RIVER AS A CULTURAL CONSTRUCT: MYTH AND RITUAL ON THE BANKS OF BHARATHAPPUZHA

A Thesis Submitted During 2012

To the University of Hyderabad in partial fulfilment of a Ph.D Degree in

Centre for Folk Culture Studies

By

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DECLARATION

I **Hashik N.K** hereby declare that this thesis entitled **"River as a Cultural Construct: Myth and Ritual on the Banks of Bharathappuzha"** submitted by me under the guidance and supervision of **Prof. Y.A Sudhakar Reddy** is a bonafide research work. I also declare that it has not been submitted previously in part or in full to this University or any other University or Institution for the award of any degree or diploma.

Date:

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the thesis entitled **"River as a Cultural Construct: Myth and Ritual on the Banks of Bharathappuzha"** submitted by Hashik N.K, bearing Reg.No: 07SFPH03 in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Doctor of Philosophy in the Centre for Folk Culture Studies is a bonafide work carried out by him under my supervision and guidance**.**

The thesis has not been submitted previously in part or full to this or any other University or Institution for the award of any degree or diploma.

Prof. Y.A Sudhakar Reddy   **Prof. Y.A Sudhakar Reddy**
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Glossary

Aashan: Master

Aniyara: Back stage

Attam: Performance

Ayapudava: Screen

Bhajanam: Adoration

Chenda: A cylindrical percussion

Chengila: Gong

Chilanka: Anklet bells

Dakshina: A kind of gift

Dakshina: Offering

Desham: Locality

Dikhu: Side

Dwaja sthambha: Flagstaff

Embrantiris: Tulu Brahmins

Ezhunallippu: Procession

Ezhupara: A cylindrical drum made of jackfruit wood with both faces covered with calfskin.

Guruthi: Sacrifice

Idakka: Hourglass-shaped drum

Ilathalam: Cymbals

Kachi: White piece of cloth as her lower garment.

Kalam: Pictorial drawing/floral painting

Kali: Play

Kaliachan: Master of the performance

Kalpana: Order

Kara: Inland

Karanavar: The eldest male member of a family

Kathirkoodus: Small globular packets of palmyra leave containing handfuls of paddy

Kavu: Scared grove/shrine

Kelikotu: Overture on drums

Kindi: Brass vessel

Kodi: Flag

Kols: Sticks

Kombu: Stump/branch

Koora: Screen

Kovilakam: Residence of a king

Kurumkuzhal: A short pipe

Machu: Upper surface of a ceiling

Maddalam: Drum and has two sides for playing

Mandapam: An open shed/ceremonial stage

Marthali: Necklace

Matam-kayaruka: Mounting the stage

Mel shanthi: Sub priest

Mudi: Crown/headgear

Mundu: Long piece of white cloth

Naduvazhi: Ruler

Nambuthiri: Kerala Brahmin

Nanduni: A string instrument

Nanthuni: An instrument similar to Veena

Nilavilakku: Brass lamp

Ooraalar: Hereditary trustees

Pandal: Canopy

Pantham: Rag-torch

Para: A small drum instrument

Parayeduppu: Collecting paddy

Paricha: Shield

Patalam: The nether world

Pattu: Silk

Pava: Puppet

Payasam: Sweet broth made of milk, sugar, rice etc.,

Peedam: Stool/pedestal

Pookula: Flower of coconut tree

Prasada: Remnants of the offerings to deity given to devotees in shrine/temples etc.,

Prasna: Astrological calculation

Prayashchitham: Expiation

Pulavar: Learned scholar

Rakshadhikari: Protector

Shankhu: Conch

Shudhikalasham: Purification with water

Sreekovil: Sanctum sanctorum

Swaroopam:

Swaymboo: Self grown

Tayambaka: Drum beating

Thalam: Plate

Thanthri: Main priest

Thattakam: Jurisdiction

Thiris: Wick of a lamp

Thottam: Poetic narrative which explains the origin and evolution of the particular deity or goddess or hero

Thudi: Small percussion instrument

Tirtha –Yatra: Pilgrimage

Vaitari: Rhythmic syllables

Vala: Bangles

Valli: Climbing plant

Vattam: Round

Veekan chenda: A cylindrical percussion instrument which use for basic rhythm

Velichapadu: Oracle

Vettila: Betel leaf

Vigraha: Idol

Chapter-I
<u>Introduction</u>

Kerala state is situated on the South Western part of the Indian peninsula. The land is rich in the availability of water and there are forty four rivers flowing throughout the state, out of which forty one are flowing towards west and the rest towards the east. Several places of politico-historical and cultural importance are located on the banks of these rivers. Such rich heritage reveals how the rivers of Kerala influenced different realms of the lives of the people. The water streams in Kerala are known as '*puzha*'. The Malayalam word *puzha* means a small river/stream of water or water flows. Generally in India, the large natural stream of water known as *nadi*. The word *nadi* is derived from Sanskrit root word '*nad*' meaning channel, stream or flow. In the case of Kerala, almost all water streams are small comparing to other parts of India and the people name it as *puzha* (small water stream).

The Bharathappuzha is the biggest of all rivers in Kerala. It is also known as '*nila*'(means'long') and '*peraru*' (big river). The river originates from the '*trimurthi sangam*' of Anamalai hills in Western Ghats and flows through the three district of Kerala (Palakkad, Thrishur and Malappuram). The river is located in the central part state and divides it into Northern and Southern area. Finally, the river joins with the Arabian Sea at Ponnani. The three districts have many villages on the river banks which are inhabited by different cultural communities. All the communities have their own worldview and perceptions of the river. Thus the river is considered not only as a material object, but also, as a symbol of their entire life of the people living in and around it.

Significance of the Study

The study on Bharathappuzha is significant for two reasons: Firstly, The River Bharathappuzha divides the state into Northern and Southern regions and flows through the central part of the state. Incidentally, this part of Keral is known as Cultural Capital.   Like any other river in India, Bharathappuzha has its own role in molding knowledge, beliefs, customs, practices, material and culture of various communities which reside on its banks. The river has four major tributaries. They are *thoothappuzha, gayathrippuzha*, *kalpathippuzha* and *kannadippuzha*. All the

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folklore on the river banks are transmitted from one generation to another verbally and non- verbally. There are many shrines and worshiping places especially dedicated to Bhagavathi on the banks which eventually become the basis for the existence of different folklore forms. The first six months in a year is the time of festivals such as *vela* in the origin part of the river, *pooram* in middle banks and *thalapoli* on the end part of Bharathappuzha in the *kavu* (village shrine). A rich tradition is embedded in the folklore forms performed by the people belonging to different communities. Therefore it constitutes a vital source material for the folkloric study which points out how they construct, represent and view their own selves in relation to the river. Hence, folklore is the expression of the folk that speaks about their own understanding of their lifestyle patterns. It means they view the world around them in a particular way. It can be called as the 'worldview' of their community. Worldview is the fundamental cognitive orientation of an individual or society encompassing the entirety of the individual or society's knowledge and perspective including natural philosophy; fundamental, existential, and normative postulates; or themes, values, emotions, and ethics[1]. Different communities understand and interpret the river as per their worldview and call it by different names. It is a part of the cultural identity.

Secondly, Bharathappuzha is dying due to various natural and human interventions. The decreases of rain, sand mining, deforestation have been accelerating the death. The river is the sources of water to the villagers and agricultural activities on the banks. The life and lore of the people living on the banks depend on the river Bharathappuzha itself. Naturally, the changes which occurred in the flow and course of river may affect the life and culture of the people. Bharathappuzha is a centre of discussion both in the academic and the non-academic spheres of Kerala. The decay of river will affect the folk culture of different communities on the banks. With the onslaught of changes that have occurred in the geography on the river banks and due to modernisation and commercialisation, there is a transformation even in the consciousness of various communities living there. Thus, the river is regarded as a commodity since the ritual festivals performed on the banks have been changing in the course of time and space.

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[1] Gary B. Palmer, *Toward A Theory of Cultural Linguistics*, Texas: University of Texas Press, 1996, Pp. 114.

Nature and Scope of the Study

The Nature of present study is based on folkloric approach which focuses on the construction of various notions about an individual river and how they are expressed in the folklore of different communities in different ways. In India, rivers are centrifugal, centripetal and centrifocal forces that draw several communities to perform several rituals, sacred and secular not only on the banks but also in the places in and around their course. However, it is interesting to note that there are many Bhagavathi shrines that are situated on the banks of Bharathappuzha from its origin to end part and the folk communities conceive Bharathappuzha in their day to day life through the concept and ritual practices associated with the mother goddess, Bhagavathi. Each community looks at the river in relation to congregational annual festivals that are conducted on the banks of Bharathappuzha. In the process, each community articulate itself as being a part of the larger community and express overtly through the actions, objects, performance, ideologies etc., their own identity as well live in solidarity with the other communities.

Thus far not many studies have focussed on the 'lore' on the banks of the rivers connecting the physical landscape with cultural landscape and therefore, the scope of the present study can be extended to other such studies on rivers as cultural construct.

Area of the Study

To pursue the study in a meaningful way, after conducting several preliminary surveys, the area of study is fixed after considering convenience and feasibility. Bharathappuzha flows through three districts namely Palakkad, Thrishur and Malappuram. The river originates from the Western Ghats and enters Palakkad district. Then flows through Thrishur district and finally culminates in to the Arabian Sea. The banks of Bharathappuzha are taken as the larger area of study. Within the banks of the river, the geographical area is categorised into three broad regions: one is the Palakkad area (origin part) and the second one is Thrishur part (middle part); and the third is found in Malappuram district (end part).

Review of Literature

The present study will comprise various literatures that discuss the concept of river in general and this will give a comprehensive idea to the research questions.

In order to have a good understanding on the concept of river, the literature survey is done by looking at some of the works and then organised the literature survey in the following manner:

i.   Literature related to theoretical and conceptual frame.

ii. Literature pertaining to river as natural landscape.

iii. Literature pertaining to river as cultural landscape

iv. Literature related to cultural life of the folk of Kerala especially, on the banks of the river Bharathappuzha.

The first type of literature gives an understanding on the issues related to 'nature/culture' dichotomy and how humans have negotiated with it through the ages by incorporating it with the sacral behaviour and religious ideology. The second type furnishes studies on rivers and their natural landscapes which constitute physical features of river courses and the human intervention against the river and how it affects the natural course of the river. The third type of literature provides a critical insight into the concept of sacred and secular notions of different cultures and how humans constructed their worldview on water which is a basic element of sustenance. The fourth type of literature is to construct a folkloric approach to understand rivers and their lore.

i. Literature related to theoretical and conceptual frame

This part will cover the conceptual issues regarding nature, culture and religion. The contemporary theoretical issues related to ritual studies are also discussed here.

The Evolutionary Approach

The first approach to explain rituals is to study the historical origin which shows the evolution of rituals through various stages of history. Scholars believed that if they could discover this origin, they would be able to explain the contemporary rituals of man. This approach seeks the origin of rituals by seeking the meaning of ritual, myth, and religion. For W. Robertson Smith, sacrifice was motivated by the desire for communion between members of a primitive group and their god.[2] Later Robertson Smith's theory on the origin of rituals influenced James Frazer, Emile Durkheim, and Sigmund Freud. For Frazer, the search led to magic, a

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[2] W. Robertson Smith, *Lectures on the Religion of the Semites*, London: Continuum International Publishing Group, (1889). 2009 (reprint).

stage preceding religion. Both Smith's and Frazer's theories led Durkheim to seek the origin of ritual and religion in Totemism which is based on the study of Australia ritual. According to Durkheim in Totemism, scholars find the original form of ritual and the division of experience into the sacred and the profane.[3] The ritual behaviour entails an attitude that is concerned with the sacred acts and things.

According to **Durkheim,** the reference, or object, of ritual is the belief system of a society, which is constituted by a classification of everything into the two realms of the sacred and the profane. This classification is taken as a universal feature of religion. Belief systems, myths, and the like, are viewed as expressions of the nature of the sacred realm, in which ritual becomes the determined conduct of the individual in a society expressing a relation to the sacred and the profane. The sacred is that aspect of a community's beliefs, myths, and sacred objects that are set apart and forbidden. The function of ritual in the community is to provide proper rules for action in the realm of the sacred as well as to supply a bridge for passing into the realm of the profane. Freud was also convinced that the origin of religion and ritual is to be found in sacrifice.[4]

Veena Das's edited book *Handbook of Indian Sociology* is divided in three parts. In the first part she discusses the relation between religious beliefs and environment and the second part is about the combinational mode of subsistence. In the last part of this book she discusses the relationship between environment and public sphere.[5] In an article from this book, 'Ecology and environment by Rita Brara she argues that culture emerges in accordance with the environment of the area. Vedic hymns are a model of ecological engagement in the living world which is encoded in a religious world view. Religious beliefs implicate in the conception of nature, time and space at the dynamic interface of believers in a socio-ecological context. Vedic Hinduism has given importance to the physical environment and considers them as sacred. e.g., Ganga, Shiva. The landscape of India shows the connection between life and nature. Most of the temples located on the banks of tirthas show the beliefs in life after death. Hindu culture considers east as sacred and

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[3] Emile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life,* Oxford: Eng. Trans., Carol Cosman, Oxford University Press (1912), 2001.

[4] Sigmund Freud, *Totem and Taboo*, London: Routledge (1913), 1999(reprint).

[5] Rita Brara, "Ecology and Environment" in Veena Das (ed.). *Handbook of Indian Sociology*, NewDelhi: Oxford University Press, 2004.

Muslims consider west as sacred. That means environment moulds the life of people. This relationship with environment expresses their culture. All these environmental concerns have led to the appraisal of religion and moral beliefs.

The Functional Approach

The origin-evolutionary approach of ritual behaviour has been rejected as quite an inadequate approach to explain human behaviour because none could verify any of these bold ideas. Therefore, they have remained as creative speculations that cannot be confirmed or denied. The second approach to explain ritual behaviour is based on the empirical data gathered by actual observation. The first approach was more concentrated on the ideas of origin whereas; the central idea of the second approach looked at the functions which means the nature of ritual is to be defined in terms of its function in a society.

The aim of functionalism is to explain ritual behaviour in terms of individual needs and social equilibrium. Ritual is thus viewed as an adaptive and adjustive response to the social and physical environment. Many leading authorities on religion and ritual studies such as Bronisław Malinowski,[6] A.R. Radcliffe-Brown[7], E.E. Evans-Pritchard[8], Clyde Kluckhohn, Talcott Parsons, and Edmund Leach[9], adopted a functional approach to explain ritual, religion and myth.

Most functional explanations of rituals attempt to explain this behaviour in relation to the needs and maintenance of a society. Later this approach invited serious criticism. If the aim of functionalism is to explain why rituals are present in a society, it will be necessary to clarify certain terms like need, maintenance and a society functioning adequately. This becomes crucial if they are to be taken as empirical terms.

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[6] Bronisław Malinowski, *Coral Gardens and Their Magic,* Vol. 2, London: Routledge, (1935), 2002 (reprint).

[7] A.R. Radcliffe-Brown, *The Andaman Islanders*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1922.

[8] E.E. Evans-Pritchard, *Nuer Religion*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1956.

[9] Edmund Leach, *Political Systems of Highland Burma*, London: Athlone Press, 1970.

The Structural Approach

Societies were formed on the basis of relatively closed systems. Its respective institutional structures determine objectivity in thought, basic values for emotive control and final authority for moral action for the members of their societies. Each institution was to be thought of as a shared predicate and thus was formed for each individual of a given society a constitutive category of the individuals thinking, feeling and acting. It means that an individual being which has its foundation in the organism and the circle of whose activities is therefore strictly limited, and also a social being, which represents the highest reality in the intellectual and moral order that we can know by observation. In so far as he belongs to society, the individual transforms himself, both when he thinks and when acts. His conclusion is that the reality which religious thought expresses is the society. The Belgian born cultural anthropologist, **Levistraus,** occupies a central position within structuralism. He continued a tradition from the Durkhiemian notion of primitive religion and joined it with semiotics. By synthesizing these two traditions, Straus created structural anthropology. He describes culture in various aspects of human life like kinship, food and myth. In his, *The elementary Structures of Kinship* (1949)[10], *The Savage Mind* (1966)[11], *Structural Anthropology* (1976)[12] various glimpses of nature are discussed and he puts forward a new tool to understand the analysis of culture.

In his view human societies are structured. The basic structure of human beings is binary (nature and culture) and it is expressed in different ways in different cultures. People create myth upon the basic human problems and try to escape from the disturbances of real life events. The myths examined are dual- either directly or indirectly with the discovery of fire and hence of cooking; the latter is symbolic in indigenous thought of the transition from nature to culture. It means cooking is the part of culture and is the transformation of natural object into a cultural one. It has also happened in the case of human development. The language is also the creation of humans and is a result of culture or a part of culture. He continues that myth is a

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[10] Claude Levi-Strauss, *The Elementary Structures of Kinship*, Boston: Beacon Press, 1969.

[11] Claude Levi-Strauss, *The Savage Mind*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966.

[12] Claude Levi-Strauss, *Structural Anthropology*, New York: Basic Books, 1976.

language. In a given language certain sequence of sounds are associated with definite meanings and they aim at discovering a reason for the linkage between those sounds. They are equally present in other languages although the meaning they conveyed was entirely deferent. Humans experience is the various connotations of communication codes. In every society the things are signified in various ways and society produce the meaning in accordance with those codes. That is why different meanings are created about a single event. This meaning production happens or expresses in various folklore forms. Conventionally, humans call it as 'culture.' **Bourdieu's** idea is against the objectivist concept of Levi-Strauss. In Levistrausian view, society can be understood as an external force that determines or constrains the action of the human subject. But in his view, this objective approach fails to answer how human agents are involved in producing and sustaining the society. The concept of *habitus* and field are the basic outlines of Bourdieus in Sociology. The natural character of humans is acquired through a lifelong process of learning and socialization that gives the competence to respond to social situations. Society has a structural hierarchy. Man uses these resources and gain symbolic power. In other words, they become rich with the use of natural resources and gain social status. So nature is the way to get recognition and an attempt to transform the way of culture. In his view, man gains control over resources depending upon the capital. This capital later may change as the 'symbolic one' or a cultural one. This cultural capital transforms nature in the form of power or domination. It becomes actual capital in symbolic way.[13]

The Historical Approach

A third approach to the study of ritual is centered on the studies of historians of religion. Most historians of religions, such as Gerardus van der Leeuw in Netherlands, Rudolf Otto in Germany, Joachim Wach and Mircea Eliade[14] in the United States, and E.O. James in England, have held the view that ritual behaviour signifies or expresses the sacred (the realm of transcendent or ultimate reality). Each religion has the totality of a structure of knowledge and values. That must be a unique configuration. It must develop its own criterion of validity; it cannot judge

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[13] Pierre Bourdieu (1986). "The forms of capital", in J. Richardson (Ed.) *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education,* New York: Greenwood, Pp.241-258.

[14] Mircea Eliade, *Birth and Rebirth*, New York: Harper and Row, (1958). 1965(reprint).

the attention of empirical science or by that of another religion. Science's way of looking at the nature or world is hypothetical, pragmatic and functional while religion looks at nature as goodness, sacredness, wicked, evil and taboo. It means religion is more related to human feelings. Each clan has a totem, usually an animal or a plant. The totem is a symbol. It is the emblem of clan. Actually religion is the construction of humans on the concept of nature. That's why religion became an inextricably interlinking element of culture. Society is not only a biological or physical entity but also a moral reality. It is not reducible to the more fundamental laws of nature. Indeed, the knowledge of these more fundamental laws of nature has its source in society itself and he affirmed that any unification of sciences is possible only if man is taken as the centre. This approach, however, has never been represented as an explanation of ritual. The basic problem with this approach is that it cannot be confirmed unless scholars agree on the existence of a transcendental reality beforehand.

The Performance Approach

In the Aristotelian way, a performance is a mimetic behaviour whereas in the opinion of **Clifford Geertz**, performance is one of the most basic ways to study human interaction. A performance is always an 'emergent' phenomenon. The emergent quality of performance rests in the interplay between communicative resources, individual competence and the goals of the participants in particular situations. The keys of performance such as genres, acts, events and ground rules for the conduct of performance create the structure of conventionalized performance for the community.

Richard Bauman conceives performance as 'a unifying thread tying together the marked, segregated aesthetic genres and other spheres of verbal behaviour into a general unified conception of verbal art as a way of speaking'.[15] The verbal art includes narration of myths, stories and related genres. The Performance brings them together in culture-specific ways that are to be discovered

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[15] In 1984 with the work *Verbal Art as Performance* Richard Bauman sketch a new framework for the study of performances. His idea is that verbal communication carries an artistic or aesthetic dimension) which is connected to the specific setting and culture of those participating in the act of the communication. See Richard Bauman, *Verbal art as* performance, Illinois: Waveland Press, 1984,p.5.

within the culture of a community. In a way people communicate during specific situations and settings and these communications are done for certain reasons that will have meaning to the members of folk groups and communities. Every performance differs from every other depending on the context and the group in which the performance occurs. Bauman explains that the emergent quality of performance rests in the interplay of communicative resources, individual competence, and the goals of the participants within the context of particular situations. In other words, everything that goes on during a performance and everything that surrounds it affects the nature of the performance. Performance becomes constitutive of the domain of verbal art as spoken communication.[16] This approach highlights interaction between individual artistry and cultural expectations. It also encourages researchers to explore the processes of performing in particular situations and also the local ideas and practices that are related to this. By following the oral nature of performances, Ruth Finnegan explains the nature of oral performance.

According to **Ruth Finnegan** the idea and practice of performance clearly have a particular import for oral expression and is a major focus of research in verbal arts and traditions.[17] The oral speaker is a performer and since speakers vary in the arts, so will the style, structure and even content of what he/she says. Unlike the author of a written document, the oral performers' narrative account does not always remain as the same and different individual performer has different ways of presenting facts. This means that there is a constant interpretation and reinterpretation in terms of the current situation. She defined oral literature as unwritten literature which depends on the performer who formulates it in words during a specific occasion helping it to be actualized. Therefore, the words of the text alone cannot be the ultimate basis of interpreting and understanding the meanings embedded in a performance. It is essential that for a complete understanding of the oral words in performance, other aspects of performance have to be taken into consideration. In a way Finnegan was concentrated on the concept of oral composition which is a totality of many elements of the performance and

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[16] *Ibid*

[17] Ruth Finnegan, *Oral Traditions and The Verbal Arts- A Guide to Research Practices*, London: Routledge, 1992.

takes different forms in accordance with different cultures. First there is the whole aspect of performance. The oral speaker is by definition a performer, and all the arts of drama, rhetoric, display and verbal facility may be relevant in his performance. Unlike the author of a written document, the author of an oral historical account does not always remain the same. In the case of traditions handed down over long periods the author is necessarily different and different individuals will have different ways of presenting facts with different prejudices and different interpretations. Over a period of time, this is likely to result in many changes in a very complicated way. Oral tradition is also more constantly subjected to outside influences because of its close connection with the current social situation. Each performance is on a specific occasion and each occasion is in turn subjected to the whole changing social background. This means that there is a constant interpretation and reinterpretation in terms of the current situation. **Richard Schechner** defines two types of rituals: sacred and secular. The annual festival can be classified as sacred rituals because the specific form of performance is associated with expressing or enacting religious beliefs. According to Schechner 'every action, no matter how small or encompassing, consists of twice-behaved behaviours'.[18] The ritual is a cultural form and culture represents identity. Then this identity will be expressed through performance. The restored behaviour or repetition is an important characteristic in ritual performance. This signifies the performed identities that occur repeatedly through ritual activity. In another way, the relationships between beliefs and the enactment of the beliefs through ritual performance on one side and the respective rituals of communities on the other side have been influenced by historical and new social life of the community.

