Northern Patti Veeranayak. Thacholi Othenan is known as Theyyamaki.

Nair

The Nair troops who lived before Thacholi Othenan fought heroically in Theyyattam, Uttara Kerala. The Theiyas Kshetrapalan, Vettakkamakana, Veerabhadra, and Urpachassi represent the Nair warriors. In the Kav refuge, a herd of dogs had gathered. Nayans are octogenarians with a floor, clan, and a consultation centre named Etam for Nayans. They have it in their possession. Avarna Kalashakas have koimapadi for sitting as well. There are three types of dogs: those who joined inside, those who joined outdoors, and those who joined in Kiriya. Randilakar and Nallillakar are other names for it. Nayans who converted during Tipu's reign have returned. They are known as Chelav Nayans. However, it is no longer widely used. Nalukettu, Anchampura, Kottam, Kav, Kula, and Kalari are also Nayans in Uttara Kerala. Nayanar The Nayanars were feudal lords of Karakkattidam, Vengail Erumbala, and Warikara, as well as the Nair lords of Uttara Kerala. There are Theyasthanams

in these aristocratic lineages. Kunna Toor Padi Muthappan's position is among the Nayanars of Karakkat's Koima. The Namibian aristocratic families are called Yashamanas.

The prominent Prabhukutum groups of North Kerala are the Nair communities of Velluva, Kudali, Chempilode, Poiveri, Koothali, Ningileri, Moolacheri, Palliath, Koroth, Makuni, Mavila, Manikoth, Mundayat, and Para Madampil. They, too, have positions. Hunters The Vetuvars, a tribal community in Kerala, are also prevalent in North Kerala. They have particular requirements. Sri Kurumba is their primary deity. Pappuvetuvar, Tuluvetuvar, Malavetuvar, and Nadan Vetuvar are among them. Tuluvetu and Puvetu will be present in Kasaragod. Makathais are only found in Pappuwetu. The remaining sects are Marumakkathayats. The elder leads their class. Nadan Wavar's society is civilised. Their sanctuaries and sanctuaries, like those of other groups, are hated.

Vaniyar

Karivellur in Kola Varupa is the original place. Muchilot Bhagavathy Mayam is their clan god. Vaniyas' major sanctuary is Adimuchilotkari in Karivellur. It is a Palliara and Kavu sanctum sanctorum. Muchilot Kavs In North Kerala, there are eighteen significant Muchilot Kavs. They are not a part of Poorkali. Kolans, on the other hand, is overflowing in some of their Cavs. Vanier is a caste that still exists in Payyannur and Alladaswarup. The Vanier dog department includes the Chirakkal and Kannur localities. King Kolathiri bestowed the Nairasthan upon the Vaniyars. It was bestowed by Rama Varma, the great king of Chirakal, fifty years ago. Perana Muchilot Kao in Kumbala is the principal seat of the Vaniyas in the areas north of Chandragiripusha, as well as Mangalapuram, Sullia, Puttur, Madikeri, Udupi, and Kunthapuram in Karnataka. Only by telling this cavil may important rites in their civilisation be accomplished. The requirement that marriages occur solely in Muchilot Kavi is still in effect today. Ponapilo is the major sanctuary of Tulunadu's Vaniya community of 1,800 dwellings. The bridegroom first presents the pudava, followed by the thicket and garland-elders' blessings after three circumambulations. Then enter the da and bow before Bhagwati. It is the main wedding ceremony in this community. A wedding celebration will also be held. The celebration will begin at eight o'clock in the morning.

Paniyars

The bridegroom first presents the pudava, the thicket and the garland. Elders' blessings follow three circumambulations. Then enter the da and prostrate before Bhagwati. It is the key ritual of this communal marriage. There will also be a wedding reception. The feast will begin at eight o'clock in the morning. They are more common in Mepayur and Perampra of Kadthanat Swarup, a sect that weaves Pariyartheyyam in Uttara Kerala. They are skilled artisans who weave the Kolams known as Kuttichathan, Paakali, and Karuval. Among them are those who speak a mix of Tulu and Karnataka.