In the view of **Victor Turner**, in his book Forest of symbols cultures are most fully expressed in and made conscious of themselves in their rituals and performances. Rituals are highly context based and driven by the common intentions i.e., the conscious or unconscious agreements made by the participants. According to Turner the liminal experience of individual communities may lead to a social bonding to another community.[19] By studying the rites of passage of *Ndembu* tribe

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[18] *Ibid*

[19] Victor Turner, *From Ritual to Theatre: The Human Seriousness of Play*, New York: PAJ Publications, 1982.

of Zamba, Victor Turner emphasizes the liminal status of the ritual subject and this status would create a feeling of social bonding between the members of a community.[20] Turner's concept of 'liminality', which he has developed from Van Gennep's theories on rites of passage, points to the possibility that performed identity may emerge from within the ritual frame that guides the activity of the action.[21] Liminal phase signifies a state where participants in ritual experience gets a temporary suspension of structural norms. Turner indicates ritual as the transformational dialectic of structure and anti-structure to serve as a vehicle for unfolding social dramas.[22] Rituals are a performance that has structure and continuity. There are various kinds of rituals such as to mark passage of time (harvest festival, birthday), to transform social status (wedding, puberty) and to ensure good fortune (prayers).

ii. Literature pertaining to river as natural landscape.

S.M Haslam's book *River Plants* discuses the river plants in Britain and North America.[23]. The first part of the book describes the effect of different physical features of the river on the plants. The changes such as deforestation, industrial effluents, farming, domestic use of water in both rural and urban centres, use of fertilizers and pesticides for agricultural purposes etc., affect the flow of water stream and it also affect the decaying of plants on the river banks. In addition to this, it describes the vegetation of streams on soft rocks and hard rocks. Moreover, the

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[20] Victor Turner, *The Forest of Symbols: Aspects of Ndembu Ritual*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1967.

[21] Victor Turner, *From Ritual to Theatre: The Human Seriousness of Play*, New York: PAJ Publications, 1982. Van Gennep defined rites of passage as the rites which accompany every change of place, state, social position and age. According to Van Gennep, all rites of passage are marked by three phases: separation (preliminal), transition (liminal) and incorporation (post-liminal). The first phase or separation signifies the detachment of the individual or group from an earlier fixed social structure or a cultural condition. In the liminal period, the ritual subject passes through a cultural realm. Liminality comes from the word 'limen' which means 'on the threshold' where one experiences a luminal state or space, one is the edge of something new, a transitional place. In the incorporation phase, the subject is consummated. In the luminal phase the subject are between the positions assigned and arranged by custom. In reincorporation when a person who has gone through a ritual return to society with a new status. See Arnold Van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage*, London: Routledge, (1960) 2004.

[22] *Ibid*

[23] S.M Haslam, *River Plants,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978.

loss of these plants affects the entire nature of water flow. The author fails to suggest a solution to protect these river plants.

Radhakant Bharati[24] in his book *Rivers of India* categorises Indian rivers on the basis of its flowing nature like flowing in to the Bay of Bengal and flowing in to the Arabian Sea. The minerals of the river and the Ganga, Brahmaputra and North West region are also a part of river system in India. This categorisation is on the basis of the geographical quality of this region. This book has offered the technical data about the rivers in India. River was an important way of transportation. This may be the reason for many temples are situated on the river banks.

Grady Clay's edited book *Water and Landscape* [25] explains that water is an essential ingredient in forming the life of the community. The communities living on the river banks consider rivers as a part of life. Natural resources and features of the area decide the land use pattern, transportation and economic considerations of the area. Land is also related to water availability such as circulation, commercial, residential and recreation.

P.L.Madan's work *River Ganga: A Cartographic Mystery* describes that from the times immemorial, the Egyptians, Babylonians, and Greeks had different notion about India.[26] It reflects the cartography of the above people. But they could not collect any scientific or empirical cartographical data. So they got a misguided notion of India. Here the author describes the changing perspectives and perceptions of cartography making. The fallacies of westerners can be seen. An example that in one map, two Ganga Rivers are flowing: one from south central India and another from North West. So in this work the author has collected the early geographical literature and tries to find out the reasons behind the mystery of cartography.

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[24] Radhakant Bharati, *Rivers of India*, New Delhi: National Book Trust, 1985.

[25] Grady Clay (ed.), *Water and Landscape*, Newyork: Mc Graw Hill book Company, 1979.

[26] P.L.Madan, *River Ganga –a cartographic mystery*, New Delhi: Manoharlal Publishers and Distributors, 2005.

Pabhat Chandra Sabhapandit's edited book *Flood Problem of Assam-cause and remedies*[27] discusses the different causes both natural and human that leads to the flooding of Brahmaputra and the pathetic condition of Assam. With the help of better planning these calamities can be prevented to some extent. Application of latest technology with national and international help will also help to solve the problem. People need food security, health and ecological securities for the welfare of their life. The editor argues that no scholarly work conveying different aspects of this problem is available. He says that this may be the first book on such a type. Most articles in this work give a peripheral study of the problem and none of the work deals with intensity and solution of the problem.

INTACH Environmental Series[28] published a book, *The Tehri Dam-a prescription for disaster*. The work is based on the environmental impact of Tehri dam in the mid Himalaya. Under the direction of former Prime Minister a working group was formed and they submitted their final report on 1986 august. This Tehri dam project gain financial assistance from Russia. Tehri dam project consists of a 260.5 meters high earth and rock fill dam under construction near the confluence of Bhagirathi and Bhilangana rivers downstream of Tehri town in Uttar Pradesh (western Himalaya). There are many problems that are dealt with in this report and no scientific investigation has been carried out to establish the load bearing capacity of the rocks at tehri. A lot of technological aspects have been laid down about the dam but no studies have been made on the social aspects of its construction. Natural flow of a river is blocked by constructing a dam over it. The river bed of the reservoir begins to rise and that will destroy the towns such as Rishikesh, Haridwar and Munikireti. In short, there are some glimpses of social problem that are dealt with in this report. But they did not forward a clear cut idea about these aspects. They concentrate more on the scientific study.

Eberhard Czaya's in his book *Rivers of the World* [29] explains the nature of rivers and how rivers shape themselves in the landscape through which they pass, by

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[27] Pabhat Chandra Sabhapandit (ed.), *Flood Problem of Assam-cause and remedies,* New Delhi: Omson Publications, 2000.

[28] INTACH Environmental Series, *The Teri Dam-a prescription for disaster*, New Delhi: INTACH, 1987.

[29] Eberhard Czaya, *Rivers of the World*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981.

means of erosion and deposition. Humans and rivers are closely connected. River shaping the valley depends on the alluvial erosion and the carrying capacity of water. The basic geological types of the world decide the climate of the land. This work is a scientific study about the major rivers of the world.

Avijith Gupta's edited book *Large Rivers-Geomorphology and Management*[30] has three parts. The structural controls of the river determine the change in its direction, gradient, shape and behaviour. Tectonics, climate and estuary may control a long river in combination. The author says that many rivers are undergoing large shift due to the climate change, flood, sea level changes, activities in the drainage basins and the channel. The second part is a case study about the major rivers of the world. The last part is on the structural changes of Nile river due to intervention creating negative impact on the river. It needs to study the river with the help of modern techniques such as satellite imagery, channel geometry analysis and mapping. In short this book focuses only on the physical environment of the river. The author hopes that this kind of studies will help the sustainable management of the river in the age of climate change.

John S Bridge's book *River and Flood plains-forms, processes and sedimentary record* [31] is about the origin, nature and evolution of alluvial rivers and flood plains. The author makes an overview of the river systems in the world. The main part of the book discusses geometry, water flow, sediment transport, erosion, deposition related to modern alluvial rivers and flood plains. At the end of the book, the author puts forward a method to study the rivers and its deposits. The aim of the author is to understand the nature of modern rivers and flood plains. This understanding will be helpful before any problem concerning rivers and flood plains past or present. The author suggests that by studying the life style of ancient land dwelling organism and organic remains in fluvial deposits will be helpful to understand the human interaction with river and flood plains.

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[30] Avijith Gupta (ed.), *Large Rivers-Geomorphology and Management*, United Kingdom: John Wiley and Sons Ltd, ,2007.

[31] John S Bridge, *River and Flood plains-forms, processes and sedimentary record*, U.S.A: Blackwell Publishers, 2003.

Dev.Raj Khana's book *Ecology and Pollution of Ganga river*[32] explains the pollution of Ganga river by a different cause. The Ganga is a holy river in India. Due to the increasing population and industrial growth, the water of Ganga became polluted. The human interventions such as the domestic wastes and the remains of human body affect the physio-chemical characteristics of the river. This study would help the environmental planning of the place Haridwar. In short it is a study about how human intervention affects the river system.

iii. Literature pertaining to river as cultural landscape

In this section the general concept of rivers, various views and writings about it are discussed.

Christopher Key Chapple's book *Hinduism and Ecology*, explores religions and the environmental role of the multifaceted Hindu tradition in the development of a greater ecological awareness in India.[33] The ethical values of the society emerge from the human attitude towards other humans and nature. Hinduism considers ecology as sacred and it reflects in various religious texts. The intention of myth about water and river is to spread awareness among people about the sacredness of natural objects in human life. The different chapters of this book deals with how traditional concepts of nature in the classical texts might inspire or impede an eco-friendly attitude among modern Hindus and they describe some grassroot approache to environmental protection. They observe the Gandhian principles of minimal consumption, self-reliance, simplicity, and sustainability. They explore forests and sacred groves in text and tradition and review the political and religious controversies surrounding India's sacred river systems. Many authors look Hinduism as a text oriented one and they do not look at the other oral texts.

Debnath Debashis in his book *Ecology and Rituals in Tribal Areas* explain the representation of ecology in tribal culture especially in West Bengal.[34] He gave

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[32] Dev.Raj Khana, *Ecology and Pollution of Ganga river*, New Delhi: Ashish Publishing House, 1993.

[33] Christopher Key Chapple & Marry Evelyn Tucker, *Hinduism and Ecology*, Harward: Harward Divinity Publication, 2000.

[34] Debnath Debashis, *Ecology and Rituals in Tribal Areas*, New Delhi: Sarup and Sons Publication, 2003.

various definitions and also studied the relation between ritual and belief. Tribal festivals inextricably interlinked with the seasons of nature. The social function of festivals and rites are the result of it. It makes a distinction between Brahminical and tribal religion. In short the structure of rituals and its changing pattern will expose the individual and collective attitudes of tribes towards their ecological settings. It means that the tribals create their life as an integral part of their natural world. The author gives only some hints about what will happen to the changing scenario of their attitudes about nature.

Udai Prakash in his book *Motifs in Indian Mythology- Their Greek and Other Parallels* compares different motifs of Indian culture and the culture of other parts of the world.[35] The removal of sin through the touch of water is in actual belief among different cultures around the world. The number 'seven' is sacred among Indians, Persians, Sumarians, Assyrians, Greeks, Teutonic, Celtic and other peoples of Europe. All these show the importance of water in people's life in different parts of world. The legends of creation about birth and death of several characters of ancient Indian tradition is in one way or the other related to river. He argues that the fertility aspects of various natural forces may be seen in the birth legends of many traditional characters. The author has taken a few legends on which comparative mythology and folklore may throw some light. The legends picked up are mainly from the 'Mahabharata', a few from the 'Ramayana'. The author generalized all those things and fails to explain how it happened.

Narendranath Bhattacharya's book *The Indian Mother Goddess* proposes the transformation of matrilineal domination to patriarchal society.[36] All religious practices and beliefs were modified according to the new ideals of society. People started to worship sky goddess. It is a hierarchical life. Women were considered as the symbols of fertility. Likewise girls used red colour of vermilion after the marriage and this colour was also used for the fertility rituals in agriculture. In short all the latter period fertility rituals were the continuation of matrilineal society. The

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[35] Udai Prakash Arora, *Motifs in Indian Mythology- Their Greek and Other Parallels*, New Delhi: Indica Publishing House, 1981.

[36] Narendranath Bhattacharya, *Indian Mother Goddess*, New Delhi: Manohar Book Service, 1970.

author failed in substantiating his argument. This study correlates the cult of the Indian mother goddess with similar cults found in different parts of the world. It reveals interesting historical process working behind the origin and development of the cult. In '*The puranic texts relating to the rivers of India*', the author classifies the rivers flowing from different mountains like *Mahendra, Sahya, and Vindhya*. The main argument is that many rivers still retain its ancient name. The author makes a descriptive study and fails to establish how people consider river as a part and parcel of their lives. Author concentrates on *puranic* texts and describes the mountains and rivers on the basis of this assumption.

Kapila Vatsyayan's book *Prakrti: - The Integral Vision* shows that in many parts of India, people create secular beliefs on the river sect.[37] Many communities followed the worldview of their ancestors and their division of year was related to the natural phenomena. The various concepts of *panchabhuthas* (five elements) express the role of them in their lives. The dwelling place of evil was the water and explains the importance of water in their life. Water has two uses- it is a purifying element and an evil element. The author looks at the relation of ecology and morality. In short this book explores the concept of the primal elements (sky, air, fire, water, earth) which has governed and determined the evolution of civilization and culture.

Edward Morr's book *The Hindu Pantheon* discusses the conceptual issues between Shaivaits and Vaishnavaits. He studies the origin of different myths of river Ganga and how they have paved way to the origin of different religious groups in Hindu religion.[38] The author compares Indian gods such as Shiva, Vishnu and Brahma as a continuation of the Egyptian gods Osiris, Horus and Typhoni. The Vaishnavaits argue that god Vishnu is more related to water. So the river Ganga came from Vishnu's feet. This work was illustrated with examples from Morr's own collection of Hindu artefacts, which are currently displayed in the British museum. This book is illustrative of the enlightenment concept of education of foreign culture and religion. It was significant as it broke from European preconceptions that

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[37] Kapila Vatsyayan (ed.), *Prakrti- The Integral Vision –Vol 3*, New Delhi: Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, , 1995.

[38] Edward Morr, *The Hindu Pantheon*, New Delhi: Asian Educational Series, 1995.

Hinduism was a largely inferior and mystical religion. So the major problems of the argument are based on secondary data and looks at Hindu religion as an oriental one.

Dubois A. Abbey & Henry K. Beauchamp studied the Hindu practices, rituals and ceremonies in their book, *Hindu Manners, Customs and Ceremonies*.[39] Abbey's work represents the earlier stage of inquiry into Hinduism. The authors look into the south Indian Dravidian beliefs and argue that it is very different from the versions of the faith as expounded by the north Indian Hinduism. The connection between seven numbers, seven *risis* and seven sacred rivers were the influence of north Indian Hinduism. Most of the Hindu customs embedded with river was people making offerings for rain. Based on an 1815 manuscript by a French missionary, this comprehensive work offers a unique panorama of early 19th century Indian life related to caste system, ceremonial procedures, rules, marriage, fasting, widowhood, funerary rites, literature and religion. The basic problem is that the author has taken a more gloomy view of Hinduism and it is based on the European concept of Hinduism.

Hertel R Bardley and **Cynthi Annttumes** edited the book *Living Banaras-Hindu Religion in Cultural Context.* It introduces a group of people who considered that death on the banks of a river was something to be proud of.[40] It looks at the relation between gods and natural objects. The origin of the name Varanasi means the city between Varna and Asi rivers. Banaras is the common platform of different communities in India. This study focuses on the new notion on the 'urban popular religion'. Like in Banaras, it is the combination of traditions and various performances that have started from decades earlier are prevalent even now. It shows the communal identity and political conflict among the various groups. In this work one article, *The goddess of the Vindhyasin Banaras* by **Cynthia Ann Hume** focuses on local forms of worship to a deity called as *vindhyavasini*. There are six *vindhyavasini* temples situated in Banaras and the author argues that all these temples reflect the diversity of culture among the believers.

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[39] Dubois A Abbey and Henry K Beauchamp, *Hindu Manners, Customs and Ceremonies*, New Delhi: Asian Educational Series, 1996.

[40] Hertel R Bardley and Cynthi Annttumes (eds.), *Living Banaras- Hindu Religion in Cultural Context,* New Delhi: Manoharlal Publishers, 1998.

Surinder Mohan Bharadwaj in his book, *Hindu Places of Pilgrimage in India- A Study in Cultural Geography*,[41] discusses the Hindu places of pilgrimage on the banks of river in India. Cultural geography which is profane to the secular world and the purification value of water are the major things that are discussed in this book. The influence and the expansion of Aryan culture in the south, the sacred place names mentioned in the epic are also analyzed in this work. Earlier, people might have lived on the river banks and that helps in the understanding of the spatial dimensions and interpretations of the Aryan and non- Aryan cultures of ancient India. Accordingly, the concept of ritual purification through bathing is a contribution of the Dravidian people of Indus valley. The author traces the origin and evolution of Hindu pilgrimage from the period of Mahabharata and categories the sacred places on the basis of distances travelled by the pilgrims and their cultural diversity. The authors include the patterns of pilgrimage circulation in India and their meaning in the context of Hindu tradition. He recognizes the pre-Aryan origins of Hindu gods, goddesses and sacred places. The work selects a region and shrines on the margins of three language areas and concentrates on the north Indian places of pilgrimage whereas, avoids the south Indian regions.

Enrich Zimmer's book *Myth and Symbol in Indian Art and Civilization* looks at the Indian Concept of river. In India, rivers are regarded to be female and a mother. Ganga has taken an important role in Bengal life and the people considered it as the replica of human form[42]. Origin myth of Ganga depicted in Ramayana, Mahabharata, and Bhagavata *purana* also consider it as female. Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva are the usual deities on the banks of many rivers in India. Ganga became a proto type because in India, cultivation first starts on the regions of the Ganga River. The emergence of Bhagirathi as a symbol of purity is because she belongs to solar dynasty. The author does not answer why Vishnu, Brahma, Shiva gain more importance on the river bank of India.

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[41] Surinder Mohan Bharadwaj, *Hindu Places of Pilgrimage in India- A Study in Cultural Geography*, New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, 1999.

[42] Enrich Zimmer, *Myth and Symbol in Indian Art and Civilization*, Boligan Series,1946.

Anne Feldhaus's book *Water and Womanhood- religious meanings of rivers in Maharastra* discuss the relationship between Indian River and religion.[43] People worship flowing water and they believe in the cyclical nature of life. Both classical and folk religion looks at the river as sacred. People attribute human features to the river. The source of river is very sacred and people create cultural constructions on the material. Cows and water are essential for agriculture. So people consider it as sacred. The author deals with the different rituals associated with water, feminity of river and the natural elements related to river like fish. A river has two faces - destruction and prosperity. River festivals are celebrated after the harvests and it is a kind of thanks giving to the river goddesses.

Baidyanath Sarasvati's book *The spectrum of sacred* discusses the concept of sacred and profane in the Indian context.[44] According to Mercer Eliade, the concept of sacred is a special one or mental one. For religion some parts are sacred and another one profane. But in the view of Emile Durkheim both sacred and profane is a part of the mental and physical dialectics. On the view of Roger Callous the concept of sacred and profane are dichotomous and sacred is the source and secular is the life. The author argues that in the Indian context both are the two sides of the same coin and his first argument was that in the Indian context caste system is based on the hierarchical opposition of the pure and impure. Even in India the hierarchy can be seen on the *thirthas*. Some *thirthas* are more meritorious than others. This anthropomorphism came from the Aryan invasion of the south.

Sankaran Unni's book *Ecology of River Narmada* describes that Narmada has more than twenty synonyms in Sanskrit literature.[45] The sages of Vedic times made no reference to Narmada. But in the post-Vedic Sanskrit literature Narmada is referred. Many kingdoms have originated and flourished on this river banks. They are *Kalchuri* Kingdom, the *Gond rajas* who ruled at Garha region. The Jain religion emerged on the banks of Narmada. Many temples can be seen on the banks of the

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[43] Anne Feldhaus, *Water and Womanhood- religious meanings of rivers in Maharastra*, NewYork: Oxford University Press,1995.

[44] Baidyanath Sarasvati, *The Spectrum of Sacred*, New Delhi: Concept Publishing Company, 1984.

[45] Sankaran Unni, *Ecology of river Narmada*, New Delhi: APH Publishing Corporation, 1996.

river. The holy places like *Amarkantak*, *Omkareshwar*, and Sacred Ghats at *Maheshwar* are on the banks of this river.

Vasudha Narayanan's article *Water, Wood and Wisdom: Ecological Perspectives from the Hindu Traditions* has discussed the way of life that followed many religions.[46] It teaches how to live in accordance with nature. The non-violence in Dharma means non-violence of nature. So one of the intentions of *puranic* text is to consider nature as same as humans. The notion behind purity and pollution along with the attachment of nature with human are used for other purposes. Most of the rivers in India are considered as female. The festival that is celebrated on the river banks memorises the female nature of the river.

Colleen Kattau's book *Women, Water and the Reclamation of the Feminine* explains that in folk religion, water and other natural objects were the integral part of their religion.[47] But in a later period they give up the importance of nature. At the primitive period everything lays one. But in later, dualism has emerged like nature and culture. The author by considering nature as women and the compartmentalisation of universe like water, tree and air has created problems in modern days. The scientist and the village women are looking at the nature in different ways.

R.P.Masani in his book Folklore *of Wells: Being a Study of Water Worship in East and West* by is all about the role of wells in human life.[48] Wells are a big source of water and water worship is a non Aryan custom. People all over the world conduct sacrifices before they construct bridges and dams (like London bridge, bridge over the Hoogly river etc). Even in India, people believe that spirits live in the river. The author discusses about the water gods and goddesses in the different areas of the world. There are different types of water spirits and in India, serpent is the only one animal god of water while in the west, they have many animal gods.

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[46] Vasudha Narayan, *Water, wood, and wisdom: ecological Perspectives from the Hindu Traditions*, Daedalus, Vol.130. 2001.

[47] Colleen Kattau, "Women, Water and the Reclamation of the Feminine*",* Wagadu, *Springs*, Vol. 3. 2006.

[48] RP.Masani, *Folklore of wells being a Study of water worships in East and West*, Bombay: D.B Tarapokevala Sons Company, 1918.

Kuntla lahiri Dutt's edited book *Fluid Bonds: views on gender and water* [49] discuss the relationship between gender and water. In many societies challenges are faced by women with regard to water. Women's lives and views are intricately linked to water and also the problem of access and rights. Their responses and extent of their empowerment will happen through their participatory role.

David Mosse's book *The Role of water-state craft, ecology and collective action in South India*[50] narrates many tales and anecdotes of warriors and kings that are related to tanks and rivers in India especially South India. British rule converted village common property in to state property and denied customary rights of the traditional village authority. It affected the indigenous knowledge of the communities and the result was the centralisation of water in certain hands. Due to the force of tradition people created social rights, value system and moral codes for water.

Frans Bartman's book *Apah the Sacred Water-An analysis of a Primordial Symbol in Hindu Myths* argues that the sacred waters in the Vedic and later Vedic traditions in India unify the people.[51] The mythical and the ritual aspects of Hinduism are surrounded by the sacred nature of water. The author tries to seek the answer of the question, how water is related to humans and in which way the water appears as a symbol in various Hindu myths. In every stage of human life water takes an important role: from the creation of the universe and its destruction, man's birth to death and the dissolution to his ashes. The major religion of the world considers water as sacred. This book has four parts. In the first part, the author discusses the phenomenology and the notion of sacred. The second part studies the value system in Indian mythology such as the *dharma, mukthi, bhakthi* and also the origin myth of *agni*. While in the third and the fourth part the author studies how the water is picturing in the Vedic Hindu myth. The water is portrayed as the womb of the *brahmanda*, as mother, as flood, *atman*, and water as seed and also the creative power of water.

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[49] Kuntla lahiri Dutt, *Fluid Bonds: views on gender and water,* Kolkata: Stree Publishers, 2006.

[50] David Mosse, *The Role of water-state craft, ecology and collective action in South India*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2003.

[51] Frans Bartmans, *Apah the sacred water-An analysis of a primordial symbol in Hindu myths*, New Delhi: B.R. Publishing Corp, 1990.

iv. Literature related to cultural life of the folk of Kerala especially, on the banks of the river Bharathappuzha.

Kerala is the land of many ritual performances. The narrative of almost all the ritual performances such as *bhootha* worship*, theyyam, thira, mudiyettu, padayani* in Kerala is based on the Kali-Dharika war or Dharikavadham. The nature of one myth and its diversified manifestation is the discourse in folklore studies of Kerala. **Raghavan Payanadu** in his book *Folklorinoru Padanapadhadhi* explains this phenomenon.[52] There are similarities among these ritual performances. The *bhootha* worship is more related to magical practices; *theyyam* is the enactment of the hero/god/goddess whereas *thira* is a ritual to satisfy the goddess. The intensity of the performances reduces when it reaches from Canara to Kozhikode area and it becomes further simple when it performs in Malappuram area. It shows that, these ritual performances such as *bhootha, theyyam* and *thira* are not oppositional but interrelated. The transmission of this ritual form is from top to bottom or it is from the vertical way. This methodology is prevalent among the folklorists in Kerala. This transmission further establish by studying the colour pattern of ritual performances of Kerala. The book, *Nerinte Mozhi*[53] by Raghavan Payanadu explains the main colour of costume in the ritual performances is red. The intensity of red is diminishing when it reaches to South Kerala.

Thirayattam is the main annual ritual perfoamnces in the Malabar region. C. **Gopalan Nayar** in his book, *Malabarile Thirayattangal* says that, the origin period of *thira* is before one thousand years back.[54] After the origin of *thira* ritual, it has further changed to other ritual performances.

Ezhumattoor Raja Raja Varma's article, *Padayaniyile Kaalan Kolam*[55] one consider Kerala as a cultural unity, the joining element from north to South Kerala is the kali myth performed in different ways. The ritual performances of Ernakulam (central Travancore) is *mudiyettu* and once it reaches from north Kerala,

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[52] Raghavan Payanadu, *Folklorinoru Padanapadhadhi*, Thrishur: Kerala Sahithya Acdemy, 1998.

[53] Raghavan Payanadu, *Nerinte* Mozhi, Payyanur: Folkore Fellows of Malabar Trust, 2003.

[54] C. Gopalan Nayar, *Malabarile Thirayattangal*, Kozhikode: Mathrubhumi Books, 2010.

[55] Ezhumattoor Raja Raja Varma, "Padayaniyile Kaalan Kolam", in *Kerala Folklore*. Raghavan Payanadu (ed.), Payyanur: Folkore Fellows of Malabar Trust, 1997, Pp.84.

the ritual element slowly fades away and it has added some comic character in the ritual course. The myth and its enactment have been loosing its ritual nature even in the case of *padayani*. The last part of kali dahrika myth i.e., the dance of *bhoothagana* of Shiva is enacted through *padayani* ritual performance. Magical practices and primitive characters are the core of *bhootha* performance. Though the *theyyam* ritual is predominantly structured, once it migrates to south Kerala, this feature becomes more lucid.

Sanjeevan Azhikode's book *Theyyathile Jathivazhakam*[56] explains the relationship of *theyyam* performance and caste system in North Kerala. Before the political unification of Kerala as a state, the folklore of Kerala created a cultural unity among the Kerala people. The migration of myth with its performance can bee seen in the folk song and rituals of South Kerala.

The above studies follow the methodology of top to bottom transmission of cultural form of Kerala. Where as, the concept of Bhadrakali could reach from South to North Kerala. **N.M Namboothiri's** book *Malabar Padanangal Zamothirinadu*[57] argues that, after the attack of Pandyan, the Ay kingdom of Pothiyilmali scattered and they reached the southern part of Kerala, i.e., Venad. One of the group of Ayans, known as Nanjilvallvuvar migrated to central Kerala and established their supremacy. They also installed the goddess of Srivilli Puthoor in Angadippuram. Along with them, the myth of Kali could reach in Kerala. This studies confims the migration of Kali myth from Southern part to Northern part of Kerala.

Apart from the above studies, there are very few studies done on the Bharathappuzha. **Alankode Leelakrishnan's** book *Nilayude Theerangaliloode*[58] deals the concept of river as a metaphor for the poets those who lived on the banks. His work concentrates more on the importance to the literary aspects of river. **Rajan Chungath's** book *Nilayude Magal Sundhary* describes the kingdoms on the banks and the life of Kerala Brahmins on the banks.[59] **V.V.K.Vaalath's** book *Keralathile*

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[56] Sanjeevan Azhikode, *Theyyathile Jathivazhakam*, Kottayam: Current Books, 2007.

[57] N.M Namboothiri, *Malabar Padanangal Zamothirinadu*, Trivandrum: Kerala State Institute of Languages, 2008.

[58] Alankode Leelakrishnan, *Nilayude Theerangaliloode,* Kottayam: DC Books, 2003.

[59] Rajan Chungath, *Nilayude Magal Sundhary,* Kozhikode: Poorna Publications, 2006.

Sthalacharithrangal-Palakkad Jilla analyzes place names of Palakkad district and the reason behind the origin of local place names both naturally and culturally.[60] The study of **Kerala Council for Historical Studies** titled *Vaniyamkulam Panchayath Vijnaaniyam* explains the local history of this Panchayath.[61] They had conducted the gatherings of elderly people in the Panchayaths and tried to understand the local history from the memory of people.

All the above literature gives different conceptual understanding about human, nature and culture. This literature survey helped in developing an outline of the river and cultural life associated with it in India. The outline looks at various concepts related to Indian rivers and the fairs and festivals on the river banks in India.

Lacunae in the existing literature:

The literature survey revealed certain gaps in the studies on rivers in general and the life on the banks in particular. Firstly, all the studies mentioned above viewed various aspects of cultural life associated with rivers, origin myths, and sacral behaviour associated with the rivers. No individual river is taken for a comprehensive study. As a result, cultural life associated with a (individual) river is absent in all the studies. In this thesis an attempt is being made to fill this gap by studying a river known as Bharathappuzha and cultural life constructed around it. Secondly, Bharathappuzha River has not been subjected to any serious academic enquiry. The limited works produced on this river were either confined to the literal aspects of river or have been less explanatory about the cultural specificities of the community or locality. Thirdly, inadequate scholarly attention paid to the dynamic nature of folklore among the various communities on the river banks is felt to be an omission in these academic inquiries. Folkloric approach which brings out the perceptions and the worldview of the folk, by the folk and for the folk is thus far not attempted by the studies mentioned above in the literature survey.

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[60] V.V.K.Vaalath, *keralathile Sthalacharithrangal-Palakkad Jilla* ,Trichur: Kerala Academy of literature, 1986.

[61] Vaniyam Kulam Panchayath, *Vaniyamkulam Panchayath Vijnaaniyam,* Trivandrum: Kerala Council for Historical Research, 2001.

Hypothesis

After careful analysis of the data and the secondary sources from the preliminary survey it can be hypothesised that the cultural history of Kerala is knitted around the ritual performances of mother goddess, Bhagavathi. The prominent ritual performances are *theyyam* in the northern part, *mudiyettu* and *padyani* in the southern part and *thira* in the Central part of Kerala. The banks of Bharathapuzha seem to be epicentre (core region) for the ritual of Bhagavathi in Kerala and manifested as different cultural performances imbibing local versions and variations in other parts of the State. The process of dispersal can be found by studying the banks of Bharathapuzha form its origin in Palakkad ghats to the end of the river in Ponnani region where it joins the Arabian Sea. The myth of Bhagavathi in the form of narratives and the enactment of the myth in form of cultural performances coexist and densely concentric on the banks and hence, this hypothesis is arrived at. Perhaps due to this phenomenal prevalence of Bhagavathi worship the Central Kerala especially, the banks of Bharathappuzha acquired the status of 'Cultural Capital'.

Aims and Objectives of the Study:

1. To study the river as a cultural construct of the, by the and for the communities living on the river banks.
2. To study the socio-economic formations on the banks of Bharathappuzha river from a historical perspective.
3. To study the role of river on the life and lore of the people and to probe into the mutual relationship between the people and the river.
4. To study various folklore on the river bank and to understand the worship of Bhagavathi on the banks of the river from a folkloric perspective.
5. To study the changing concept of Bharathappuzha river and the cultural life of the communities in the new socio-economic, cultural and political milieu.

In short, the study will cover various representations of the river through the life of the people, who live on the banks. It also concentrates on the issue of why the communities look at the river in different ways and how they use the river as a part of their life circle ceremonies. From birth to death, the river takes a vital role in their life. A close study about the river system and its people's life give a new insight into the representation of river in different forms. Moreover, the study tries to explore the

changing pattern of nature in relation to the changing condition of human life in the present context.

Methodology:

As the thesis aims at studying the myth and ritual of Bhagavathi on the banks of Bharathappuzha, a systematic approach has to be developed and hence, in this thesis an intensive ethnography and social reflective research methodology is deployed. Research methods may be understood as all those methods or techniques that are used for conducting a research. It is a scientific enquiry and a systematic process which is adopted to follow. To distinguish from other academic disciplines, in folklore studies, the folk is understood as a group that talk about themselves through their lore. It means that, rather than imposing a theory or philosophical assumption, the folk have to be studied through their lore. In this research, discourse methodology technique is used for the data collection to bring out the folk perspectives.

Basically three methods are employed in the collection, analysis and interpretation of the data. Since the theme is on the river lore, it is imperative to understand the process of construction of the lore and its significant role in the life engagements of the communities living on the banks. For this reason, **observation method** is primarily employed. This warrants for watching the performances of the folk communities in their performance context living on the banks to understand their practices and the belief system. After observing, another method is employed which may be called as **ethnographic method** to understand the communities' images and their conceptual understanding of the river. To achieve this goal using **discourse method**, unstructured interviews are conducted with the communities with regard to their ritual performances in general and the verbal performances in specific. This method further leads to the analysis of myths, which forms the basis of their images on gods and goddesses. This constitutes most in translating the images of those in the performance. Their attitude towards river and its ritual symbolism is also collected through discussions with the members of the community.

Tripartite method: As such, the flowing path of the river is divided into three parts: the upper, middle, and the lower parts. In the upper part, it flows through

the hilly tract of the Western Ghats and falls into Aliyar dam, constructed at 300 metres above Mean Sea Level in Tamil Nadu. In the middle part, it is travelling with average gradient from the dam to the Moolathara regulatory in Kerala-Tamil Nadu border. From the regulator, it flows in to Kerala with a variable gradient and falls in the Arabian Sea at Ponnani. For the sake of study in this thesis the river Bharathappuzha is observed following the course of the river and it is divided into three parts which is called as the tripartite method; (i) origin part of the river, (ii) middle part of the river and (iii) ending part of the river- based on the flow of the river to understand the relationship between the communities and the river. It is found from the preliminary survey and reading of the secondary sources, the methodology adopted in the earlier studies is a vertical type wherein the ritual performances are studied from North Kerala (South Canara) to South Kerala (Trivandrum) and it is hypothesised that the ritual performances originated in the north with the influences from Tulu land (*bhootha* worship) and percolated to south in the form of theyyam, thira, mudiyettu and padayani. However, in this thesis the study of the ritual performances on the banks of Bharathappuzha postulate that the ritual performances originated in the middle part having Bharathappuzha banks as axis and dispersed to other regions of Kerala. This alternate model has developed by changing the very methodology from vertical to linear (or horizontal) and studying the ritual performances by juxtaposing them in order to find out the co-existence of myth and ritual on one hand, and on the other, its relationship with communities. Through this method it is found that the middle part of the river banks have myth and performances in a co-existing manner and thus reinforces the ritual of Bhagavathi. From the middle part which is considered as epicentre due to its intensity and density of the prevalence of the myth and ritual of Bhagavathi one can find the version and variations of the same in the beginning and end part.

Sources of Study:

The data is collected from the **primary** and the **secondary** sources.

Primary sources

A thick corpus of data is being collected during the fieldwork since field is the primary site of source for the study. The life and lore of the people and communities in and around the river banks along its course in different regions from

its birth till it reaches the sea get expressed in their verbal and non-verbal expressive genres. The audio-visually recorded genres-myths, legends, tales, ballads, songs, proverbs, riddles, tales, personal narratives of the people from different culture groups, ritual observances, practices, performances, yelling, folk speech etc, - are best primary resources of the study because the text, texture and context of the utterances and performances reflects the dynamics of the worldview and culture of the communities associated with the river through the ages. The material culture associated with folklife and worship patterns with regard to river constituted the primary source material.

The secondary sources constitute all published and unpublished written data viz: manuscripts, Journals, Gazetteers, District Manuals, Censes Reports, and Scholarly articles and books. The literature survey in the above pages delineated the status of knowledge and represent secondary source on the issue under study. Some other secondary sources used in research are given below:

- L*iteratures related to Bharathappuzha-* There are many fictions dealing with the natural beauty of this river and the life surrounding on this river. The literary fictions and poetry of the prominent Malayalam writers like V.K.N, Radhakrshnan, Idashery, Aattoor, P.Kunjiraman Nair, M.T Vasudevan Nayar are some of them.

- *Cinemas that were scripted /shot on the river banks-* The nostalgic memory of Kerala people are clearly mentioned through the films that are created on the river banks. Most of the film narrates the life of the communities on the river banks. It means that, they considered the banks as the cultural region of Kerala people. The films *Aaraam Thampuraan, Narasimham, Naghashathangal, Naalukettu, Naatturajavu, Devasuram, Vadakkum Nadhan* etc are few among them.

- *Website related to Bharathappuzha-* There are some websites that disseminate the life and lore on the banks of Bharathappuzha such as www.nilarivers.com, www.theblueyonder.com, www.nilafounadation.org are some of them.

- In addition to it, Kerala Institute of Local Administration (KILA, Trivandrum) conducts various seminars and workshops to spread awareness among the Keralities about the death of Bharathappuzha due to the unnatural activities happening on the river banks like sand mining and the increase in concrete buildings on the river banks. Likewise the NGO's such as Nilavu, Vayali Folklore Group and The Bharathappuzha Protection Committee has also worked for the conservation of the different cultures on the river banks

through travelling on the banks, documentation of community life and making awareness among the public through different media.

Brief Chapterisation:

The thesis is divided into **seven** Chapters.

Chapter I: Introduction deals with a general introduction to river and lore in India. Apart from the basic concepts, significance of the study, nature and scope of the study, area of the study, review of literature, gaps found in the existing literature, hypothesis, aims and objectives of the study, methodology, sources of study and chapterisation are also enumerated in this Chapter.

Chapter II: River and Cultural Life - A Conceptual Frame is divided into two sections; the first section discusses the general notion of river in different parts of the world and India in particular. The expressive behaviour associated with water and river has also been subjected to discussion. The second section, discusses the origin myth of Indian rivers and how river is represented in these myths. There are two qualities of water that accentuate its central place in cultures and faiths. Firstly, water is a primary element of life. Without water there is no life; yet water has the power to destroy as well as to create. In all most all creation myths one can find that life is created out of water. Secondly, water is depicted as purifying object in rituals. It means that water washes away impurities and pollutants and makes an object look as good as new. The communities on riverbanks attribute these two meanings to river through various cultural expressions both verbal and non-verbal. Through analysis of myths connected with river one can understand the role of river in people's culture.

Chapter III: Natural and Cultural Landscape of Bharathappuzha introduces the general notion of river in India and explains the geographical and topographical features of the banks of Bharathappuzha. At one level, this chapter discusses the natural settings on the river banks and at another level, it attempts to illustrate how the above natural settings create a cultural landscape on the banks of Bharathappuzha. In the cultural landscape human intervention with nature is done to through the mediation of folklore such as myth, epic, legend, proverbs, songs etc., and transform the natural products into cultural products. On one hand it has enhanced the usage of water resources and on the other, abused the same affecting

the natural landscape. As a result the river Bharathappuzha is at the verge of decline. Nevertheless, the communities engaged in various forms using the water attributing sacrality especially with the construction activities of shrines and temples and thereby conducting rituals and ceremonies on timely intervals.

Chapter IV: Folk Communities on the Banks of Bharathappuzha examines different folk communities living on the banks and how they engaged with the river in their day-to-day life. On the whole, the migrations into the land of Kerala contributed to the development of history of the region. An overview of the time frame of the migrations of different religious and racial groups shows that all races and communal groups inhabited this region. The history of Kerala is the history of migrations which led to composite and complex social formation. However, the settlement pattern reveals that the tribals and indigenous communities which are the inhabitants of the banks and hilly terrains of Bharathappuzha replaced or subdued by the process of 'Aryanisation' wherein the '*jatis*' (occupational ranking i.e. castes) of upper '*varna*' (ritual ranking) encouraged to immigrate into the Kerala soils and expand the settled agrarian economy. The 'Parasurama myth' and the 'Vararuchi myth' as explained above attest to this fact. The Bharathappuzha banks are much used for acculturation of native communities into the 'Hindu fold' by attributing mythical origin and relationship between the 'Aryan *Varna* system and the native *jati* matrix'. As a result the social hierarchy emerged on one hand, negating the 'Aryan *varna* system' and on the other, incorporating it with the native hierarchical system.

Chapter V: Bhagavathi: Myth and Worship discusses the myth and worship of Bhagavathi. The myth of Kali seems to have migrated from the Northern and Southern parts of India into the land of Kerala and formed as Bhadrakali myth/Dharikavadham and worshipped as Bhagavathi in sacred groves. In the process of incorporation of the myth several ethnic categories in the form of legends are deployed in 'oico-typification' of the entire worship Bhagavathi. The native cultural landscape has even affected the 'mythification' process of Bhadrakali. As a result, it is not only the incorporation of narratives but also the communities were brought under one umbrella through the worship of Bhagavathi. Ritual spaces are created to engage each and every community in the worship of Bhagavathi.

Chapter VI: Ritual Performances on the Banks - Towards Identity Formation elaborates the ritual practices on the banks of Bharathappuzha. It also examines the *vela*, *pooram* and *thalapoli* from the origin, middle and ending part of the banks respectively as case studies and looks how each community identifies themselves from the other communities in connection with the sacred space and ritual practices. The ritual performances of Bhagavathi on the banks of Bharathappuzha reveal that there is a pattern that emerges in the worship of Bhagavathi. Following the course of the Bharathappuza if one study the performances of Bhagavathi in the *kavus* in a linear/horizontal manner, a complete story of Bhadrakali emerge having the beginning and progressing then culminating with an end thus making it as a comprehensive story. Only when the performances of the three parts of Bharathappuzha are studied together, the story as narrated in the myth of Bhadrakali can be understood in a meaningful sequence. In the beginning part as stated already, the concept of Bhadarakali is in the formative stage and variedly depicted in the myths of *kannyarkali* and *pavakoothu*. Neither of them is directly connected with Bhadarakali. In the middle part the myth of Bhadrakali is proportionately connected with the enactment. In the ritual performances of the middle part, visual enactment in the form of floral drawings and in the performative enactment as play is crystallized and even supported by the narrative in the form of *thottam*. Both narrative (myth) and enactment (ritual) reinforced the concept of Bhadrakali as a goddess. In the end part, the ritual *thalapoli* is performed to seek the blessings of the deity. Thus the story of Bhadrakali is represented in its totality as the story of Bhagavathi.

Chapter VII-Conclusion gives a brief summary of all the chapters along with findings and suggestions. The major finding is that the Bharathappuzha played a central role in the culture of Kerala especially, the rituals and enactments connected with Bhagavathi. Kerala is known for art and culture associated with performing traditions and even some of them are used as national identity. The performing arts such as *theyyam, thira, mudiyettu* and *padayani* having colourful costume and make up influenced the classical genres such as *kathakali, krishnattam, koodiyattam* etc. the basis for such eruption of performing art tradition in Kerala, as found in the thesis, can be attributed to the epicentre which is on the banks of Bharathappuzha.

Chapter-II

River and Cultural Life - A Conceptual Frame

Water is central to many beliefs and practices of world's religions. Though the worldview of different communities with regard to the water may vary across cultures, it is represented as (i) a primary element of life and (ii) a purifier of pollution in rituals, thus occupies key role in folklife. Firstly, water as a primary element of life is ambivalent in its manifestation. It is represented both as giver and destroyer of life. Water as a river is redeemer and as a flood causes devastation to the living beings. Thus water functions as benign and malign factor in different cultural contexts. World's major religions like Christianity, Islam and Hindu, both of folk and elite traditions had creation myths which uphold that the life had been emanated from waters.

According to Bible, "*In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters*"[1]. Quran also attests to similar kind of creation myth with some deviations. The story of Creation is located in various places within the Quran, such as in *Sura' Al-Baqarah*, *Sura' As-Sajdah*, *Sura' Yassin* and so on.[2] The Quran states that "*God created the world and the cosmos, made all the creatures that walk, swim, crawl, and fly on the face of the earth from water*".[3]

According to Hindu sacred books, "*In the beginning the universe was full of water. But in that water there emerged a huge egg (anda) that was round like a water-bubble. The egg became bigger and bigger and inside the egg there was Vishnu. This egg was called Brahmanda. And inside Brahmanda there were the mountains and the land, the oceans and the seas, the gods, demons and humans and the stars. On all sides, the egg was surrounded by water, fire, wind, the sky and the elements. Inside the egg, Vishnu adopted the form of Brahma and proceeded to create*

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[1] Genesis, Chapter 1: Ver. 1-2 (King James Version of the Bible)

[2] Chapter 2: Sura' Al-Baqarah; Chapter 32 Sura' As-Sajdah; Chapter 36 Sura' Yassin.

[3] Quran, Chapter 21 Al Anbiya Ver.30.

the universe. When the universe is to be destroyed, it is Vishnu again who adopts the form of Shiva and performs the act of destruction. Let us therefore salute the great god Vishnu"[4].

Manusmriti (1; 4-31) gives an elaborate account of how life and the world got emanated from waters. The origin myth of world is narrated below[5]:

5. This (universe) existed in the shape of Darkness, unperceived, destitute of distinctive marks, unattainable by reasoning, unknowable, wholly immersed, as it were, in deep sleep.

6. Then the divine Self-existent (Svayambhudeva, himself) indiscernible, (but) making (all) this, the great elements and the rest, discernible, appeared with irresistible (creative) power, dispelling the darkness.

7. He who can be perceived by the internal organ (alone), who is subtile, indiscernible, and eternal, who contains all created beings and is inconceivable, shone forth of his own (will).

*8. He, desiring to produce beings of many kinds from his own body, first with a thought created **the waters**, and placed his seed in them.*

9. That (seed) became a golden egg, in brilliancy equal to the sun; in that (egg) he himself was born as Brahman, the progenitor of the whole world.

*10. The **waters** are called narah, (for) the waters are, indeed, the offspring of Nara;as they were his first residence (ayana), he thence is named Narayana.*

11. From that (first) cause, which is indiscernible, eternal, and both real and unreal, was produced that male (Purusha), who is famed in this world (under the appellation of) Brahman.

12. The divine one resided in that egg during a whole year, then he himself by his thought (alone) divided it into two halves;

13. And out of those two halves he formed heaven and earth, between them the middle sphere, the eight points of the horizon, and the eternal abode of the waters.

14. From himself (atmanah) he also drew forth the mind, which is both real and unreal, likewise from the mind egoism, which possesses the function of self-consciousness' (and is) lordly;

15. Moreover, the great one, the soul, and all (products) affected by the three qualities, and, in their order, the five organs which perceive the objects of sensation.

16. But, joining minute particles even of those six, which possess measureless power, with particles of himself, he created all beings.

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[4] Vishnu Purana, Part 1, section ii. B.K Chaturvedi (Trans), New Delhi: Diamond Books Pvt Ltd, 2006.

[5] N. Lakshminarasimhacharyulu, (ed).*Manusmriti*, Hyderabad: Gayatri Publications, 2000, 1-5-31.