Karimbalans

The Karimbalans are a hill-dwelling group in North Kerala's Thaliparam and Thalassery districts. They revere Mutucherry Deity, Patimala Deity, Kanjal Bhagavathy, Nagakanni, and Karingali. They have a "Kannikettal" ritual dance. A maiden's clothing is

connected to Sapta in this traditional dance. Thalapali and Marmula are the major ornaments. They, like the Theiyars, have Komarams.

Kurichyars

Kurichyars are black people. Kurichyars are a tribal community who live largely in Wayanad. Kannavam Kurichyars are Kurichyars who live in Kannavam in Kannur district. They are from tribal communities' elite classes. They have authority over other indigenous communities. Kurichyars are a group that has kept their tribal traditions alive to this day. Muthappan and mountain gods are their family deities. They have ritual kalasams such as kumbhanivedya, and kalasam, check rasam phulkari kalasam, payamkutti, and their unique folk song repertoire. Kurichya were Pazhashiraja's soldiers. They are known as Marumakkattai. A few temples in Wayanad occupy the same spot as Nayas. Kurichyar's home is close to the fields. Their house has all the hallmarks of a family residence. Kurichya women took part in the performance. Kettukalyan, Thali They will do the weapon pooja on the 10th of the month of Libra. Save the bow and arrow for puja. It is a ritualistic ceremony. Taliket Kalyanam, Tirant Kalyanam, and Vayava (Kalyanam) are all marriages held among Kurichya women. Thali Kettukalyan is not currently being performed.

Tachnadans

Tachnadans are a Wayanad tribal tribe. They are known as Tachannads because they originated in Tachanat on Nadukandi Hill. The Lord of Kottayam, who ruled the Vaithiri Amsam Kantamangalam fort, is said to have given them the name Thachananadam. 46 According to folklore, the Tachanadans sprang from Nilambur Vane, who is said to be the older. Two of them will be elders. Mudali, Eleri, Mudali are the karanas in charge of settling quarrels and marriages, while Eleri karanas are in charge of rituals. Eleri is a cleric and a magician. The Paniyars have no authority over the peasants. Kurichyar, on the other hand, is not untouchable. Two rites are performed for women: Katukuth Kalyanam and Thirand Kalyanam marriage. The "Kanayam" ceremony in Thachanadan huts is remarkable. Worship is founded on the cause. The cane serves as the foundation for this puja. Every cane will be taken away, even if everyone dies. It is a stick, not a cane. It is known as "Kanayam." This cane stick is revered regularly. This year, visuals such as Puthari Nat, Kolailla, and Kanuva will be performed. Their deity represents their deity. Kottapadi, Kanianpatta, Mutil in Vythiri, and Ambalavaya are their main settlements.

Brahmin

Brahminism spread from north to south in Kerala. Perinchallur, Panniyur, Chengannur, and Parapur are the principal villages of the Namboothiris who arrived in Kerala via the rural way. Perinchallur is in Uyameralam (Taliparam), and Payyannur Subrahmanya Temple is in Chaturghati, which means "group (region) with four corners." Perinchallur Kazhakam is a Taliparam-based Brahmin kazakam. Perinchallur was a Vedic school in Kerala's Uttara district. "Nampiti Wa" is another name for this location. Nambitis were Nambutiris who studied the Vedas. That is how this name came to be. The Talipa Rump Brahmins have a regal rank in society, and there are accounts of their frequently warring with

the Kolathiri king. According to legend, a group of Kolathiri Tulunadu Brahmins convened in Choruathar near Payyannur and others to resist the Perinchallur Brahmins. The prominent Brahmin shrine is Cherutazham, while Raghavapuram is a well-known Hanumara temple in Uttara Kerala. The major deity is Lord Ram. As previously stated, Payyannur Brahmins are Marumakkatais, distinguishing Payyannur Brahmins from Kerala Brahmins.