17. Because those six (kinds of) minute particles, which form the (creator's) frame, enter (a-sri) these (creatures), therefore the wise call his frame sarira, (the body.)

18. That the great elements enter, together with their functions and the mind, through its minute parts the framer of all beings, the imperishable one.

19. But from minute body (-framing) particles of these seven very powerful Purushas springs this (world), the perishable from the imperishable.

20. Among them each succeeding (element) acquires the quality of the preceding one, and whatever place (in the sequence) each of them occupies, even so many qualities it is declared to possess.

21. But in the beginning he assigned their several names, actions, and conditions to all (created beings), even according to the words of the Veda.

22. He, the Lord, also created the class of the gods, who are endowed with life, and whose nature is action; and the subtile class of the Sadhyas, and the eternal sacrifice.

23. But from fire, wind, and the sun he drew forth the threefold eternal Veda, called Rik, Yagus, and Saman, for the due performance of the sacrifice.

24. Time and the divisions of time, the lunar mansions and the planets, the rivers, the oceans, the mountains, plains, and uneven ground.

25. Austerity, speech, pleasure, desire, and anger, this whole creation he likewise Produced, as he desired to call these beings into existence.

26. Moreover, in order to distinguish actions, he separated merit from demerit, and he caused the creatures to be affected by the pairs (of opposites), such as pain and pleasure.

27. But with the minute perishable particles of the five (elements) which have been mentioned, this whole (world) is framed in due order.

28. But to whatever course of action the Lord at first appointed each (kind of beings), that alone it has spontaneously adopted in each succeeding creation.

29. Whatever he assigned to each at the (first) creation, noxiousness or harmlessness, gentleness or ferocity, virtue or sin, truth or falsehood, that clung (afterwards) spontaneously to it.

30. As at the change of the seasons each season of its own accord assumes its distinctive marks, even so corporeal beings (resume in new births) their (appointed) course of action.

31. But for the sake of the prosperity of the worlds he caused the Brahmana, the Ksatriya, the Vaisya, and the Sudra to proceed from his mouth, his arms, his thighs, and his feet.

Even in the *Kula Puranas* (caste myths), creation myths are narrated. According to *Jambapuranam*, the caste myth of Madigas (Scheduled Caste community in Andhara Pradesh), "*In Anantayuga, Parabrahma created water from*

his right and left hands. In these waters, he created creepers of lotus and other flowers. In Adbhutayuga, amidst the waters, a water spring arose. This water spring when fallen into a lotus flower, Jambavanta is born. His head contained many plaited hair and body was fully covered by long hair. In appearance, he resembled to a 'bear'. Then the 'Adbhutayuga 'ended. In Tamanda yuga, when Parabrahma again chanted pranava, another water spring came up and fell into a lotus flower which resulted in the birth of 'Adisakti".[6]

Thus, almost all creation myths of the world view water as source of life.

Secondly, water as purifying object in rituals. It means that water washes away impurities and pollutants and makes an object look as good as new. Almost all Christian churches or sects have an initiation ritual called Baptism involving the using of water. Baptism is a public declaration of a person's belief and faith in Christ and his/her initiation into the Church. In the Baptist and Charismatic churches Baptism was usually performed by dipping the person in water. This is also called immersion. In Anglican and Lutheran churches the rite is performed by pouring water over the head three times and sometimes by sprinkling water over the head. Water in Hinduism has a special place because water is believed to have a spiritually cleansing power. Hinduism encompasses different belief systems, among those that most Hindus do share the importance of striving to attain purity and avoiding pollution. This relates to both physical cleanliness and spiritual well-being. Water is used in *puja* (worship) and also used for holy dip known as *theertha snana*. In Islam water is important for cleansing and purifying. Several mosques have courtyards with pools of clean water. In Islam ritual purity called *vulu* (ablution) is required before carrying out religious duties, especially *namaz* (worship)[7], before touching the *Quran* and it must also be performed on the dead before they are buried. In Islam, a believer is obliged to perform bath after sex which incurs a state of major ritual impurity and bath is also recommended before the Friday prayer. Hence, water acts an important role in all these religious practices.

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[6] Y.A Sudhakar Reddy and R.R. Harischandra, "Story, Performance and metaphors: Explorations in the art form of Cindu Madigas" in Simon Charsley & Laxmi Narayan Kadekar (Ed.) *Performers and their Arts: Folk, Popular and Classical Genres in a Changing India*, New Delhi and London: Routledge, 2006:82-100.

[7] Quran, Chapter 5 Ma-idhah: 7/8 'O you, who believe, when you prepare for prayer, wash your faces and your hand to the elbows; rub your head and your feet to the ankles.

The communities on river banks attribute meanings to river through various cultural expressions both verbal and non-verbal. Almost all religions of the world and sciences underline the fact that life originates from water. It is believed that the universe had originated from water and the human civilization has originated on the banks of rivers. In ancient times, there were civilizations whose lives were much oriented towards one of their major rivers and hence they had come to be called as river valley civilizations. Mesopotamian Civilization along the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, Egypt along the Nile, Indus Valley along the Indus River are some of them.[8] The rivers have certain unique characteristics that have helped the growth of civilizations on their banks. Ancient civilizations first grew up on major river-systems and there could be two main reasons for the growth of these civilizations on the river banks. One is that river flood provided rich fertile soil renewal and the second one is that the river had a steady flow of water almost throughout the year. The nature of river constitutes different beliefs and practices on the river banks. This human meaning of geography begins to express in symbolic form of representation of river in various life occasions. After the nomadic life, humans settled in certain centres and these centres were often on the banks of rivers. Water was the backbone of agriculture, cattle feeding and their daily life. River bank is a fertile land and different folk live on the banks of river. Every group on the river banks has their own concept about the river in which it lives and it in turn becomes their 'worldview'. Robert Redfield (1953, 85) has defined worldview as "the way people characteristically look outward upon universe", which is part of the cognitive view of a group and they perceive it in their own view consciously or unconsciously.[9] Many communities live on the river banks and they are related directly or indirectly to the river. This could be the reason for the existence of plenty of folklore about a single river. The cultural construction of river has revealed the existence of various beliefs, rituals etc.

River and Religion

Folk and classic traditions of the world have their own notions about river. The English word 'river' originates from the Latin word '*rivus*' which means shore or

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[8] DD Kosambi, *The Culture and Civilisation of Ancient India*, New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House Pvt. Ltd, 1970.

[9] Robert Redfield, Primitive *world and its Transformations*, New York, Ithaca: Cornel University Press, 1953.

banks. Most of the religions of the world emerged as part of the civilization on the river banks. Water plays a key role in the belief system of many world religions. It has two symbolic qualities such as rebirth and purification. Purification quality of water has an important ritual in many religious ceremonies.

The valley of river Jordan is one of the famous places in Bible. Jordan River is mentioned 175 times in the Old Testament. There are many events in the Bible that take place in the banks of this river. After Joshua succeeded Moses as the leader of the people at the end of their wilderness journey, the Israeli people entered the 'Promised Land' after crossing the river Jordan.[10] Jesus Christ was baptized by John in the Jordan river.[11] There are beliefs that river Jordan has the power of healing. Naaman, the commander of the army of the king of Syria, received word from the prophet Elisha that he should take bath in the Jordan River for seven times in order to cure his leprosy[12]. The reputation of river Jordan remains even today among the Christians.

In Islam, *Hadith* (words and deeds of Prophet Muhammad) shows the prophecy that the river Euphrates itself dries and unveil the mount of Gold in the river. This will cause quarrel among believers for the Gold and many people will die in that fight.[13] In Prophet's journey to heaven (Al-Mi'raj), he saw four rivers, two of which were coming out and two were flowing in to paradise. Gabriel explained to Prophet that the rivers which were flowing out from the paradise were Euphrates and Nile.[14] There are many beliefs surrounding the concept of Euphrates River. A Muslim believes that if he dreams that he is drinking water from the Euphrates River which means that the person is blessed as a pious religious believer. If any one sees the Euphrates as being dried up in his dream it denotes the death of the ruler or loss of the country. The meanings attributed to rivers when appear in dreams as per the Islamic faith are as follows.

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[10] Bible, (King James Version), Joshua 3:15-17.

[11] *Ibid*, Mathew 3:13-17; Mark 1: 9-11; Luke 3:21-22.

[12] *Ibid*, 2kings 5:14

[13] Hadith of Sahih Bukhari, Sahih Muslim (6922) and Sunan Abi Da'ud.
[14] Sahih Al-Bukhari Hadith 4.647 and 7.514 narrated by Abu-Huraira and Ibn Abbas respectively.

Table No. 2.1: Meanings of dreams associated with rivers in Islam

S.No.	River in Dream	Attributed Meanings
1	If river appears in the dream as visual phenomenon	The dreamer can become a noble and great person or undertake travel, or gets regular income
2	Drinking from a dirty river	The dreamer may face trials
3	Drinking from a clear river	Prosperity and happiness in life
4	Jumping from one bank of river to another	Escaping from danger, dismiss anguish, winning victory over enemy,
5	Swimming in a river	Working in the government
6	River runs through the streets and people taking bath and ablution in it	Justice of a ruler
7	River floods the streets and runs through peoples home and damages their property	Unjust ruler and enemy invades his territory
8	River flows from one's house and cause no harm	One's good intention or deeds
9	One becomes himself/herself as a river in dream	Causes death
10	Murky waters	Worries and fearing; hell fire
11	Crossing from one side of a river into another	Dispelling one's fears or worries
12	Jumping from the middle of a river to the river banks	Escaping from the wrath of a ruler
13	Losing something in a river	Suffering/harm and damages
14	River flowing inside one's house	Prosperity
15	One sees people drink water that flows in one's own house	He is generous and imparts knowledge to others
16	Drinking from Egypt's Nile river	Receiving great wealth and power.

Source: Seeing Rivers in Your Dream in Islam, www.myislamicdream.com/clean river.html, accessed on Feb 7/2012.

There are innumerable stories about the relation of Islam to Nile River. Egypt was conquered during the reign of the second Caliphs of Islam, Umar-Ibn- Khattab and he appointed Amru Al-As as the governor of Egypt. The Nile River used to dry at some point of the year and before the drying of the river the Egyptians had the custom of sacrificing a girl to the river in order to prevent the river getting dried up. People used to compel the governor to pursue the age-old custom but he was not ready to do it as he believed that this custom was against Islamic tradition. Amru, the governor, informed of the drying of the river to the Caliph Umar. Umar wrote a letter and asked the governor to throw the letter into the drying Nile. The content of the letter was, "*O' river of Nile, if the water is flowed on your will, behold that we do not need it. But if it*

flows in the will of Allah, thus, we pray to Him let flow the water in the river". After the letter was thrown into the river, the river was filled with water at night and the sacrifice ceremony for keeping the river always flowing was stopped for ever. Muslims keep a particular water known as '*zam, zam*' in their houses and use it at the time of diseases.

Water has a significant role in Hinduism because of its life sustaining properties and its use in various rituals. In India, a river is called *nadi*. The Sanskrit word *nadi* derives from '*nad*' which means flow, motion or vibration. The meaning of the word itself shows the nature of *nadi*. According to *tantric* texts, the human body contains 72,000 *nadis* and it is these *nadis* that channalize *prana* to every cell. Some are wide and rushing while others are trickled. When this systems flows freely in human body, it gives health and when the flow becomes weak it is believed that, humans get mental and physical problems. Likewise, the *nadi* (river) flows across different natural settings and the people living on the banks get varying benefits. Human beings believe that *nadis* are the nerves of earth and it nourishes the earth.

Purification is integral to Hindu ritualism. It is commonly held that mere dipping in sacred waters of a river would ward off the sins and purify the birth of the believer. During the Vedic period, there were seven rivers which were considered to be sacred and these rivers include the five rivers of the Punjab and the Indus, Sarasvati. But later, the Aryans moved the centre of their life to the Valley of Ganga River and as a result of this the river Ganga became prominent among other Indian rivers. It is widespread belief that river Ganga is a symbol of holiness, cleansing and life- giving among the other Indian rivers. Today, there are seven sacred rivers such as Ganga, Indus, Sarasvati, Yamuna, Narmada, Godavari and Kaveri. People observe a wide range of rituals on the banks of these rivers to confirm the sanctity of the rivers. According to Hindu cosmology, the river Ganga originates and flows from heaven into four quarters of the earth. Attributing heavenly character to rivers can be seen in the other religions of the world as well. For a Hindu it is mandatory to have a bath before enters a temple. Thus bath or sacred dip in waters emerged as customary and obligatory observance on the part of the devotees before they worship. Often the temples and pilgrim centers are constructed on the banks of the rivers. It is popularly held that running waters are the best sites for sacred bath and ritual purification. Stinky and stagnant waters are not supposed to be used for ritual bathing. If there is

no provision, the temples are annexed with a *tirtha* (sacred water tank) for ritual bath. If sacred dip is not possible, the devotees may wash their feet or sprinkle waters in the wells and tanks of the temples on their heads and thereby symbolically undergo cleansing ritual. Thus water cleansing becomes inevitable for the devotees to enter the sacred premises. The sacrality of rivers in Indian belief system is so high that one should not ask the origins of rivers (*nadi mulam*), woman (*sthri mulam*) and sage (*rishi*) for these three are always sustainers of the humankind from birth to death.

Mythologies of prominent rivers of the world

Water is essential for human life as it ensures their nourishment by fertilizing the land in which they live. In some cases, water is associated with sexuality. The Greek notion is that the heavens send rain, like seed, to the earth in an enormous outburst. In certain cultures, river attains either male or female qualities. In Greece, Rivers are strongly masculine.

In **Greek mythology**, Potamoi is the god of rivers and streams of the earth. The river god is depicted in three forms: a bull with a man's head, a man with bull's horn and a man with the body of serpentine fish from the waist down. In Greek mythology there exist several myths about the metamorphoses of men into rivers. Selemnos was a handsome boy who used to feed his animals on the shore of a sea. Argyra was a sea Nymph fell in love with Selemnos and used to come out of the sea to visit him. As time passed by, Selemnos no longer seemed handsome and the Nymphe stopped visiting him. Later the boy died and Aphrodite turned him into a river. This is the story from the people of Patrai region who often speak about the origin of Selemnos river. Selemnon continued his love for Argyra even when he turned into river.[15] The origin myth of the Lykormas river is that, Idas, the son of Aphareus, kidnapped the daughter of Euenos called Marpessa, in a winged chariot. Euenos pursued him in his own chariot, but he failed to recover his daughter from Idas. He reached the Lykormas river, where he slew his horses and killed himself by throwing into the river. After this incident, the river god of Lykormas was called Euenos.[16]

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[15] William Smith (Ed.), *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Biography and Mythology*, London: Taylor and Walton, 1844.

[16] *Ibid*

There are several beliefs among the Greeks that river gods are the protectors of the young who used to dedicate their uncut hair to the local river-god. This belief is followed as a custom in the rivers such as the river Kephisos and the river Alpheios. There are evidences from the poetry of Homer, who makes Peleus vow that on the safe return of his son (Akhilleus from Troy), he will cut off the young man's hair as a gift for the Sperkheios. After Akhilleus reached from Troy, he stood away from the pyre and cut a lock of his hair which he had grown long enough to give to the river Sperkheios. Gazing out over the wide wine-blue water, he spoke to the river Sperkheios that, his father Peleus vowed to you that, when I had returned home to the beloved land of my fathers, I would cut my hair for you and make a grand and holy sacrifice of fifty rams consecrated to the waters of your springs, which is your holy ground and smoking altar.[17]

Greeks believed that one does not cross a flowing river afoot until one has prayed and gazed into the river water for some time. One must wash his hands in the river water before crossing the river and if anyone does not wash his/her hand, the river gods would be angry with him/her and bring trouble upon them afterwards.[18] The people of Dion (Dium) believe that the river Baphyras flowed across a vast area throughout year. It is said that, once a woman who killed Orpheus, tried to wash off the blood stained hands in the river. Thereafter, the water disappeared from the river and did not allow its waters to cleanse manslaughter.[19]

According to **Egyptian mythology** the river Hep or Hapi, the god of Nile River, is always depicted in the form of a man, but his breasts are those of a woman. They are indicative of the powers of fertility and of nourishment possessed by the god.[20] When the Egyptian divided their country into two parts- the south and the north- they also divided the river gods. Thus, each part came to be the god of each side. That is the god of the South and the god of the North of Nile.

The god of the South Nile has a cluster of lotus plants on head while the god of the North Nile has a cluster of Papyrus plants. The former is called Hap-Reses and

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[17] Homer, *Iliad*, Ian Johnston (trans.), Virginia: Richer Resources Publication, 2006.

[18] Hesiod, *Works and Days*, Evelyn White (trans.), Forgotten Books, 1914(First Published), 2007.

[19] Pausanias, *Description of Greece*, Samuel Jones (trans.), Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1975.

[20] Canney, Maurice A, *Encyclopedia of Religions*-12, Rivers, Delhi: Nag Publishers, 1976.

the later Hap-Meht. When the two forms of Hep or Hapi are indicated in a single figure, the god holds in his hands the two plants, i.e., papyrus and lotus or two vases, from which he was believed to pour out the two Niles. By a pretty device, in which the two Nile gods are seen tying in a knot the stems of the lotus and papyrus round, the emblem of union, the Egyptians symbolized the union of the South and North. It is believed that there was a cut-up on the side of the thrones of some Pharaohs, from very early times, to indicate that the thrones of south and North had been united. It is also meant to signify the sovereignty of the monarch over both upper and Lower Egypt. The god Hapi held a unique position among the gods of the country. Without the water of Hapi, every living being would perish. The festival of the annual rise of the Nile was celebrated throughout Egypt with very great solemnity. The statues of the Nile god were carried through the town and village so that men might honour him and pray to him. When the inundation was abundant the people rejoiced on the banks in a great way.

The ancient Egyptian festival has its equivalence among the Muslims which is celebrated on June 17, called *Leylet en Noocktah* i.e., Night of the drop. Because, it is believed that on that night, a miraculous drop would fall from the heaven into the Nile and make it to rise.[21] In its annual flow, this river deposits rich sediment which would make the plains on either side of the Nile fertile.

The Yellow River Huang Ho is China's second longest river and the muddiest river in the world and it is also the birthplace of Chinese civilization. Over a billion tonnes of silt and sediment flow through it each year, giving the Huang Ho its distinctive yellow colour. The Yellow River is called China's sorrow for its frequent flooding.

According to **Chinese mythology**, a man named He Bo tied heavy rocks to his back and jumped into the water as a supreme sacrifice to stop the flood of the Yellow river. Plunging into the river, he thus gained immortality. For his pains he was granted immortality and promoted to the status of the god of the Yellow River. He is spotted with a red moustache, dressed in white robes and wears a black crown. He rode a white horse and had twelve boy attendants. He Bo, the god of the Yellow river is the

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[21] Ernest Alfred Wallis Budge, *The Gods of the Egyptians or Studies in Egyptian Mythology*, Vol 2, Ericson classic Series, Boston: Adamant Media Corporation Publications, 2006; Lewis Spence, *Ancient Egyptian Myths and Legends*, Boston: DD Nickerson Publishing, 1990.

combination of 'He' literally means river and Bo means master or god.[22] Following this act, it became a custom to throw a young virgin as a bride of He Bo into the river on the anniversary of his death (this ritual lasted until the end of the Zhou dynasty in 256 BCE). This 'marriage' was arranged by the local authorities. As a rule, when the date for 'marriage' approaches, a female Shaman was sent to visit families in the Ye village. When they find a beautiful girl, they would say, 'She should be married to He Bo'. The people assert that, if the annual providing of a bride to the River god, He Bo, is not carried out it would result in the over flow of the river and the resultant death of many people.[23]

After giving the family some money as bride-price, they would put the girl by force on a decorated bed on which is spread a mat of woven split bamboo. Carried by nine strong men to the river bank, the girl would be thrown into the water in the presence of two to three thousand people dressed in bright coloured clothing. In order to avoid this unreasoned custom, most families with girls escaped from this area. The masses were strongly against this evil custom, but they did not dare to oppose it openly for fear that their fields would be flooded if He Bo becomes angry.

Mythologies of major rivers of India

There are many myths about the origin of rivers in India. These narratives give an overview of the sacredness of the rivers and their association to ritual enactment. The following are the origin myths of major Indian rivers with versions and variations.

Indus River

According to Indian mythology, Indus valley civilization was originated on the banks of the river Sindhu. The word 'Sindhi' derive from the river Sindhu. Though this river is called Sindhu in India, it is called the Indus by Westerners. The word Sindhu means 'stream'. The river is a pivotal water source for Sindh as it is the only

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[22] Lihui Yang, Deming Ann and Jessica Anderson Turner, *Handbook of Chinese Mythology*, California: A B C Clio Publication, 2005.

[23] Whalen Lai, *Looking for Mr. Ho PO: Unmasking the River God of Ancient China*, History of Religion Volume 29, spring 1990.

source of freshwater that sustains the people, local environments, and the economy of Sindh.[24]

The river god of Indus is called as the 'Jhulelal' by the Sindhi people. His birthday cheti chand which falls on the second day of the chaitra month (march-april) is auspicious for Sindhis and is celebrated in high esteem. He is also known under various names such as Uderolal, Dulahlal, Amarlal, Khwaja Khizr, Darya Shah and is worshipped throughout Sindh and Punjab of India.

In Sindh, Mohamed Bin Qasim defeated Raja Dahar, the last Hindu Kings. Sindh was annexed by Khalife of Al Hilaj to his kingdom and was administered by his representatives. In the 10th Century, Sindh came under the rule of Sumras, who were converted from Hinduism to Islam. While they made Sindh free from the foreign rule, they were also tolerant to all other religions. There was one exception in Sumra reign. The province of Thatta being far from the capital, maintained its separate identity.

Its ruler Mirkshah was not only a tyrant but also a religious fanatic. Mirkshah too was surrounded by sycophants. These friends advised him one day: 'Spread Islam and you will be granted 'Janat' (paradise) or eternal bliss after death'. Swayed by the promise, Mirkshah summoned the 'panchs (representatives) of the Hindus and ordered them: "Embrace Islam or prepare to die". The terrified Hindus begged Mirkshah for time to consider the 'shahi firman' or royal proclamation. The arrogant Mirkshah conceded and agreed to give the desperate Hindus forty days to plead with their god. Faced with imminent death, the Hindus turned to god Varuna, the god of the River, to come to their aid. For forty days, they underwent penance. They neither shaved nor wore new clothes, praying and fasting and singing songs in the praise of god Varuna. They requested him to free them from the hands of their persecutor. On the fortieth day, a voice was heard from Heaven: 'Fear not, I shall save you from the wicked Mirkshah. I shall come down as a mortal and take birth in the womb of Mata Devki in the house of Ratanchand Lohano of Nasarpur'. The oppressed Hindus anxiously awaited the birth of their deliverer. After three months, the second tithi of Asu month, they got confirmation of the news that Mata Devki had conceived. The River god has incarnated himself in her womb. The Hindus rejoiced and praised the Lord. On Cheti Chand, two tithis from the new moon of chaitra, Devki gave birth to a boy. As if to proclaim the auspicious event, unseasonal clouds collected on the sky and brought down torrential rains to welcome the new avatar. The newborn infant also hailed his birth with a miracle. He opened his mouth and his parents saw therein river Sindhu flowing and also an old man sitting cross-legged on a Pala fish. The pala fish is a very tasty fish and its peculiarity is that it swims against the flow of water. Devaki went to the bank of Sindhu and performed Jado which means praying to water god. All Hindus celebrated the birth of the child with songs and dances.