Dhakkattu Manakars are Payyannur Tirumumbans. The main area of the lower mana is Thrikaripur Thekumpat. The Kuttamath branch was also noticeable. They aided Theiyam and Kathakali. By conferring degrees at Talipa Rump Kottumpura, the Brahmin Acharyas of Perinchallur Kazhakam, they encouraged artists and Acharyas. Thaliparam Rajarajeswara Temple is headquartered in Kottumpuram. Chala Vellurillam is a village in Uttara, Kerala's Vilvamangalam district. It is thought to be one of the Illams Swamiyar visited. Theyatam, particularly the Uchabali, is held here. Vellurilla provides theyattas with silk, Bangla, and a ritual location.

Kanishan

Kanishan is a cult that has made astrology their clan profession. They are the inheritors of the tradition who consider problems and forecast outcomes in social and home functions. They also engage in mystical rites. For example, Kalampat and Maranpat. Kanishas (virgins) draw the palakokolam of the Patayani in southern Kerala, while Prashnik Vidhi reigns in Theyam celebrations in Uttara Kerala. As a result, Kanishan has a unique place in Kerala compared to other places. The title Nekanishan is given to the younger Nekanishan in their respective takes. God knows everything. It is stated that friends of friends are friends of friends. Thinking about God's will or destiny reveals it to society.

The community refers to them as Ganakas and Gurus. The maidens sing Poomalapat (wooden song) during the song festival in Poomalakavas. Kanisha also performs the song in Tukayas locations. Making straw umbrellas and presenting them to the Kavas is a birthright. Thrikkaikuda and Tamburatikuda are two names for this umbrella. This umbrella is also used in Chirmakavas' valeunnallam. The Kanishas revere all Theiyams. Subrahmanyam is their clan deity; nevertheless, Subrahmanyam does not have a Theya form. Similarly, certain groups in North Kerala have yet to have their own Theiyas and Theiyasthanas.

However, there has been a rising understanding of the significance of maintaining and studying folklore as India attained independence and its academic environment changed. The necessity of preserving and honouring the various folk traditions that exist in the nation has come to light more recently. Thus, the development of folklore studies in India was a result of the efforts of Western scholars. Today, India's folklore is being studied and investigated more thoroughly, and efforts are being made to comprehend and appreciate the rich tapestry of stories and melodies.

Second, certain Western academics have a propensity to romanticize and overstate the spiritual components of nations like India. This viewpoint, spurred by an interest in the exotic and mystical, produced an idealized picture of Indian culture that emphasized its mysticism and spiritual depth. This method is thought to have come into being during the Romantic

Nationalistic era and characterized the academic setting in which Indian cultural studies were extensively pursued. The study of Indian folklore is currently in its second phase.

The researchers were motivated by an internal sense of the value of their own culture and way of life during this Romantic Nationalistic era, and they regarded the study of folk customs as an honorable endeavor. There were, however, a number of restrictions and drawbacks at this time. Many academics made the mistake of reducing folklore to little more than pedantic and nationalistic symbols. They missed the bigger picture of folklore as a rich tapestry of cultural expressions and customs due to their narrow emphasis. It was frequently forgotten to seek for the culture's overall integrity.

To solve these flaws and widen the scope of the study, the third phase of Indian folklore arose. In this stage, folklore research expanded and adopted more rational methods. Researchers made an effort to systematically gather, categorize, and study folklore, aiming for a methodical and comparatively impartial approach. At this point, regional and national perspectives were supporting folklore research, which helped to include a variety of viewpoints and voices in the conversation. Researchers started to recognize the depth and richness of cultural manifestations found within folklore as their study of it advanced beyond the simple nationalism and pedantry of the earlier period.

Soman Kadaloor's words, "Bath's novel is considered as an art form that establishes harmony with the world of popular Samskarika by rejecting the language and ideology of the said adhyasamskar which shows the sense of authority" (*Folklorinte Soundharyashasthram*, 24). Overall, the third phase of Indian folklore research represented a substantial advancement over the preceding phases as it attempted to dispel prejudices, constraints, and constricting viewpoints. Scholars were better able to investigate and preserve the varied cultural history and expressions inherent in Indian folklore by using a broader and more thorough approach. This was also the time when universities began to examine and do research on folklore. According to Soman Kadaloor:

Bakhtin novel is a world of equally important sounds. He revealed the polyglot tone of the novel and its popular tradition. His vision of pluralism intersects with folklore philosophy to acknowledge different texts and distinct communities. He identifies and studies the official and authoritative group that dominates the society. He described the official cultural forms considered superior to the culture of the common people with the term 'poetic'. (22)

The study of folklore believes that folklores are created with distinctive texts regionally and temporally, and that the minds of different communities operate behind those texts. Each group is unique and each folklore is its expression. To discover this uniqueness of community life is the essence of studying folklore. The pulse of this democratic idea in folklore can be heard throughout Bhakti thought.