The child was named 'Udaichand' (Uday in Sanskrit means moonbeams). Udaichand was to be the light in the darkness. An astrologer, who saw the

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[24] Altaf A. Memon, "An Overview of the History and Impacts of the Water Issue in Pakistan*", in* Proceedings of *International Conference on Sindh, The Water Issue and the Future of Pakistan*, Washington DC: The World Sindhi Institute, November 9, 2002.

child, predicted that he would grow up to be a great warrior and his fame would survive many places. Udaichand was also called 'Uderolal (Udero in Sanskrit means 'one who has sprung from water). Inhabitants of Nasarpur lovingly called the child 'Amarlal (immortal) child. The cradle where little Udero rested began to sway to and fro on its own. It is because of this that 'Uderolal' became popularly known as 'Jhulelal' or the swinging child. However, soon after the child's birth, Mata Devki passed away. A little later his father Ratanchand remarried. News of the birth of the mysterious child reached to Mirkshah who once again summoned the Panchs and repeated his royal threat. Hindus, now quite confident that their savior had arrived, implored him for some more time informing him that their saviors were none other than the Water god himself. Mirkshah mocked at the very idea of a child saving the Hindus. He jeered that, 'I shall wait. When your savior embraces Islam, I am sure you will also follow suit.'

The sycophants pressed Mirkshah hard for settling the issue without any further delay. But the very thought of the child proving more than a match for him amused the ruler. He therefore told them to wait and watch. As a precaution, he asked one of his ministers Ahirio, to go to Nasarpur to see things first hand, Ahirio did not want to take any chances. So he took along a rose dipped in deadly poison and asked Ratanchand to take him to the newborn baby. At the very first glimpse of the child, Ahirio was astonished. He had never seen a child so dazzling or more charming. He hesitated, and then put on courage. He extended the rose to the baby's lips. The child gave a meaningful smile while accepting the rose. He then blew away the flower with a single breath. The flower fell at Ahirio's feet. Then he saw that the child was no more in the cradle. Instead an old man with a long white beard was staring at him. All of a sudden the old man turned into a lad of sixteen years. Again the scene changed. He saw Uderolal on a horse back with a blazing naked sword in his hand and there were rows of warriors behind him. It was a scene of battlefield. A cold shiver ran down Ahirio's spine and he bowed his head in reverence. 'Have mercy on me Sindhu Lord', he prayed 'I am convinced'.

On his return Ahirio narrated the miraculous happening to Mirkshah. But Mirkshah was not convinced. He hardened his heart even more. 'How can a little baby turn into an old man?' he mocked. 'It looks like you have been fooled by simple magic.' But in his heart, Mirkshah was afraid. That night he had a dreadful dream. A child was sitting on his neck. The vision changed to an old man with a flowing beard and again to a warrior with a drawn sword confronting Mirkshah on the battlefield. Next morning Mirkshah called for Ahirio and gave him orders to counter the threat posed by the child. Ahirio, however, advised Mirkshah not to rush matters.

Meanwhile, the child Uderolal grew in stature and spirit performing miracles and comforting the sick. Residents of Nasarpur were fully convinced that god had come to save them. To earn money for the family, Udero's stepmother would send him to the market to sell boiled beans. Instead of going to the market; Uderolal would go to the banks of the Sindhu. There he would distribute half of the beans among beggars, the poor and the sadhus. The other half, he would offer to the Sindhu. He would then spend the rest of the time speaking to little children and the elderly about

spiritual wealth on the riverbank. In the evening when it was time to go home, Udero would fish out from the river a container full of fine quality rice. This he would take home and give it to his stepmother. Growing suspicious about her stepson's behaviour, the stepmother one day asked Ratanchand to follow him. When Ratanchand witnessed the miracle, he bowed to Uderolal from a distance and accepted him as the saviour.

Mirkshah on the other hand was being pressurized by the flatterers to bring Hindu infidels into the fold of Islam. They gave him the ultimatum and ordered the Hindus to convert to Islam or be branded as kafirs (unbelievers). Fearing the wrath of the clerics, Mirkshah decided to meet Uderolal face to face. He asked Ahirio to arrange for a private meeting with Udero. Ahirio who had in the meantime become a devotee of Daryashah, went to the banks of the Indus and pleaded with the Water god to come to his rescue. To Ahirio's amazement, he saw the same old man with a white beard floating on a pala fish. Ahirio's head bowed in adoration and he understood that Uderolal, the Water god, was in fact the other form of Khwaja Khirz. Ahirio then saw Udero leap onto a horse and galloped away with a sword in one hand and a flag in the other.

As decided, Mirkshah reached the meeting place, Udero appeared before Mirkshah and explained to the ruler that, 'Whatever you see around you is the creation of only one god, whom you call 'Allah' and the Hindus call 'Ishwar'. The sycophants urged Mirkshah not to pay any attention to the infidels' talks and to arrest him. Mirkshah, dithering as usual ordered his soldiers to arrest Udero. As the officials of the court moved towards Udero, great waves of water leaped forth-inundating Mirkshah and his courtiers. Fire too broke out and the palace was consumed by the flames. All escape routes were sealed. Udero spoke again to Mirkshah that, 'think it over. Your god and mine are the same. Then, why did you hound my people?' Mirkshah was terrified and begged Udero, 'My Lord, I realize my foolishness. Please save me and my courtiers'. Suddenly the water receded and the fire died away. Mirkshah bowed respectfully and agreed to treat Hindus and Muslims alike. Before they dispersed, Uderolal told the Hindus to think of him as the embodiment of light and water. He also told them to build a temple in memory of transformation of Mirkshah and light a candle in the temple with holy water always available.

Uderolal named his cousin, Pagad, as the first Thakur (Priest of the religious sect that believes in Water god). Pagad followed Uderolal wherever he went. Uderolal asked Pagad to continue the sacred work of building temples and spread the message. Selecting a place near village Thijahar, Uderolal gave up his earthly form. Both Hindus and Muslims were present in large numbers to witness this mysterious incident. Mirkshah's representatives were also there. No sooner Uderolal's soul left his body; they took charge and wanted to build a 'Turbat' or 'Qaba' at the site according to the dictates of Islam, while the Hindus wanted to erect a 'samadhi' according to Hindu custom. While the debate began, heavy rains came down and a voice said: 'Behold, You shall make my shrine acceptable both to Hindus and Muslims. Let its one face be a temple and the other a dargah (Shrine). I belong to all

of you. It is performed with Sobha Yaatra (victory dance) of Jhulelal's Bahrana Sahib.[25] *After the demise of Uderolal, Pagad followed the place wherever Uderolal went. They visited Rohiri by the riverside and a 'ghat' was built there, which later on came to be known as Udero-ghat.*

Sarasvati River

1. *Sarasvati was residing in the heaven with her husband Hari, his co-wives, Lakshmi and Ganga. Once Ganga was in a passionate mood and was eyeing Hari continuously. Hari realized this easily and responded by laughing at her. Sarasvati could not tolerate such behaviour from Hari and got angry. When Hari saw that Sarasvati was in such a mood, he went out of the room leaving Sarasvati, Ganga and Lakshmi inside. Then Lakshmi tried her best to appease Sarasvati with her polite words; but could not succeed in her endeavour. Sarasvati then cursed Lakshmi, to become a river. When Ganga came to know of it, she consoled Lakshmi by saying that Sarasvati herself should go to earth as a river where sinners resided. Again Sarasvati cursed Ganga as she had done to Lakshmi. While this was going on, Hari returned and heard of what had happened and at last, said that Sarasvati should go to earth in consequence of her quarrel with Ganga. But since she had already been cursed, Ganga should also have to go to the abode of Shiva. Since Lakshmi had remained innocent in all this unpleasantness, she should remain here in the heaven with Hari. Therefore, Sarasvati came down to earth as a river.*[26]

2. *The King Pururava saw the nymph Sarasvati in the assembly of the gods, and asked Urvasi, to arrange for his union with her. Sarasvati consented to his desire, conveyed to her through Urvasi, and approached Pururava. These two then sported for many years and from them was born Sarasvan, who later produced Brhadratha. For this act of hers, Brahma cursed her to become a river*[27]. *But, being afraid of the curse, Sarasvati went to the Ganga, who pleaded on her behalf in front of Brahma. Brahma said that Saravati would have to be a river, but she would be seen in some places and not seen in others. Thus, Sarasvati (river) was joined with the Ganga.*[28]

[25] Vaswani, J.P, "I am a Sindhi: the Glorious Sindhi Heritage" in *The Culture and Folklore of Sindh,* New Delhi: Sterling Publishers Pvt Ltd, Pp 129-135, 2008; Falzon Mark Anthony, "Cosmopolitan Connections: The Sindhi Diaspora", 1860-2000, in *International Comparative Social Studies*, Vol 9, Brill Academic Publishers, 2004, Pp.59; F. Burton, Richard, *Sindh and the Races that Inhabit in the Valley of the Indus*, Karachi, Oxford University Press (1851), 1975; Dawani, M. "Shrine of Udero Lal: An Architectural and Symbolic Expression of Sindh's Cultural Past", in *The Journal*, 7(1), pp.63-71. Karachi, NIPA. 2002, March.

[26] *Brahma Vaivarta Purana* (11 6.17-40), Shanta Lal Nagar (trans.), Delhi: Parimal Publication, 2001.

[27] Brahma Purana (10l .2-11)*,* Delhi: Motilal Bansarsidas, 1986.

[28] Sadashiv A Dange, *Encyclopedia of Puranic Beliefs and Practices*, New Delhi: Navarang, 1989. Brahma Purana 101.2-11*,* Delhi: Motilal Bansarsidas, 1986.

Ganga River

1. *Sagara, king of Ayodhya, eagerly desired children. His elder wife was Keshini and the second wife Sumati. He went to Himalaya with his wives to practise penance. When a hundred years passed, the rishi Brigu, granted him his wish that one of his wife Keshini, shall bring forth a son who will perpetuate his race and the other wife shall give birth to sixty thousand sons. In due course Keshini bore a son and his name was Asamanja. Sumati gave birth to sixty thousand sons and the nurses fostered them in jars of ghee until they grew up to youth hood and beauty. But the eldest son, the child of Keshini, didn't love them and cast them in the Sarayu river and watched them sink. For this evil disposition and for the wrongs he did to citizens and honest folk, Asamanja was banished by his father. But he had himself a son named Suman, fair-spoken to all and well-beloved. Many years had passed. Sagara determined to perform a sacrifice and the place he selected for the sacrifice was the region between the Himalaya and Vindhya. But he had lost his horse and Anshumat, a mighty chariot-fighter, followed to protect it. Then the Brahman priests informed the king, and commanded him to slay the thief and bring back the horse. Then Sagara sent his sixty thousand sons to seek the horse. They searched many places and finally they saw the horse near to the hermitage of sage Kapila. They rushed on Kapila in fury and attacked him with trees and boulders, spades and ploughs. But Kapila uttered a dreadful roar and flashed a burning flame upon the sons that burned them all to ashes.*

King Sagara addressed his grandson Suman, to seek his uncles and learn their fate. He came in turn to many places and at last he came to the heap of ashes that had been his uncles and there he also found the horses. He desired to perform the funeral rituals for the uncles, but he could not find water anywhere. Then he asked Garuda who was passing through the air. Garuda explained all stories of his uncles and the great Kapila's curse on your uncles. Later they returned to his home with the horse and Sagara's ceremony was completed.

Sagara died after some years and Anshumat became king. He was a great ruler, and at last resigned the kingdom to his son and retired to dwell alone in the Himalayan forests. In due time he also passed away and reached heaven. Later, his son, King Dilipa, constantly kept on thinking about how to bring down the Ganga to purify the ashes. But after thirty thousand years he too died, and his son Bhagiratha, a royal saint, followed him.

Bhagiratha performed terrible penance for a thousand years to draw down Ganga from the skies. Then Brahma was pleased by his devotion, and appeared before him, granting him a boon. He prayed that the ashes of the sons of Sagara should be washed by the water of Ganga to which Brhama replied that only Shiva could bear the power of falling Ganga from heaven.

Then for a year Bhagiratha worshipped Shiva and he being well pleased, undertook to bear the mountain-daughter's fall, receiving the river upon his head. But

when Ganga fell in Shiva's tangled locks it was feared that she might not even reach the earth, for she wandered there unable to escape for many years. Then Bhagiratha again engaged in many hard austerities, till Shiva would set the river free and she fell in seven streams. Bhagiratha conducted the funeral ritual for the sixty thousand sons of Sagara and they finally attained salvation in Heaven.[29]

2. *Once, King Sagar wished to become the emperor of the Earth. To achieve this he decided to perform an Ashwamedha Yaga (sacrifice of horse in Vedic fire-ritual). Indra smelt the danger of Sagar gaining more power and decided to disturb Yaga. He stole the horse brought for the Yaga (Vedic fire-ritual) and hid under a tree where sage Kapila was under meditation. The sons of Sagar, numbering 60,000, barring one, detected the horse. They mistook it was stolen by sage Kapila and threatened the saint. The insulted Kapila burnt them to ashes through the fire emanated from his third eye. The remaining one son of Sagar learnt of the incident and begged upon Kapila to release the souls of his brothers from the ashes. Saint Kapila said he has no power to release the souls and advised him to please Brahma with penances. If Brahma was pleased he would release Ganga from heaven to the earth for purifying the ashes as a requisite for getting the souls released. He undertook penances for many years but Brahma was still to be pleased. After many years Bhagiratha was born to king Sagar. He undertook penances and pleased Brahma. Brahma advised him to worship Shiva and so he did. The pleased Shiva withheld Ganga by spreading his hairs in the sky in order to avoid flooding of earth when Ganga descended on it. Shiva finally released a bit of Ganga's water to the earth.*[30]

3. *Formerly Ganga the beloved of Krishna lived in the Goloka. When she was with Krishna, Radha, another wife of Krishna, came there. Radha didn't see Ganga as she concealed herself in water but Radha came to know of the situation by her yogic powers and she started to drink the water to destroy Ganga. But Ganga then concealed herself in the feet of Krishna. Because of Ganga's disappearance, all the water in the world dried up. Thereby, all the gods and goddess went to the Goloka and prayed to Krishna. He then advised Brahma to please Radha and accordingly Brhama prayed to her. Radha was pleased with them and thus Krishna drew Ganga out from his feet and she began to flow again.*[31]

4. *Ganga was the beloved of Shiva and he kept Ganga on his head (as a token of honour). Since Shiva's wife Uma knew about this, it as a matter of great concern for him. Uma was unable to bear this and on seeing Ganga on the matted hair of Shiva, she spoke angrily to her Lord and asked him to send Ganga away. However, Shiva declined to send her away. Later Uma, in secret, spoke of this matter to Vinayaka, Skanda and Jaya. She said that the Lord would never abandon Ganga even if it was attempted by the Devas, Asuras, Yaksas, and Siddhas, including them, the kings or*

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[29] *Ramayana, Balakanda*, Rupa Publishers, Delhi: 1989; Sadashiv A Dange, *Encyclopedia of Puranic Beliefs and Practices*, New Delhi: Navarang, 1989.

[30] *Brahmapurana Part iv-Gautamimahatmya,* Delhi: Motilal Bansarsidas, 1986.

[31] *Brahma Vaivarta Purana*, Shanta Lal Nagar (trans.), Delhi: Parimal Publication, 2001.

others. She told them that either she should have to go to Himavan and perform penance once again or entrust the job to holy Brahmins who have already dispelled their sins by practicing austerities. Requested by them, there was a chance that Ganga may go to the Earth.

Then Vinayaka spoke to his mother, brother and Jaya that, the Brahmin Gautama is equal to Devas and has done many things which could be achieved by Devas only with effort. Gautama may thus be able to dislodge Ganga from the matted hair of Lord Shiva. During this time there was a drought in the entire world, except for in the hermitage of the Brahmin, Gautama. Thus, all the Brahmins came and pleaded to Gautama to allow them to live in his hermitage. Jaya assuming the form of a cow, went to the place where Gautama was present, eating the paddy plants near to the hermitage. When Gautama saw the cow, he tried to prevent it from eating the paddy by striking it with a blade of sharp grass. On hearing the cry of the Cow and on seeing the action of Gautama, the other Brahmins who resided in the hermitage of Gautama became very distressed. The Brahmins said that all of them should leave the hermitage because of Gautama's sin even though they had all been nurtured by him as his sons. Gautama was struck down by the severity of the decision on hearing these words of the Brahmins who were determined to go from there. He fell down in front of them while touching their feet, said that their holinesses alone was his refuge.

Then Lord Vinayaka (Ganesha, the creator of obstacles) reached the place in the form of a Brahmin and stood surrounded by them. Whereby, all the Brahmins said that this intelligent Sage would speak in accordance to the opinion of all of other Brahmins and that his statement would be considered authoritative by all of them as well as Gautama. Vinayaka in the guise of a Brahmin thus spoke to all and told them that only by accepting his suggestion would they be delivered from this sin they had committed. He told them that the Ganga was staying in the matted hair of Lord Shiva and should be brought quickly down by performing the austerities and holy rites by the Brahmins. He asked them to bring the water of the Ganga and pour it over the dead cow that had fallen to the ground. And after that they all shall stay in Gautama's house like before. After Vinayaka gave this suggestion, Gautama started his penance and pleaded to Shiva to let Ganga come down to the earth.[32]

5. It is said that, when Vishnu, in his form of the dwarf, crossed the earth and heaven in two strides, he reached the heaven of Brahma, called Satyaloka. Brahma received Vishnu and washed his feet with the water from a pitcher. From that pitcher it is said that the flow of Ganga was produced.[33]

Brahmaputra

1. There was once a sage named Santanu, who sometimes lived in Kailash, sometimes on the banks of the big tank (kunda) called lohita and sometimes on

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[32] *Brahmapurana Part iv-Gautamimahatmya,* J.L Shastri (trans.), Delhi: Motilal Bansarsidas, 1986.

[33] Skandapurana (1.1.19.10-15), G.V Tagore and G.P Bhatt (trans.), Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 2007.

the top of mount Gandhamadana with his wife Amoga. Once, while at Gandhamadana, the sage while gathering fruits and flowers wandered quite far away from his ashram. Meanwhile pithamaha Brahma, the creator, came on his way to his cottage in quest of Santanu and saw his wife Amoga, who was as beautiful as any celestial nymph. Brahma wished to have a child by her which would benefit the whole world. But the chaste Amoga not only refused to recognise Brahma, but also resisted his wishes. Brahma returned to Brahmalok after leaving his semen in the hermitage of Santanu. Santanu, on seeing the semen lying on the ground, learned of Braham's visit and his desire. He meditated and recognised the real intention of Brahma and thereby requested his wife, Amoga to drink the semen of Brahma for the benefit of all the three worlds and for the fulfilment Brhama's desire. But Amoga requested her husband to drink the semen himself and sprinkle it into her womb. She conceived and in due course of time gave birth to a watery form which in appearance looked exactly like Brahma. Santanu placed this form, called Brahmakunda, in the middle of the four mountains- Jarudhi and Sambwarttaka, Kailash and Gandhamadana. After some years the stream grew in to a lake, swelling up to forty miles looking like a vast sea. Brahma thereafter, himself blessed his child and gave it the name of Brahmaputra (son of Brhama).[34]

Narmada

1. Once Shiva and Uma were sporting on the peak of Amarkantak and were both perspiring profusely. After which, the perspiration on the chest of Shiva mixed with the perspiration of Uma and a beautiful lotus-eyed girl was born. The gods and the Asuras were both enchanted by her beauty, and ran to get her. Shiva and Uma on seeing the plight of both, the Devas and the Asuras, said to the girl that, it is she who had given them erotic excitement (narma), and thus, will be known as Narmada thereafter. Then, while the Devas were still trying to capture her, she changed herself into a river and flowed onto Earth.[35]

2. Lord Shiva was wandering in the naked form at forest of Daruvanam. The wives of the sages living there got extremely frightened of the nakedness of Shiva but some of them while surprised approached him. Thereafter they lost self-control thinking that Lord Shiva was the most beautiful and attractive of all men. Meanwhile the sages came there and on seeing Lord Shiva engaged in perverse activities with their wives, became infuriated and asked him of his identity. But Shiva does not reply. As they failed to recognize Shiva and took him to be an ordinary man, they cursed him that his penis should fall to the ground. The moment the Lingam of Shiva fell to the ground, he disappeared immediately. The penis went all over the earth and never remained steady anywhere. The sages wondered about this maayaa, and approached Lord Brahma to find a solution for

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[34] Kalikapurana (81.32-34), B.Shastri (trans.), Delhi: Nag Publishers, 1991.

[35] *Skandapurana* (3.5.29-30), G.V Tagore and G.P Bhatt (trans.), Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2007.

stopping the wandering of the penis. Then, Lord Brahma explained to them on how to make steady the penis and the sages following the instructions of Brahama got the linga (penis) fixed at one place, called Daha Sira, in the mountains of Amarakantak where the semen from it turned into the river Narmada.[36]

3. *The river Narmada is also known as Maikal associated with such names as Maikalsuta i.e the daughter of Maikal etc., and can be attributed to it in many different ways. Maikal is said to have been a sage who used to practice penance at Amarkantak and therefore, Narmada is said to have originated as his daughter, as a result of his hard penance.*[37]

Godavari

1. *Parvati would always feel jealous of Ganga, because Shiva held Gangaon his head. She expresses her agony in front of her sons Ganesha and Skanda and her attendant Jaya. They constantly think on how to come out of this predicament and meanwhile there comes a severe famine on earth. All sages come and take resort with Sage Gautama at his mountain abode and the adjoining fertile plane called Brahmgiri. Ganesha knew too well that none except Gautama could bring Ganga down from Shiva's matted hair. So Ganesa called Jaya and asks her to take the form of a Cow and go and graze in the field of Gautama which was full of crops and thereby she follows his instruction. Ganesha had instructed Jaya (cow) to fall down and pretend to be dead at the very touch of Gautama. When Gautama sees a cow grazing in his field, he follows and touches the cow and it suddenly falls dead. All the sages then get the news that Gautama has killed a cow. Gautama thus decides to relieve himself from the gohatya.*

Later, Ganesha disguises himself as a Brahmin and approached the sages. He tells Gautama to bring Ganga to earth (the great river that stayed in the matted locks of Shiva) as it is only with the touch of her waters that the cow would come to life. This was to be done to wash off the sin of the gauhatya. Gautama worships Shiva and requests him to let Ganga flow down to the earth to purify his hermitage. Shiva pleased with Gautama's devotion lets Ganga flowed out of his matted hair to the earth. Since Ganga was brought down to Triambakeshwar, by sage Gautama. She is known here as Gautami. She is also known as Godavari because the river helped sage Gautama to relieve his sin from the killing of cow.[38]

2. *Gautama practises austerities in the forest of Dandaka and receives a boon from Brahma in the form of high crop fertility and thereby huge production of crops. Now, in course of time there breaks out a severe famine which lasts for twelve years and that compels the sages, who lived in the forests, to approach*

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[36] *Skandapurana* (vi.259.3-5). G.V Tagore and G.P Bhatt (trans.), Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2007.

[37] Sankaran Unni, *Ecology of River Narmada,* New Delhi: APH Publishing Corporation, 1996.

[38] Brahma Purana, J.L Shastri (trans.), Delhi: Motilal Bansarsidas, 1986.

Gautama for food. Gautama supports the sages throughout the whole period and requests them to stay with him even when the famine is over. As a pretext to leave the place the sages create a cow by virtue of their power and put her in the hermitage. Gautama realizes that it is a magic cow and sprinkles water on her face. The cow drops down dead and thereafter the sages leave the hermitage. Then, Gautama began his austerities and Shiva being pleased with his devotion comes down and gives him a piece of his matted hair. Gautama brings the hair to his hermitage and this causes the Ganges to flow through the place where the magic cow lay senseless. The cow revives with the touch of water and consequently the river was named Godavari.[39]

Krishna

1. *Lord Brahma decided to perform a yajna. He prepares the place, materials and invites the gods, the rishis and the Gandharvas. The altar is ready and the auspicious time for the sacrifices has started. Meanwhile, Savitri, the wife of Brahma while wearing her clothes and jewels, forgets the auspicious moment of yajna and gets delayed in reaching the ordained place. Brahma starts the yajna with the consent of others along with Gayatri. When Savitri hears the sound of musical instrument and hymns of Vedas, she rushes to the sacrificial tent, and sees her husband performing the yajna with Gayatri. She gets angry and she curses Brahma, Vishnu, Mahesheswar and Gayatri. She said that since the Trimurtis took the help of Gayatri, they will be turned to rivers and will be known by feminine names. Gayatri should also become a river but people would ignore her presence. On hearing the curse, Vishnu becomes angry and gives a similar curse to Savitri. Because of these curses, Vishnu became the river Krishna, Shiva takes form of the river Vena and Brahma takes the form of the Kakudmati (the Koyna). The names Gayatri and Savitri remained the same.*[40]

2. *There was an Asura called Jalandhara who became invisible due to his wife Vrindhas devotion towards Vishnu. Jalandhar thus challenges the devas who were then defeated by him. After being vanquished, the Devas approached Vishnu and on seeing their plight he decides to wage war against Jalandhar. But Jalandhar emerged victorious in the war. Vishu, after being defeated, realised that as long as Jalandhar's wife Vrindaa remained chaste to him, nothing and nobody could ever defeat him. Based on Shiva's request Vishnu plotted Jalandhar's downfall. One day Vrindaa becomes very sad in Jalandhar's absence and goes for a walk in the forest where she is pursued by two Demons. Vrindaa get frightened and runs to a sage, meditating in the forest. She falls at his feet and asks him for shelter. Vishu, in the form of the rishi burns up the demons into ashes and thereafter makes love to Vrindaa. She thereby becomes unchaste and Vishnu wins his mission. This weakens Jalandhar and he gets killed*

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[39] Varahapurana, B.K Chaturvedi (trans.), Delhi: Diamond Books, 2004.
[40] *Skandapurana*, G.V Tagore and G.P Bhatt (trans.), Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2007.

in the battle against Shiva. Vrindaa, later, gets the news of the death of her husband and realizes that the sage was Vishnu himself. She feels sad at having deceived by Vishnu and throws herself into a burning pit. Meanwhile the Devas celebrate the victory of Shiva over Jalandhar but they are shocked to find that Vishnu has become mad and is rolling in Vrindaa's ashes. Seeing this, Lakshmi, Vishnu's wife becomes jealous and curses Vishnu to be turned into river whose colour would be black. That is how the river Krishna comes out.[41]

3. *At the place where the Krishna River now is, there was no rain or even any kind of drinking water source for the people of that land. There is now a big hill near Satara where the Krisna river origins. The people of this village had to go twenty five or thirty kilometres each time to get water. Once, an exasperated woman jumps from the hill and thereafter water is said to have sprung from that place. This spring, now grown into a full-fledged river is known as Krishna River.*[42]

Kaveri

1. *Long ago, a sage Kavera lived in Brahmagiri (the present source of the River Kaveri) mountain and meditated to Brahma, the Creator. Kavera's devotion was so great and at last Brahma appears before him and blesses him by granting him his wishes. Kavera tells Brahma that he wanted children. Brahma to this replies that Kavera could not have any children of his own because of the sins he had committed in his previous life. But since Kavera shows exceptional devotion to Brahma, Brahma blesses Kavera with his adopted daughter Lopamudra (a manifestation of Parvati) for his own daughter. The sage was highly pleased with this boon. Later, Lopamudra informs Kavera that she regarded herself as his daughter, and she wanted to become a holy river someday. The girl lived with Kavera till the day he died. After their death, she met a great sage Agastya, who was visiting Brahmagiri Mountain to meditate to Shiva. Agastya falls in love with Kaveri, (as daughter of Kavera was called) and asks her to marry him. She agrees on one condition that she would leave him if she was ever left alone even for a little while. One morning Agastya wanted to bathe in Kanake, a river which rises in the Brahmagiri Mountain and thus, he puts his wife into a vessel and hands the vessel to one of his young Brahmin disciples for safekeeping. Kaveri, gets annoyed at being left alone and when the vessel stumble and falls from the hands of the disciples and rolls away on the ground, Kaveri escapes from it in the form of the River Kaveri*[43]. *Agastya returns after his bath and finds out about what had happened in his absence and runs*

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[41] *Padmapurana.* G.P Bhatt (trans.), Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 2004.

[42] Feldhaus, Anne, *Water and womanhood: religious meanings of rivers in* Maharashtra, New York: Oxford University Press, 1995.

[43] M.N. Srinivas, *Religion and society among the Coorgs of south India*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2003; M.P.Cariappa, The *Coorgs and Their Origins,* Mysore: Geetha Book House, 1981.

after his wife who swiftly keeps flowing away as a river. He catches up with her and expresses his regret at having left her alone and begs for her forgiveness. As a result of his entreaties, Kaveri decides to split her into two halves, one half flowing away as the River Kaveri and the other half becoming Lopamudra, the wife of Agastya.

2. Siddharta, the King of Matsyadesha, had four sons of which the youngest was Chandravarma. When he grew up, Chandravarma left his father and went on a pilgrimage to various holy places in the southern part of India. In the course of his pilgrimage, he went to the Brahmagiri Mountain where he meditated on Parvati, the wife of Shiva. When the goddess presented herself before Chandravarma and asked him what his wishes are, he replies that he wanted a kingdom, a wife of Kshatriya caste who would bear his children and a place in heaven after death. Parvati told him that owing to sins committed in a previous life, he could not beget children from a wife belonging to his own caste, but would have to get children from a Shudra wife. His wife would bear him eleven sons, who would be called the ugras. They would be courageous and righteous and respectful to the Brahmins and would be equal to Kshatriyas in every respect except one. They would not be entitled to the performance of Vedic ritual. They would also be devoted to the worship of Shiva and Parvati. The goddess assured Chandravarma that she would be born in course of time as the River Kaveri and confers prosperity and other blessings on the children (Coorgs) of Chandravarma. She asks him to go forth and clear the land of mlechchas (Muslims) and gives him a victorious sword, a white horse quick as the wind, and an army to drive the mlechchas out of the country. Chandravarma overcame the mlechchas and married a woman of his own caste according to Vedic rites. The coronation ceremony was performed by Brahmins to whom he gave houses and lands. He invited other castes to settle down in Coorg. He married a second time and had eleven sons from his Shudra wife, and Vedic rites were performed for each of them on occasions like the conferment of name, performance of tonsure, and investment with the sacred thread. In this respect, they were treated like Kshatriyas. When they came of age, the eleven sons married the hundred daughters of the King of Vidharbadesha. Chandravarma retired with his two wives to the Himalayas to meditate on Shiva and Parvati. Before his departure he told his children that Parvati would be reborn in Coorg as the River Kaveri and that they would be happy as long as they continued to worship Shiva and Parvati, and the Brahmins. Each of the sons of Chandravarma had more than a hundred sons. They were all very strong men, with nails as sharp and powerful as the tusks of boars. With their nails they levelled the ground and tore up the forests, and generally reclaimed land. Parvati appeared in a dream to Devakanta, the King of Coorgs, and ordered him to assemble his people in a place called Balmuri, where she would meet them. Accordingly, all Coorgs assembled there to greet Parvati in the form of the river Kaveri. The river, thus, came rushing down the valley, and such was the violence of the flood that it pushed the frontal knots

of the women's saris to their backs and even now Coorg women push the frontal knot to the back in memory of their first bathe in the Kaveri.[44]

3. According to one legend, a prince named Chandravarma worshipped goddess Parvati on the Brahmagiri hills in Kodagu. She promised to appear in the form of a river for the benefit of humanity. During the churning of the Kshirasagar by the Devas and Rakshasas for the amrita, the nectar of immortality; the Rakshasas seized the amrita from the Devas. In order to save heaven and earth from the wicked Rakshasas who would become immortal by drinking the amrita, Lord Vishnu incarnated himself as Mohini to recapture the amrita for the Devas. Goddess Lakshmi sends Lopamudra in the form of Parvati to help Mohini to carry out this delicate and difficult task. After recapturing and restoring the amrita to the Devas, Mohini changes herself into a rocky cave in the Brahmagiri and Lopamudra was brought up by Brahma as his own daughter.

The great sage Kavera resided at that time on the Brahmagiri and meditated to Brahma. He prayed to the Lord for a daughter. Lord Brahma, pleased with his devotion gives him his own Lopamudra as his daughter. Lopamudra gains the new name, Kaveri as the daughter of sage Kavera.
The great sage Agastya once happened to meet Kaveri on the Brahmagiri where she was meditating. The sage attracted by the lovely maiden and asks her to marry him. The youthful Kaveri consented on the condition that if at any time she should be left alone even for a short while, she should go away. Agastya accepted her condition and married her. Even though the sage was a loyal and devoted husband, Kaveri patiently waited for an opportunity to transform herself into a river. One day, after cautioning his disciples to keep a watch over her, Agastya leaves Kaveri at the holy pond and goes to bathe in the river. This leads him to break his promise at the time of their marriage whereby Kaveri plunges from the holy pond and flows out as a stream. This stream becomes to be known as the river Kaveri.[45]

4. King Kavera performs penance for a thousand years in the Himalaya whereby Brahma appears and promises him that his daughter, Vishnumaya, would be born as Kavera's daughter. A daughter was soon born to the king and when she came of age, she begins to practice tapas in order to become a river that would purify all her sins. Vishnu promises her that she would have her wish and that she would be greater than the Ganges. Vishnu appears to Agastya in the south and tells him that he should take a wife. Vishnu overcomes all of Agastya's objections and sends him to the Himalaya, where he finds Kaveri at performing her tapas. She thereby divides her nature, half of her entering his pot and the other half marrying the sage in a wedding as splendid as that of Parvati's. The couple then go south after the wedding, where on reaching the mountain of

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[44] M.N. Srinivas, *Religion and society among the Coorgs of south India*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2003.
[45] *Ibid.*

Brahmagiri, Agastya leaves his pot and from there Kaveri flows out over the feet of Vishnu forming the river.[46]

5. *Agastya propitiated Shiva at Kailasa and gets the boon to keep some holy water in his pot. At the same time Kaveri has also been worshipping Shiva. Thus, Shiva fills Agastya's bowl with Kaveri's water. Agastya, on his way back from Kailasa curses the Raksasa called Krauncha and kicks the Vindya Mountain down. After overcoming various difficulties he reaches Southern India where he sits in meditation with the bowl of Kaveri water in front of him. Here, Ganesa reaches the place in the disguise of a crow based on Indra's request and sits on the edge of the bowl thus toppling it and as the water in the bowl flows out it takes the form of a river which in present times is considered as Kaveri River.*[47]

From the above description of myths in brief one can find that some of the rivers in India are born out of body parts of the divine beings.

Table No. 2.2: Rivers and Divine Beings Association

S.No	Body Parts	Name of the River
1	Hair and feet	Ganga
2	Sweat; Genital Organ	Narmada
3	Hair	Godavari

From the above table it is evident that the Ganges is formed out of the plaited hair of Shiva according to one version whereas the other version states that the Ganges is created out of the feet of Vishnu. The river Narmada is born out of the sweat of Shiva-Parvathi as per one version and as per another it is created out of Shiva's genital organ. The river Godavari is believed to have been formed out of Shiva's head.

In the analysis of the myths, is also found that some of the rivers in India are formed owing to the verbal expressions of the gods/goddesses. In the popular belief it is considered that the divine beings are bestowed with powerful tongues whose curse or blessings results in the creation of the rivers in India as shown in the table below:

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[46] David Dean Shulman, *Tamil temple myths, sacrifice and divine marriage in South Indian Saiva Tradition*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980.

[47] *Skandapurana*, Asurakanda (3.5.29-30), G.V Tagore and G.P Bhatt (trans.), Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2007.

Table No. 2.3: Origin of Rivers – Verbal Acts of Divine Beings

S.No	Verbal Act	Name of the River
1	Curse	Sarasvati
2	Blessings	Brahmaputra
3	Curse	Krishna
4	Blessings	Kaveri

From the above table it can be found that some of the rivers owe their origin to the verbal acts of gods and goddesses. In the case of Sarasvati, the co-wife of Hari, Ganga cursed Sarasvati to be born as river on earth leaving Kailasa, the abode of Hari (Shiva). The lord Brahma blessed his son to grow as Brahmaputra. The river Krishna is born as the result of the curse of Savitri, the wife of Brahma. The origin of river Kaveri is attributed to the blessings of the lord Brahma who happens to be her father.

Personification of River as God/Goddess

The river is personified around the world as god/goddess. Each culture has depicted the river in iconic form or in figural form of human or super human being. The depictions are quite interesting to observe as in most cases the river is endowed with royalty or virginity or motherhood. For example the river Sindh (Indus) is depicted as a royal person with crown. Like wise the goddess Ganges is also attributed with a crown, whereas the goddess Kaveri is depicted as a virgin (young bride). The river is considered to be either a gift or a sorrow in different cultures and people are aware of their dependence on river for their lives. River Nile is called as 'the gift of the Nile' whereas Huang Ho or Yellow river in China is considered to be the 'sorrow of China.[48] Water deities are common in mythology and have important role in different civilizations.

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[48] Likewise, in Bengal River Damodar known as sorrow of West Bengal and Kosi River is the Sorrow of Bihar.

Table No. 2.4: Name of Water Deities

Mythology	Deities
Aztec mythology	Chalchiuhtlicue goddess of lakes, rivers,
Canaanite mythology	Yam, god of rivers and the sea
Celtic mythology	Acionna (Gaulish) water goddess of the Orleanais region; Boann goddess of the river Boyne (Irish); Sinann (Irish) goddess of the river Shannon;Sequana (Gaulish) goddess of the river Seine
Chinese mythology	Gong Gong water god who is responsible for the great floods, together with his associate, Xiang Yao Mazu water goddess and protector of sailors
Egyptian mythology	Hapy god of the annual flooding of the river Nile
Finnish mythology	Vedenemo a goddess of water
Greek mythology	Poseidon god of rivers, storms.
Lusitanian mythology	Nabia goddess of rivers and lakes
Mesopotamian mythology	Enbilulu god of rivers and canals; Enki god of water and of the River tigris
Tonga (Zambezi Valley Zimbabwe)	Nyami Nyami river god
Igbo, African religion	Idemili goddess of river
Indian Mythology	Varuna the god of water, river and ocean; Ganga-goddess of river Ganga, Saraswathi-goddess of river Saraswathi; Jhulelal-god of Sindhu river

Feminity of Rivers

Generally, rivers are considered to be feminine (river names are attributed to daughters) and it is a fact of life in India. The names of rivers are almost all grammatically feminine (except Indus, Brahmaputra, and Bhrathappuzha) and they are used freely as the names of girls and women.[49] Moreover, neither men nor women are generally given the names of mountains. This is because mountains never move towards any place. The feminine rivers are, on the other hand, often appearing as females in stories about them and are honoured than men. In relation to the ocean, which often is seen as masculine, the rivers that flow in to it are seen as wives rather than as sisters (Except Yamuna). Kaveri, Ganga, Krshna are depicted as the wives of

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[49] Vasudha Narayayanan, "*Water, Wood, and Wisdom: Ecological Perspectives from the Hindu Trdaditions",* in *Daedalus* Articles, September 22, 2001.

the ocean. 'Varuna' is the god of water in Indian mythology. Thus, river names are grammatically feminine. People offer women's clothes to rivers and consider them as women. In addition to it, a ritual rule hints that rivers are viewed as being physiologically female. The rule is found in Sanskrit literature in connection with the idea that rivers menstruate in the rainy season: the mud (*rajas*) is carried down with their currents and which make them menstruate (*rajaswala*). One should not bathe in them at this time, just as a man should not have intercourse with a menstruating woman. The origin place of rivers is considered as the head and the remaining part as the body. In India, river is called as *nadi* and the meaning of this Sanskrit word is feminine which shows its feminity. The narratives (origin myth), ritual and iconographic evidence show the feminity of Indian rivers.

Another kind of worship in terms of the feminity of the rivers is the custom of dressing a river in *saris*. In this ritual, *saris* are tied end to end stretched from one side to the other side of a river. This happens once every twelve years, during the period when Jupiter is in Leo and all people believe that it is part of the honour paid to the Krishna River when the Ganges comes to meet her. The names of rivers are grammatically feminine, stories make them in women's familial roles and offerings made to them are made to women. The ritual rule hints that rivers are viewed as being physiologically female.[50]. Both wealth and poverty are personified as women. A number of rituals that are by tradition or preference to be performed at rivers involve feeding Brahmins, gods or ancestor.

River as Mothers

River is symbolically addressed as a 'mother'. It points to the fact that in general, mothers provide food for their children. River also provides water on its banks and people use it for their agricultural purpose. So, river also acts as mother.[51] It can be seen as a symbol of prosperity and of destruction. It has two faces, providing foods and at the same time create flood. In a story, wealth and poverty are personified as women (earth as the goddess of Lakshmi and poverty as herself). Rivers are also more often important than bullocks, seen as the promoting symbol of agricultural

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[50] Salman, Richard, "Legal and Symbolic Significance of the Menstrual Pollution of Rivers", in Richard W. Lariviere (Ed.), *Studies in Dharmasastra*. Calcutta, 1984, 153-178.

[51] Heinrich Zimmer and Campbell Joseph, *Myths and Symbols in Indian Art and Civilization*, Washington: Bolligen Series, 1946.

prosperity and the good aspects of life in the world. Many festival calendars of river goddesses are directly connected with the celebration after the harvest. The earth is also considered to be a mother, because the earth gives grain. Water comes from the sky in the form of rain and it returns back as steam and again comes as rain. It shows the cyclical nature of life.

Connection between river and food also provides a further key to understanding the feminine imagery associated with rivers. Most of Indian rivers do not have organic birth. The river is not a mother in the sense of having children of her own, but is held to be a mother to her worshippers or to people in general. In this sense the reason for calling her people's mother is not that she gave birth to them, but she protects them the most and provides them with food.

The role of rivers in providing food appears, then, to be the basic reason that rivers are thought of as mothers. The water of rivers certainly could be in India compared with the waters of the womb. The river provides water which is required to make crops grows and hence to feed people, just as mothers provides the new born with their body and later from their kitchen-the food necessary to nourish their children and make them grow. In India, food is most clearly related to the physical reality of a river and it is another value that it is traditionally thought of as a woman's. Men may own land, plough the fields; but it is still women who are preparing their family's meals.

In times of flood, rivers too have their violent and dangerous side. Streams that normally flow all too thinly can transform themselves into roaring torrents, overwhelming and destroying the landscape that they otherwise nurture. Women are symbolically identified or associated with nature. Their body and its function all are related with nature. In the coastal areas, people consider sea as their mother. The very first creature came from water and considered everything equally. It became a symbol of freedom and fraternity. Like the earth, sea receives everything in its deeper level as utterance.

In India, Rivers are centres of religious attention. There are many striking differences in style between folk and classical tradition in India and equally important, deep rooted agreement with this respect is at least one cluster of religious values. The religious values of the world such as success, prosperity, good health,

long life, food, beauty, love and the birth of the children are clearly associated with women or represented by goddesses like *Sri* (the auspicious), *Lakshmi* (wealth), *Annapurna* (food) and *Jaya* (victory). The connections with these values are expressed in terms of feminine symbol and female goddesses. Brahmaputra and Indus are the major masculine rivers in India.

As mentioned earlier, in the Maharashtra region, the various goddesses who are embodied in the rivers are called *suvasinies* (married women whose husband is alive). Many images of river goddesses are depicted with a wedding necklace (*mangalyasootra*). There are some rituals like *asara,* where green bangles are offered. The rite of '*odibharanam*' is performed for the river goddess who directly reflects the feminity of rivers.[52] But, actually no one has bothered about the question of river identity but they have often considered rivers as husbandless wives. There are many male gods who are often associated with river goddesses. But they are considered as brothers, not as the husbands of rivers. The answer to the question about the divinity and feminine nature of the river is that the people see them this way. They consider river as '*apsaras*'. Rivers are female because *apsaras* are female. They are tempted by and are opponents to the male ascetics. River banks are considered to be good places of asceticism. It seems that in India, major cultural imagery is often associated with women than with men. In many rituals, people put turmeric and *kumkum* into river. It indicates the feminine character of river.[53]

From the mythologies of the Indian rivers as described earlier in this chapter some of the rivers are born as old, whereas some others are born as young or infant stage of human life. The following table illustrates this fact.

Table No. 2.5: River born as follows

S. No	Feminine Status	Name of the River
1	Young Lady	Sarasvati
2	Grown up Lady (Mother)	Ganga
3	Child	Brahmaputra
4	Young Lady	Narmada
5	Grown up Lady (Mother)	Godavari
6	Young Lady	Krishna

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[52] Anne Feldhaus, *Water and Womanhood- religious meanings of rivers in Maharastra,* NewYork: Oxford University Press, 1995.

[53] Colleen Kattau,"*Women, Water and the Reclamation of the Feminine*" in *Wagadu*, Vol 3, spring 2006.

| 7 | Young Lady | Kaveri |

It is interesting to note from the above table that Ganga and Godavari are shown as grown-up ladies having the status of mother due to their perennial and lengthy flows of water cutting across different states. In the case of Brahmaputra, though is perennial and long, it is depicted as a child and masculine.

Mother	X	Child
Feminine	X	Masculine
(Ganga and Godavari)		(Brahmaputra)

When it is feminine they are shown as mothers whereas when it is masculine it is shown as child. This dichotomy is interesting to note in the world-view connected with the gender perception in India.

Indian Rivers - Beliefs and Ritual Practices

India is a subcontinent and is also the land of many rivers. Indian *Puranic* literature refers rivers as mothers and mountains as fathers. Generally, Indian rivers have been divided into two basic categories on the basis of their courses: the rivers flowing into the Bay of Bengal and the river flowing in to the Arabian Sea.

River has a central place in the belief and practices of various communities living on the banks. There is a Marathi proverb which says, 'do not look for the source of a river or the ancestry of *rishi*'. This means that a river or a sage may have sacred origin but it should not be judged by their origins. Most rivers are formed by the totality of small streams and none of them is obviously the source of the river. In India, most of the major and minor rivers have been identified as the sources of certain rivers in India and these origin places often become the sites of worship and pilgrimage. This is a form of cultural construction of landscape and these sources are agreed by everyone as the sacred places. It shows that in India, the sources of rivers have been made into places of pilgrimage and people construct temples there. The architectural arrangements are designed to welcome pilgrims to the place. The source of the Godavari on Brahmagiri at Trayambakesvar and the sources of the Krishna at Mahabaleswar, the source of Kaveri at Talakaveri, the sources of river Ganga at Gangotri are some of them. Most of these origin places of rivers are on the mountain tops and are associated with the myth of Lord Shiva and his consorts.

The banks of rivers are by tradition used for almsgiving, ancestor rites, sacrifices and pilgrimage. There are some general rituals stated below which is still performed on the banks of several rivers in India:

<u>Alms-giving</u>

Almsgiving (*dana*) take different forms such as donating gold, cows, and food to the Brahmins. The Brahmins, whether they are ascetics or householder are the recipients. Giving alms on the banks of river is considered sacred act. It is considered that feeding one Brahmin on the banks of Godavari is equivalent to feeding a thousand at other holy places. The merit one gets by donating a particle of food at Dakini kshetra on the Bhima river is greater than that from giving a heap of food the size of mount Meru as alms anywhere else and giving any food at the banks of Godavari river is equivalent to donating the whole wealth of a believer.

<u>Ancestor Rites</u>

Ancestor rites involve feeding one's dead relatives preferably at pilgrimage places, especially at rivers. In classical, Sanskrit or Brahmanical literature, there are two principal types of rites that aim at satisfying, pacifying, freeing or feeding the dead, especially one's ancestors (*pitr*). One called *sradha* or *pindam* has its focal point the setting out of balls of cooked flour or rice, called *pind* for the ancestors. *Sradha* is one of the death rituals performed everywhere in India. Preparing cooked rice (*pindas)* for the ancestors and offering it on the banks and *tarpan* is another type of ancestor rite which is performed in the water of the river.