Conclusion

Theyyam is a captivating and spiritually significant art form that embodies Kerala's rich cultural heritage. It is a living testimony to the ideas, customs, and ancestor worship that

have impacted Keralans' life for millennia. Theyyam, through its engaging performances, opens a portal into the magical world of gods and goddesses, establishing a profound link between the divine and mortal realms. It demonstrates the eternal power of faith, art, and culture to transcend boundaries and touch people's hearts and souls.

Traditional music accompanies the performances, including drums, cymbals, and other traditional instruments. The dancers' rhythmic beats and energetic movements create an alluring ambience, luring the audience into a trance-like condition. The ceremonies entail calling the deity through song and dance, and the Theyyakkarans speak with the worshippers and seek favours through the heavenly spirit. Theyyam is a synthesis of animism, spirit worship, and Hindu mythology. The performances feature numerous folkloric deities, spirits, and legendary people. Each Theyyam has a distinct meaning and is linked to certain rituals, customs, and local community beliefs.

Theyyam's appeal has transcended regional bounds, drawing visitors and art enthusiasts from all over the world. It is a thoroughly engaging experience because of the vivacious colours, captivating dancing techniques, and spiritual aura. Through festivals, workshops, and documentation, efforts are being made to promote and preserve this antiquated art form, ensuring that Kerala's rich cultural history endures for years to come. One interesting point is that irrespective of caste and social status an un-touchable or Dalit person can enter a Brahmin house. Caste hierarchy has had a significant impact on a number of factors in the Theyyam culture. Performer selection is the primary factor. Theyyam performers traditionally originate from distinct lower-caste groups that are frequently referred to as "Dalits" or "Adivasis." Higher caste members are unable to participate in Theyyam rites due to the dominance of caste hierarchy. Within these lower-caste communities, this exclusivity has aided in the maintenance of a distinctive cultural character.

Theyyam frequently depicts themes and characters that represent the historical narratives and cultural ethos of the relevant populations. The myths, stories, and religious practices of the area are strongly related to these topics. The selection of characters and deities shown in the performances has been affected by the maintenance of caste hierarchy, emphasizing the significance of ancestral spirits and deities particular to each caste. The religious beliefs of the communities engaged are firmly ingrained in the ritual rituals linked with Theyyam performances. The sequence of offerings, the location of the performance, and the audience's participation in these rites have all been influenced by caste hierarchy. The Theyyam rites support the region's long-established traditional social order and religious standards. The prevalence of caste hierarchy affects Theyyam performers and their communities in significant socioeconomic ways. The fact that theyyam is a caste-based art form can have an impact on the economic options accessible to the performer's family as performances frequently serve as a source of revenue for them. Lower-caste performers' exploitation and their restricted access to resources have been issues that have persisted in the evolution of Theyyam.

Although caste hierarchy presents difficulties, Theyyam has also been a means of protecting the cultural heritage of these underprivileged communities. Their distinctive

customs, rituals, and oral histories are preserved in the art form, which also serves as a platform for the celebration and preservation of their cultural identity. The exclusivity of caste-based roles in Theyyam has recently been challenged, and efforts have been made to promote inclusivity by allowing performers from all castes to take part in the rites. With the help of these initiatives, the old art form can be practiced in a setting that is more egalitarian and diverse and free from the constraints imposed by the caste system. However, it is crucial to realize that challenging deeply ingrained societal conventions requires time and that the development of Theyyam continues to be shaped by its historical roots and the social dynamics of the region

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