The *sradha* is performed by preference on the bank. The tarpan ritual is performed in water itself. Standing in the water, one takes some water in one's hands and pours it back into the river in which one is standing. This ritual is performed not only for the ancestors but also for gods and sages (*rishis*).

There are some special places for performing *sradha* especially some pilgrimage spots. The chief among these, for pilgrims from all over India, include Gaya, Prayag and Varanasi (Kashi) on the Ganges river in Northern India, Amarkantaka on Narmada river, Trambakeshwar and Ramkund on the Godavari at Nasik, Sri Rangam on the river Kaveri and so on. The confluence of the river is also a major place of pilgrimage in India such as Prayag at Alahabad where Ganga, Yamuna and Sarasvati bound together.

The ancestral worships like *sradha, tarpan* are conducted on river banks. River is the basic source of food and it is fit for conducting such rites. In other words, rivers embody the generosity of humans to perform rites of generosity of their own.

Sacrifice

There are many famous sacrifices that were performed along river banks both historic and *Puranic* past. The rich people can sponsor sacrifice and make great donations whereas people who cannot afford these expensive means can purify themselves through asceticism (*tapas*), pilgrimage (*tirtha-yatra*) and other ritual activities.

Besides this, pilgrimage can substitute for sacrifice. Some of the sacrifices in *Puranas* and epics are famous. The story of King Sagara's horse sacrifice which eventually necessitated the descent of the Ganges to revive the sixty thousand Sagaras[54] (son of Sagara) and the story of the sacrifice through which Rama's father Dasaratha came to have his sons are famous.[55]

Why is a river such a good place for giving alms and performing sacrifices and ancestral rites? What is the basis for the close association between rivers on the one hand and sacrifice, alms giving and *sradha* on the other? It could be that the sacrifice, almsgiving and *sradha* are acts of feeding. Through sacrifice one feeds the gods, as in *sradha* in which one feeds one's ancestors and as in almsgiving in which one feeds ascetics, Brahmans or other worthy humans. Because rivers are important sources of food, they are appropriate sites for conducting such rites of feeding. The sacrifice on a river banks provide such thing as long life, good health, victory, sons, wealth, cows and food. The creativity of a sacrifice and the life giving power of water provide a clearer symbolic basis for the association between sacrifice and rivers. The riverside location enhances the creativity of the sacrifice.

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[54] The story of Sagara's sacrifice can be seen in the section of Myths of Major Rivers in India', and referenced by *Brahmapurana,* translated by Sriram Sharma Acharya, New Delhi: Sanskrit Sansthan, 1980.

[55] Dasaratha, the king of Kosala, had three wives, Kausalya, Kaikeyi and Sumitra and he had no heir to succeed him. He performs a sacrifice known as Putra-Kameshti Yaga in order to be blessed by the gods. As a result of the sacrifice his wife Kausalya gave birth to Rama. Later the same day, Kaikeyi gave birth to Bharatha and Sumitra to twins Lakshmana and Shatrugna. Valmiki, *Ramayana, Balakanda*, translated by B.R Kishore, New Delhi: Diamond Pocket Books Ltd, 2005. p. 9-13

Tirtha –Yatra (Pilgrimage)

The custom of pilgrimage is widely prevalent among Indians. In Indian tradition, *tirtha* is sacred. There are hierarchies among the *tirthas* and many *tirthas* is often related to god Shiva. This hierarchy is related to the sacredness of the region. Bathing ghats in *tirtha* (river) is known as *upa-thirtha*.

The Vedic word '*tirtha*' originate from the *ter*, *tarate* which means 'step to a river'. The word *tirtha* was used at first refer to a bathing place on the banks of a river or a pond. Generally *tirthas* are held to be holy based on three grounds[56] : (a) on account of natural characteristics of the locality, (b) on account of peculiar dignity of some watery place, (c) on account of the fact that some holy sages resorted to them for bathing, or for performing austerities. In a sense, *tirtha* means a locality or spot or expanse of water which gives rise to the accumulation of merit owing to its own peculiar nature without any adventitious circumstance. The *thirtha* has come to mean a holy place or bathing place for religious purposes.[57] In India, a pilgrimage to a sacred bathing site has from early times been considered the part and parcel of one's religious life. Each bathing place showers its special benefits up-on the pilgrims.

Ancient Indian literature, especially Vedas (*Rigveda* and *Atharvaveda*) refer to rivers as divine and deified. Water is considered as holy and purifying. It also heals various diseases and helps to attain prosperity. The *Smritis* and *Dharmasatras* and *Puranas* give sanctity to the confluence of rivers and valleys of mountains. The *Puranas* (*Skanda* and *Padma* and *Narada Purana*) narrate the pilgrimage to holy places, such as mountains, holy rivers. According to Budhist literature, *Mahaparinibhana Suttanta*, there are four holy places namely Lumbini, Gaya, Sarnath and Kushinagar. The places such as Rajgriha, Vaishali, and Mankul Paravata are described as holy places where Budha used to spend the rainy season every year. The places where Budha performed miracles such as Sankasya (where he is believed to have descended from heaven); Vaishali (where monkeys offered him honey); Rajgriha (where he subdued a mad elephant) and Sravasti (where he performed the miracle of

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[56] Baidyanath Sarasvati, *The spectrum of the sacred,* New Delhi: Concept Publishing Company, 1984.

[57] Surinder Mohan Bhardwaj, *Hindu Place of Pilgrimage in India- A Study in Cultural Geography*, New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, 1999.

reduplicating himself are also considered holy). Budhists all over the world visit these holy places, especially where the relics of Budha are kept and *stupa* erected. In Jain scriptures, the Jain Shasana (dharma) is itself the real *tirtha*. The one who creates *thirtha* is *thirthankaran*. The places attached to the birth, contemplation, nirvana of twenty four *tirthankaras* are holy.

In the major cultural traditions of India, the concept of *tirtha* is sacred. Pilgrimage to sacred spots is the most effective means of expiation for all sins. According to *Purana* (Brahma, Matsya and Vamana) and Mahabharatha, the number of *tirthas* is countless and cannot be enumerated in detail even in hundred years. *Brahmapurana*[58] classifies *tirthas* into four divisions:

1. **Daivatirtha**- this kind of *tirtha* originates from the divine act of gods such as Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva. The holy *thirtha* Kashi, Pushkara and Prabhasa (Somnath) are sanctified by the act of the *thrimurthies*. River Sarasvati connected with Brhama, river Ganga from Vishnu and river Narmada from Shiva.

2. **Asuratirtha**- it is not the creation of demons or *asura* but these *tirthas* are associated with *asuras*. The sanctity is given by the act of gods who destroyed the demons. Eg: Gaya. Vishnu subdued the demon Gaya. The place, known in the name of the demon Gaya and Vishnu is the presiding deity of Gaya.

3. **Arsatirtha**- the *tirthas* created by the actions of Saints and sages through their austerities. eg: Naimisa *tirtha* in Uttar Pradesh.

4. **Manusatirthas**- this kind of *tirthas* created by kings such as Ambarisa and Manu in association to temples.

The following charts show the number of holy places in various geographical locations.

Table No. 2.6: *Tirthas* and their geographical locations in India.

On River Bank	At River Source	Place of Confluence of River	Coast	Hill Top	Other	Total
60	6	7	11	21	37	142

Source: S.M.Bhardwaj, *Hindu Places of Pilgrimage in India: a study in Cultural Geography*, Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, Delhi, 1999.

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[58] Surabhi Seth, *Religion and Society in the Brahmapurana*, New Delhi: Sterling Publishers, 1979; Brahmapurana-70.16-9.

Diagram No2.1: *Tirthas* **and their geographical locations in India**

Tirthas & Thier Geographical Locations in India

- Other 26%
- River Bank 42%
- Hill Top 15%
- Coast 8%
- Confluence of River 5%
- River Source 4%
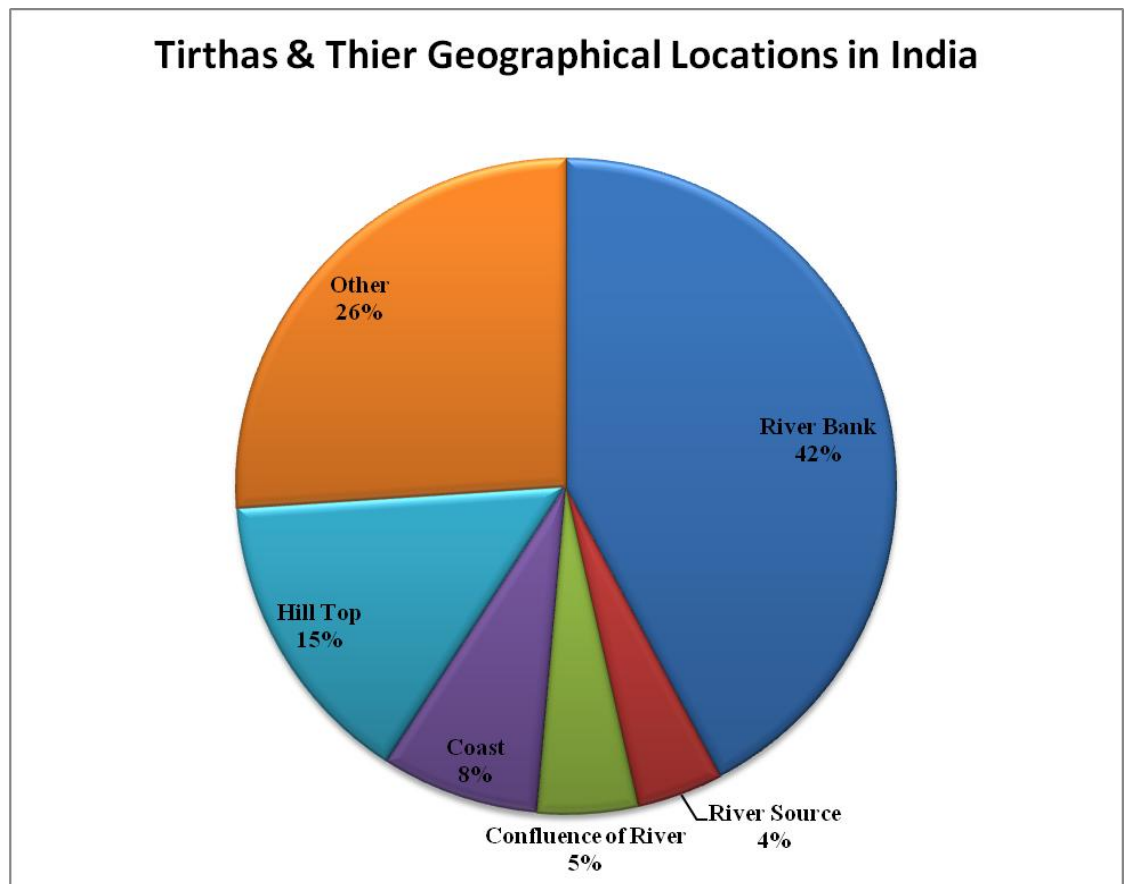
In the above table/chart water-associated with pilgrim sites are 84 (59 %) which means that flowing water is more important in Hinduism, especially for ritual bathing. From the above table it is evident that 60 (42%) pilgrim sites are located on the banks of the river whereas the remaining 24 (17%) pilgrim sites though are connected with the river, they are negligible when compared to the banks. Bathing at sacred places is not simply an act of physical purification; it is an act of symbolic purification of the soul. This could be seen in case of Ganga river. Ganga river is physically polluted even though the devotees are bathing without considering the physical condition of the river. It also means that hygiene and ritual purification by bathing are two entirely different concepts.

Among the various communities in India, there are specificities to certain *tirthas*. Brahmins and Rajputs gave much importance to Haridwar than any other

community. They know the origin myth and the rituals and concepts in Haridwar are based on Brahmanic belief.

Puranas and Mahabharatha have placed various *tirthas* in hierarchy of merits. Naimisa is the best *tirtha* on the earth and Pushkar in the aerial region (*Anthariksha*), Kurukshetra is the most distinguished in all the three worlds. But Sarasvati is holier than Kurukshetra. The water of the Sarasvati purifies after one bathes for three days; that of the Yamuna in seven days; that of the Ganga at once, while the water of the Narmada purifies a man at the mere sight of it.

There are four main holy *tirthas* that are located in the confluence (*prayag*) of rivers. The *triveni* at Prayaga, where the rivers Ganga, Yamuna and Sarasvati meet together is considered with special merit. There are five *prayag* in Himalayas, each at the confluence of two rivers. Devaprayag is the confluence of Bhagirathi and Alakananda; Karnaprayag is the confluence of Alakananda and Pindara; Rudraprayag is Alakannanda and Mandhakini; Nandhaprayag is Alakananda and Nanda and Vishnuprayaga is Alakananda and Vishnuganga. They are collectively referred to as *Panchaprayaga*. Likewise, there are five rivers such as Bhagirathi, Godavari, Krishna, Pennar and Kaveri known as *Pancha*-ganga. There are seven Ganges and seven Godavaries. The *Sapta*-Ganga includes Ganga, Godavari, Kaveri, Tampraparani, Sindu, Sarayu and Narmada while the *sapta* Godavari refers to the seven origin place of Godavari which is sacred as seven sages named Kashyapa, Atri, Gautama, Bharadwaja, Viswamitra, Jamadagni and Vashistha.

There are cultural diversities of *tirthas* and this diversity shows the ritual performance on these *tirthas*. People perform various ritual associated with life crises, spiritual and worldly desires. Each region has developed its own river concept based on local myths but these myths have been linked by establishing a main *tirtha*. Those who are unable to go on pilgrimage by travelling long distance conceptualise their own ideas of sacredness with regard to their local rivers and attribute variations of the main *tirthas* to these rivers. Hence, there is Dakshin Kashi in South India, Uttarakashi in the Northern Himalayas, Gupta Kashi in the east of Bhubaneshwar, and Western Kashi in Nasik in Maharashtra as pilgrim spots. Pilgrimage to each of these places is endowed with the merits of the sacred journey attached to the Kashi in Uttar Pradesh. Therefore, people attribute the features of Ganga river to their local rivers. There are several Ganga Rivers, each flowing through different area and thus covering the

whole of India. Those who are physically incapable of bathing in the Ganga may drink its water in order to be freed from sin. The practice of flowing *asthis* (bones) of the dead in all major rivers throughout the country is a common practice. Remembering one's ancestor by performing *sradha* in different *tirthas* spread all over India is another extension of sacredness of rivers.[59]

The basic intensions of a pilgrimage are purification of sin and attainment of salvation. A Hindu pilgrimage known as *tirtha-yatra* denotes undertaking journey to the river bank. Most of the sacred spots in India are situated on river banks or at the confluence of rivers. Badrinath (Badri), Mahakala (Ujjain), Vadava (Jwala Mukhi) are examples of sacred spot which points to the fact that the purification value of water is an important factor in locating *tirthas*. Purifying oneself at a *tirtha* by bathing is to symbolize one's passage from the profane to the sacred. There are some common practices in every *tirthas*. That is bath, vow, prayer worship, *godana, tarpana* and *prayshchitha*. The Sun merges in the water and raises again everyday. It seems to be the death and rebirth. So this could be the reason for people choosing holy places as cremation sites especially on the river banks. They flow the ashes of the dead man in the river and doing so will get a rebirth to the deceased.

Table No. 2.7: Deities and *tirthas* in India

Shiva	Vishnu	Brahma	Mother Goddess	Others	Total
53	43	2	27	21	146

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[59] Purposes of Pilgrimage are: (a) Accumulation of merit and removal of sin (b) Life cycle purpose- It is believed that, whose bones/ashes have been laid within river waters will go to heaven. One may live as a sinner and yet ends his life beside the sacred river, he will go to heaven; *sradha* and *pinda* ceremonies for the dead, *upanayana*, purificatory bath for the bride and groom (c) Personal desires- desire for male offspring's, marriage, higher profits, better crops and settlements (d) Social merit- social value to certain castes. In India many castes are associated with specific pilgrim places.

Graph No 2.2: Deities and *tirthas* in India

Deities & *Tirthas* in India
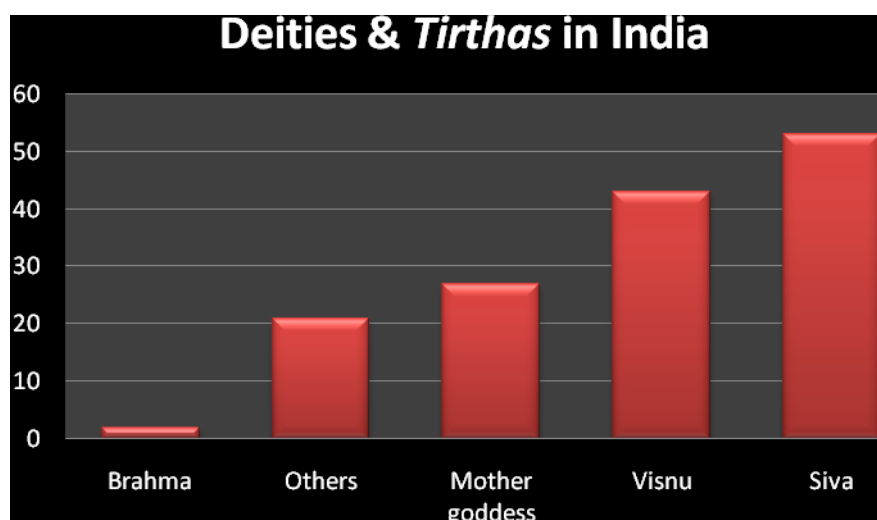
In the above table/graph, most of the *tirthas* are associated with Shiva. It could be because Saivism is a wide spread cult than Visnavism. River Ganga originated from Shiva's hair and many *tirthas* have some association with Shiva.

The *kumbh mela* (Urn Fair) is the most sacred of all pilgrimages in India and there are different *kumbh melas* are being performed in different parts of India. The normal *kumbh mela* is celebrated every three years by rotation in accordance with the position of the planet of *Brahaspat* (Jupitar) and the sun. The *ardh kumbh* mela is celebrated every six years, the *purna kumbh* takes place in every 12 years and the *maha kumbh mela* is held in every one hundred and forty four years at Alahabad[60].

The origin of this ritual can be seen in the *Samudra Madhanam* episode (churning of the Ocean of Milk) mentioned in the *Bhagavatapurana*, *Vishnupurana*, the Mahabharata and the Ramayana[61].

The myth is that the god approached Lord Vishnu once seeking the gift of immortality. The lord Vishnu spoke to them about the primeval ocean in which the secret of life and death was hidden. The gods sought the help of demons to churn the

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[60] Rampuri, *Autobiography of a Sadhu: A Journey into Mystic India*, New York: Bell Tower Publishers, 2005.

[61] Prem P. Bhalla, *Hindu Rites, Rituals, Customs & Traditions*, Delhi: Hindology Books, 2009.

ocean to produce the nectar of immortality, and agreed to share it afterwards. The Mandara Mountain was used as a churning rod and Vasuki, the king of serpents, became the rope for churning. They began to churn the ocean and a pot of nectar was eventually produced. However, both the Devas and Demons were anxious. The gods were afraid of the eventuality if the demons drank their share of the nectar of immortality. The divine physician, Dhanvantari was holding the Kumb (pitcher) of amrit (the elixir of life). Dhanvantari transformed himself into a bird and flew off to the heaven with the pitcher. During his journey, which lasted twelve years, he rested at five places (Prayag, Allahabad, Haridwar, Ujjain, and Nasik) *which have been consecrated by drops of nectar that fell. Hence, these places are considered holy.* The major event of the festival is ritual bathing in the river. The devout believe that by bathing in the river during *kumbh mela*, one is freed from their past sins and is eligible for liberation from sins. The roots of the *mela* has been seen during the river festival of the past when pots of grains were soaked in the river water and the seeds being put along with the rest of the grains during sowing time[62].

In addition to the general ritual practices on the banks of Indian rivers, each community living on the banks have their own belief and manifestation related to the river. Like the rivers on the other parts of the world, Indian rivers are not merely material object but are also parts of culture. Throughout history, there has been a custom among people to name their daughter as *Ganga, Padma, Gomathi, Kaveri* and *Yamuna*. Their naming seems to be the value of a river in the life of these people. One of the interesting things related to Indian rivers is that they symbolize Indian culture. Rivers have had a mythological or *Puranic* association in the mind of every community on the river banks. People chant the name of rivers while bathing for the sake of glory. Rivers also play a vital role in the prosperity of a region. It not only provides the immediate requirements of life, but also acts as channel for the communication between different parts of a country.

Water is also associated with supernatural beings. One of the best manifestations of water worship would be found in certain people's belief in magic or holly wells. The practice of throwing coins into a fountain for good luck, which is

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[62] S.P Sharma and Seema Gupta (Ed.), *Fairs and Festivals of India*, Delhi: Hindology Books, 2006.

obviously a rudiment of ancient well worship, is a worldwide phenomenon.[63] Most legends around the world indicate that animal and human sacrifices are done for the protection of buildings and dam especially those adjacent to water. During the construction of dam, people performed *puja* at the water of a river. This ritual is intended to placate the river and prevent any obstacles while the construction of dam. Before the construction of Dhom dam in 1966 (which is located on the upstream of the Krishna river), *puja* was done. Two Brahmin priests were invited to perform *puja* and to recite Vedic hymn, the *sri sukta* and sprinkled water (*abhisek*) to the material and handed the material to the constructor to be placed in the river. The same ritual was also performed while constructing a dam at *Kambalesvar* in 1988.

In a sense, water and fire are contradictory one. But lightning and rain may appear at the same moment on the sky. People also believe that after sun setting the sun lives on water or sea. The relation between sun and water could be found in myth as well. The Indian concept of *apsaras* and *gandharvas* are related to sun and water. The *apsaras* means 'to have been born from water'.[64] The *apsaras* are female and the earth received the light of sun and became pregnant. Earth's reception of the light of the sun was the base of the story of those virgins who became pregnant in mythological stories. In addition to it, many communities perform ritual for rain and consider rain as semen of sun which would make the earth pregnant[65].

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[63] R P, Masani, *Folklore of Wells- Being a Study of Water-Worship in East and West*, Bombay: D B Tarapokevala Sons Co Ltd, 1918.

[64] Anne Feldhaus, *Water and Womanhood- religious meanings of rivers in Maharashtra,* New York: Oxford University Press, 1995.

[65] The earth is considered as womb for it provides vegitation. Rain is the fertilizing force from the sky and is symbolically equivalent to semen. So rain is a mediating element between sky and earth. It falls from sky. See for John Monaghan, *The covenants with earth and rain: exchange, sacrifice, and revelation in Mixtec Society*, Norman. USA,: University of Oklahoma Press, 1995; A.T Jones, *The Two Republics or Rome and the United States of America*, University of Michigan: Herald Publishing Co, USA, 1891). The Annual Odisha Rain Festival is to seek the blessing of the deities. In Rajastan, if the monsoon is delayed, the women folk of the village assemble at night, catch some frogs, and keep them in an earthen pitcher. Then they parade through the whole village, stopping at the door of each house from which a bucket of water is poured over the head of the participants. (for further details see, Chabey Ganesh, "Rain Compelling and Stopping Rites in Bihar", In *Rain in Indian Life and Lore*, Ed. Sankar Sen Gupta, Indian Publications, 1963: 34; Jogenda Saksena, "Some Rain Ceremonies of Rajastan", In *Rain in Indian Life and Lore*, Ed. Sankar Sen Gupta, Indian Publications, 1963: 67; Ilhan Basgoz, "Rain Making Ceremonies in Iran", In *Iranian Studies*, 40:3, 385-403, 2007. The native Southwestern American tribes such as Chichimeca, Apalachee, Zuni, Osage and Quapaw make rain dances. See for further details Julia Seton Butree and Ernest Thompson Seton, *The Rhythm of the*

Water is also considered as the dwelling place of spirits and demons. The name of the spirits and the descriptions of their misdeeds vary from region to region. Many of these demons are the spirits of those who have met death by drowning or an accidental death.[66] It is believed that the spirits resides in the well near the Bombay gymkhana and the drowned person disturbs the people/villagers in the evening. In the lake of Movaiya village in Gondal taluk of Rajkot of Gujarat, a Pinjari (a female cotton carder) is said to have been drowned and turned into a ghost. Another lake in Vadhwan village is haunted by a ghost called *mahda*. Every three year one human being drowns in this lake. In Mirzapur, there is a famous water-hole, known as Barewa. According to the story,

"Once, an old man was grazing his buffaloes near Barewa. Suddenly the water rose and carried him along with his cattle. Later, the drowned buffalos were turned into a dangerous demon known as Bhainsasura. None dare to catch fish there, until he has propitiated the demons with the offerings of a fowl, eggs and goat. The Bengalis believe that a water spirit in the form of an old woman called Jate Buddi haunt tanks and ponds and bind with an invisible chain to the feet of persons who approached her territories. Another Bengal spirit called Jakh is believed to reside in tanks."[67] Till date the name of this witch is taken to frighten naughty children.

Crossing a river without any purpose is prohibited. When a train crosses a bridge across a river, it is desired that passengers throw coins into the river. People of the Deccan never went out in their vehicles without carrying coconuts and cloths to throw in any river they might have to cross on their way. A Hindu neither crosses a river without removing his shoes nor can he take bathe in it naked. He cannot spit into it and if he spits he is supposed to first spit on his palm and then wash his palm. When a Brahman bathes in a river he normally turns his head to its source and bows and before he enters the water he sips some water and also applies water on his forehead

Redman: in Song, Dance and Decoration. New York: A.s Barnes, 1930; Vincent Stanzione, *Rituals of Sacrifice: Walking the Face of the Earth on the Sacred Path of the Sun*, Mexico: University of New Mexico Press; 2003.

[66] Bhasiraj, "Vamanapuram Nadhiyude Thanima" In *Puzhayude Naatarivukal*, Vijayakumar Menon (Ed.), Kottayam: DC Books, 2004, Pp.88.

[67] R.P. Masani, *Folklore of Wells- Being a Study of Water-Worship in East and West*, Bombay: D B Tarapokevala Sons Co Ltd, 1918.

and head[68]. The village folk throughout India attach religious sanctity to rivers. So, as an integral part of their life, people develop many beliefs and rituals. All these are related to river in one way or another.

Beliefs and Practices in Various States in India: An Overview

All the beliefs, rituals and its various manifestations throw light on the importance of river on people's daily life. River provides water for agriculture and it prospers their entire life. Water has the power to purify the sins which is a common notion in the world. The purificatory power of water and its power to carry away pollution are frequently seen as essential to religious significance in India. In past days, Indians conceptualization and evaluation of human life and social arrangements rested up on the concept of purity and pollution.

In India, river is not only a natural object but it decides the life and culture of its banks as well. River Ganga in **Rajasthan** is surrounded by many beliefs.[69] Those who carry Ganges water in a bottle are not supposed to put down it on the ground but is carried reverently on the head or in coloured decorated basket and handed over to the *grihalakshmi*, the wife who places it with utmost respect in a suitably high spot. The formal opening of the bottle necessitates religious ceremonies (*puja*) to be followed by a community dinner, according to one's resources and desires. The Ganges is also the river where the ashes or a portion of the ashes of the dead are immersed to be carried to the ocean and ultimately to the heaven. If one cannot take them immediately to the river, it is usually tied in a cloth or silk piece and will be sent to the Ganges with someone who is going on a similar mission sometime sooner or later. There is another ritual of giving Ganga water to those who are about to die.

The state of **Punjab** is also known as a land of five rivers. The people there collect coconut, grass and tie golden rings around a buffalo's neck and send it to the other side of the river. If the buffalo reaches the other side safely, it is considered to be a good omen and if it comes back to the starting point, it signifies uncertainty and the arrival of flood.[70] Before the construction of well, people conduct *puja* and offer *naivedya* (gift) to the god.

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[68] J.Abbott, *Ritual and Belief: The Keys of Power*, New Delhi: Usha Publications, 1984.

[69] D.R Ahuja, *Folklore of Rajasthan*, New Delhi: National Book Trust, 1980.
[70] Sohinder Singh Bedi, *Folklore of Punjab,* New Delhi: National Book Trust, 1971.

In **Sindh**, a Muslim will not cross Indus river if his body is unclean. A fisherman will not row boat if he is unclean. It is also believed that a pregnant woman should not cross a river and a menstruating woman is not supposed to wash clothes in a river. If a Hindu bride crosses a river it is obligatory that she should offer a coconut to the river and a pregnant woman offers turmeric, vermilion powder and a coconut. A woman awaiting her delivery cannot wash clothes in a river. After a woman's delivery she cannot cross a river or wash clothes for forty days or so, which varies according to caste. Before she does it she must take a bath of purification. During her menstrual period, the Hindu woman must bathe first in river water carried by others in a pot. When she crosses a river she must throw in it betel leaves and a coin. In Sind, water is associated with the water god, Jhulelal. Woman often go to the river at Sukkur Island where the shrine of the saint is located, drink water from the river and pray for children. In the seventh month of a woman's pregnancy, miniature boats about two feet long are offered to Jhulelal. This is also done on the fortieth day after a woman's delivery[71].

Water is also associated with fertility. In **Karnataka**, a woman desiring children is required to go to a river, fill a pot with water, worship it, bring it home and add it to the water of daily bath. Another practice is also done in the form of going to a deep pool in a river bed, wearing wet clothes and saying 'let there be a child in my family and I will light a lamp in your waters'. She makes a vow that she would offer the river a *pardi* (combination of seven compartments of curds, milk and fruit). In Sirsi taluk of Kranataka, the devotees bathe in a river and go to the shrine of Vadiraj Swami with wet clothes and eat cooked rice from the shrine. In Kalghatgi taluk, there is a *nullah* (small stream) where women take bath and worship an image of Shiva which they make from the sand. They also offer dates to the image of Shiva and eat the seeds of dates for productiveness.

The barren women in Mahar community of Satara should go to a river and place five stones in a line on the bank to become fertile. On each stone she then places a piece of bread, red *sindhur* and turmeric. Then she says 'may the river water come and be my child'. On five *amavasyas* (new moon days) childless women with their husbands will sit near river and get another married pair with the same issue to pour

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[71] Dawani, M. (2002, March), "Shrine of Udero Lal: An Architectural and Symbolic Expression of Sindh's Cultural Past", in *The Journal*, 7(1), NIPA, Pp.63-71. Karachi,.

water over them so as to fall on the couple. Before sunrise, women bathe in a river and make five balls from the river sand which they place in a line and worship with coconuts and plantains, promising to give charity if their mundane problems are resolved.

During the *pani tola* ritual in **Assam** (which is held before few days of a person's marriage), the mother of the bride and bride groom conduct periodic and ceremonial trips to *Brahmaputra* river bank and fetch water for bathing the bride and bridegroom. Some tribes, who live on the banks, do not eat certain fish because they believe that their race originated from them and consider that fish as the symbol of fertility. During the day of *Gaur* or cattle *Bihu* festival, domestic cattle are ceremonially taken to the river bank and their heads and horns are rubbed with turmeric, black grain paste. Primitive tribes of Assam worshipped Brahmaputra and offered virgins to river gods.[72] Every year, one girl would be chosen and decorated like a bride and laid on a bridal bed. This bed would then be launched on the water and is allowed to sink. Thus the selected girl would get married to the river. It is also believed that all sins will be removed after a bath in the *brahmakund* (dip). People offer betel nut to the river god and pray for protection from natural calamity. On special occasions, the banks of Brahmaputra get special attention. People, irrespective of caste, creed, sex or age, wash off their sins and purify them. In *asokastami* day, anyone who drinks the water with eight buds of *Asoka* flower and takes a dip in the Brahmaputra will be able to get rid off their grief (*soka*) in the coming year. After the matricide, *Parasurama*, the Hindu saint washed his hand on the water of Brahmaputra (Lauhitya- ancient name of Brahmaputra) and the river became red. In rainy season, the river carries red soil to its banks and it gives a red colour to the river. This is the reason behind the red colour of the river. But the communities on the river banks attribute a myth to it. During the time of flood alert, people also conduct animal sacrifice.

In **Bengal**, *snana* (bathing) is a common practice performed in every river. The worship of Ganga as deity in more than one form is peculiar to the people of this delta. People sacrifice pigeons and lamb in the festival occasion and throw pigeon eggs into the river. This rite is connected with the performance of ancestral worship.

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[72] Jogesh Das, *Folklore of Assam*, New Delhi: National Book Trust, 1972.

After the death burial of a person, the descendents take bath and collect the bones from the cremation grounds and they are immersed in Ganga. An image of Ganga riding on a *makara* (a mythical aquatic animal with an elephant's body) is offered as worship at the beginning of rainy season when the river is in a furious and threatening mood.[73] A river deity in Bengal is also known as *Dariyapir* who is supposed to be a deified Muslim saint having some control over the whims of the rivers. Members of all communities offer worship in his name in the hope of having a safe journey by boat on the rivers. In the coastal region, the names of goddess Ganga and Badruddin Ghazi (name of a Muslim saint), along with reference to five *pir* (holly saint) are chanted by Muslim boat men, before starting the journey into the big river. The 13th lunar day of the fortnight of the waning moon in the month of *chaitra* is known as '*varuni*'. On that day, the river of Bengal assumes the sacredness of the river Ganga. Therefore, any dip in any river on that occasion is considered a holy act. People conduct animal sacrifices and offer rituals to the river deity *Varuna*. The newly married husband and wife take some ceremonial bath for the goodness of their future life. The flowing water of rivers is often used for ritual purification and the pouring of water may accomplish the same aim instead of the absence of flowing water. It implies that bathing in the flowing river is a way to purify not only the sins of this birth but also those of many previous births. In some villages in Bengal, the Ganga is not only a river but also goddesses. They make an image made by clay and a mud hut is also erected for this purpose in every year as a temporary arrangement. People reach there for worship either on foot or in bullock cart. The women prepare small floatable boat, lighted candles and these boats are floated down to the rivers. This ritual is part of *bera* festival. In Amarkundu village, there is a temple and an idol known as '*gangadity*' which means Ganga and Aditya. During the festival, two idols are brought out from the temple and are smeared with sandal wood paste, milk, *kumkum,* perfumes and the water. On the occasion of *Ganga sagar mela,* people take holy dips near the place where the Ganga meets the sea. There is a shrine in the Maldah district with the idol of Ganga, depicted as a beautiful lady riding a *makara*, a legendary aquatic creature. The idol is worshiped daily and in the Bengali month of *Magha*, a two day fair is held every year. People take bath and offer social worship to the deity. In another village in the same district worship of Ganga is held annually

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[73] Asutosh Bhattacharyya, *Folklore of Bengal*, New Delhi: National Book Trust, 1983.

with an image made of clay. A mud hut is erected every year for this purpose as a temporary arrangement. Both these villages can be reached from Rajgunj area either on foot or by bullock carts. In Kanchubian village, a popular belief is that mother Ganga appears on the occasions of *baruni* and *asokastami* in the month of *chaitra* and resides in the local river.

In western **Utterpradesh**, many people sing the songs for the auspiciousness of Ganga. At the time of *Vaisakapurnima* and *Karthikapurnima* festivals, the departed souls of a dead person get a chance to enter the heaven. The people there celebrate '*gangashtami*' on the month of May and June. They believe that Ganga reached the earth on that day. The first hair tonsure ceremony of new born babies is also held during this festival on the banks of river Ganga.[74]

It is believed that, those who bathed in the Yamuna River or tasted its water need not be afraid of Yama (the god of death).[75] On some occasions people throw *sari* to the Yamuna River with the belief that the river will wear the *sari*. River Yamuna is considered as the sister of Yama, the god of death and visits Yamuna on '*Bhai Dooj*' ritual day. It is considered as an act of religious merit by the sisters and they offer food to their brothers. They in turn honour their sisters by offering presents in cash and clothes. *Bhaiya or Bhai* means brother, and *Dooj* means two days after new moon, i.e., two days after *Deepavali* (Diwali) in *kartik* month of Hindu calendar. It is a day to pray for the long life of one's brother, who is referred to as '*bhayya or bhai*'. The legend behind the festival of Bhai Dooj has the story of Yamaraj, the custodian of death and his sister Yami or Yamuna:

Surya, the god of Sun, was married to a beautiful princess called Samjna (Sangya). In the course of a year, she presented him with twins. The twins were called Yama, and Varni or Yamuna, and they grew up together. However, Samjna, after some time, being unable to bear the brilliance of her husband decided to go back to earth. However, she left her shadow, Chaya, her exact replica, behind so that it would appear for Surya that she was still there. Chaya turned out to be a cruel stepmother and was very unkind to the twins. She soon gave birth to her own children, and then convinced Surya to drive out Samjna's twins, Yama and Varni, from the heavens. Varni fell to earth and became the river Yamuna and Yama went to the underworld (hell) and became the Lord of Death. Many years passed since this incident. Varni married a handsome prince and was content and happy in her life. But she missed her brother and yearned to see him. Yama, too, missed his sister and

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[74] *Ibid.*

[75] R.E Enthoven, *Folklore of Gujarat*, Haryana: Vintage Books, 1989.

decided one day to visit her. Overjoyed by news of her brother's visit, Varni prepared a great feast in his honour. She applied tilak on Yama's forehead and performed arati on him. Since it was two days for Deepavali, her home was already decorated with lamps. She lovingly prepared a feast, including all the sweets and delicacies that her brother loved. Her husband, the handsome prince, was very happy seeing Varni so dedicatedly preparing a welcome for her brother. Yama, too, was delighted by his sister's loving welcome, and the brother and sister spent a pleasant evening in each other's company, after their long period of separation. When it was time for Yama to leave, he turned to his sister and said, 'Dear Varni, you have welcomed me so lovingly. But I did not bring you a gift. Ask, therefore, for something and it will be yours'. Yama was persistent. 'You must let me give you a gift', he insisted. Varni said, taking a moment to think that all brothers should remember their sisters on this day and visit them if they can, and that, on this day, all sisters should pray for the happiness of their brothers'. 'So be it' proclaimed Yama, 'And I grant all brothers who give their sisters a loving gift on this day a long and healthy life'.

Since then siblings have been religiously celebrating Bhai Dooj. On the day of Bhai Dooj brothers visit their sisters to have meals with them. On this day, brothers and sisters also take a dip in the holy waters of river Yamuna. Sisters also chant a *mantra* as they perform the ceremony: '*Bhratus tabaa grajaataaham Bhunska bhaktamidam shuvam Preetaye yama raajasya, Yamunaah Visheshatah* (I am your sister, eat this sacred rice, for the pleasure of 'Yam Raj and 'Yamuna').

The people of **Orissa** celebrate *Chandrabagha* festival which is held on the bank of Chandrabhaga river.[76] In the view of the folk, one who bathes in the river can get rid off their impotency and leprosy. The rituals in *Chandrabagha* festival includes people decorating small boats with lamps and throwing it to the river. They commemorate their fore-fathers who died while going to southern countries for trade.

In **Maharashtra**, during the times of drought, men carry water from a river to local Shiva temple and fill the temple sanctuary with water until the Shiva *linga* submerged. Men perform this ritual in the hope of bringing rain. They use small gourds or plastic bottles to hold the water. Many carry Godavari water at various specific times including daily and during the month of *Sravan* (July-August) for the gods Hanuman and Shiva and village gods as a matter of village custom. Most of the men carry water in two containers and tied loosely together and slung over one shoulder or suspended from opposite ends of a pole that rests on one or both shoulders. The practice of carrying water and the men who carry it is referred to as *kavad* (plural *kavadi*). This water is carried on foot. When a water carrier needs to

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[76] K.B Das, *Folklore of Orissa,* New Delhi: National Book Trust, 1979.

urinate or defecate, he ties the *kavad* to a tree or has another water carrier hold it for him. The man bathes in the Godavari and fills his water container and he should not allow anyone else to touch him. The water is supposed to arrive at the village for the morning worship (*puja*) of the god/goddess for whom it has been brought. In many villages, a man of the household responsible for bringing the water on a given day may go himself that day or the household may hire another man to bring the water on the basis of the month of *Sravan*. In respect and reverence of river goddess the '*odibharanam*' ritual is performed and is seen as a sign of femininity of rivers.[77] The *odibharanam* means filling the lap. It is a ritual which consists of offering a coconut, some grains of rice or wheat, turmeric powder, *kumkum* powder, a blouse piece, a betel nut and dried dates, whole almonds, pieces of turmeric root and fresh fruit. This rite is preferred to married woman and they accept the offering in the part of her *sari* that hangs directly over her womb as an expression of good wishes for fertility. When people perform *odibharanam* to a river, they place offerings on the water or drop them in to the river. In some places, on the banks of Godavari river, people of Nanded say that a hand would emerge from the river's water to accept such offerings. The hand disappeared forever when some people had tried to grab it. This ritual is also done for fertility and is often done during flood season as well. The wife of the headman of a village would put into the water a coconut, a blouse piece and other articles used in *odibharanam*. They also do *puja* before they come back. In Maharashtra, people toss a bit of yellow turmeric powder and red *kumkum* powder into the river. Married women put these two powders on their forehead. Thus putting turmeric and *kumkum* to the water of a river implies their recognition of the river's feminity.

The *Narmadajayanthi* is one of the prominent fairs that are held in *magha* month. Narmada is tied around many Shiva stories and it is considered to be purer than Ganga River. People believe that to bath three years in River Sarasvati, seven days in Yamuna, one day in Ganga are equal to just seeing the Narmada River. River Ganga reaches once in a year to meet Narmada River. People make small boats and throw them into the river to commemorate their ancestors. In many Shiva temples, it is common to see a water pot with a small hole in its bottom and which hangs above

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[77] Anne Feldhaus, *Water and Womanhood- religious meanings of rivers in Maharastra,* NewYork: Oxford University Press, 1995.

the *linga* in the sanctum sanctorum, allowing the water to drip continuously on to the god. Moreover, in Maharashtra, at the time of drought, men carry water from a river to a local Shiva temple and fill the temple sanctum sanctorum with the water until Shiva *linga* is submerged. Men perform this rite for the arrival of rain.[78] At the time of heavy floods, the village headman should go in procession to propitiate the river with flowers and coconuts in order to quench the floods. Women offer a vessel containing a ghee lamp, afloat on the river.

Godavari and Krishna are the main rivers in **Andhra Pradesh**. Rivers are visible goddesses. Their banks afford trysts and the farmers in Andra Pradesh perform some reverence songs to the river goddess before the preparation of paddy field. The rivers are believed to be propitiated with this ritual act and so that there is no flood in the rivers. Rivers are the wives of sea and people offer banana, flowers and toddy to the goddess. At the time of *Durgama* festival in August or September month, they sacrifice buffalo to the river. Buffalo is given a bath in the river and makes a procession with the help of music. The very next day they conduct the sacrifice of the buffalo.[79] Hermitage of sage Gautama was on the banks of Godavari. When planet Brihaspati (Jupitar) enters the *simha rasi*, the Ganges goes to the Godavari and remains there for one year. During that year, all the gods are beloved to bathe in this river. In the *kapilashashti* day, on which six conjunctive incidents occur simultaneously, the virtue of all *tirthas* or holy places is believed to be concentrated in the Godavari at Nasik.

Krishna River has black colour and the *puranic* view behind this is that after the curse of Savitri, lord Vishnu became the river Krishna.[80] It carries black waters in some areas and the notion is that lord Krishna is in black colour.[81] So the river also has black colour. But in actual, the river bank carries black mud and at the time of rain it becomes black.

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[78] Sankaran Unni K, *Ecology of River Narmada*, NewDelhi: APH Publishing Corporation, 1996.

[79] B.Rama Raju, *Folklore of Andrapradesh*, New Delhi: National Book Trust, 1978.

[80] The origin myth of Krishna river can be seen in the following section 'Myths of Major Rivers in India', and referenced by Skandapurana, G.V Tagore and G.P Bhatt (trans), Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 2007.

[81] Anne Feldhaus, *Water and Womanhood- religious meanings of rivers in Maharastra,* NewYork: Oxford University Press, 1995.

In **Tamil Nadu**, rivers are goddesses in common peoples' admiration and are worshipped with offerings. After a person's death, the ashes of the cremated body are dissolved in river. Many of the towns and villages of Tamil Nadu are on the banks of rivers. The people there maintain that Kaveri river is an alternative to the Ganga River. The importance of Ganga can be seen in the Sangam literature. People keep Ganga water in their house. Some families collect waters from the Ganga rivers for use at the 61st and 81st birthday bathing rituals. Special festivals are held in linking up the rivers. One such is the *Saptasthana* festival at Thiruvaiyaru, where deities of seven nearby areas assemble.[82] The bathing ghats of river are crowded with pilgrims at the 30th day of the month of *aippasi* to purify bath. While bathing in the river, people throw shells, silver and gold replicas of fish, coconut, and ear rings as offerings into the river. The ancient temple town of '*talakad*' is on the banks of Kaveri and the holy festivals *panchalinga darshana* is held in every twelve year. The story of lame man who became desperate at his inability to be in time to have a bath at least on the last day of the month is related in a legend at Mayavaram. The lame man was blessed by god for his devotion. He had his dip on the first day of the following month, *Karthikai* and attained spiritual glory. Since that day, the dip in the Cauvery at mayavaram has been known as *mudavan muzhukku* or the lame man's dip. Humans consider river water as *pavitra* (holly, sacred, pure) and that's why they carry it from one place to another.

Mountains are the origin places of many rivers. People all over the world consider mountains and rivers as the places of revelation and vision, divine dwelling places or as a geographical manifestation of the divine. The attitudes of people around the world towards mountains have varied widely. It may be the linking factor between the heaven and the earth. In India, there is an important connection among mountains and rivers. The religious notion in India is that, the origin place of river is the vicinity of *Shivalinga* in the mountains. It shows that, the origin spot of rivers is invisible or is in hidden form. The heavenly Ganges in its descent to earth first touches the top of *Meru* and then divides into four rivers that run down along the four cardinal directions to water on the earth.[83]

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[82] S.M.L Lakshmanan Chettiar, *Folklore of Tamil Nadu,* New Delhi: National Book Trust, 1973.

[83] Richard L.Thompson, *Vedic Cosmography and Astronomy*, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers Pvt Ltd, 2004.

Kerala is the land of forty four rivers[84]. The *Iruvazhanjippuzha* is the main water source of Mukkam village of Kozhikode district. Thrikudamanna Shiva temple is situated on the banks of this river. The *kanjipaarcha* is one of the main offering of this temple. During the *revathi* days of Meenam (March-April) month, the ladies prepare fire-place (*aduppu*) in the sand heap of the river. By using river water, people prepare *kanji* (rice soup) and *puzhukku* (mixed vegetable curry). They offer this to Shiva and after that; they conduct communal feast (*uchayootu*) to the people of Mukkam village.[85] For the gratification of *ashtamachal* Bhagavathi (Bhagavathi means goddess) in the Payyanoor of Kannur district of Kerala, the Chaliya community (weaving community) in the Payannurtheru area offer *meenamrthu* (fish) to *ashtamachal* Bhagavathi in the *kalasha* festival. In the early morning of the fifth day of the *kalasha* festival of *ashtamachal* Bhagavathi, the male members of Chaliya community take bathe with white lower garment and go to the shrine. They offer betel leaf and areca-nut to Bhagavathi. The priest of the shrine receives it. They make circumambulation in the shrine. After the circumambulation, they come out from the shrine and the relatives of the male members receive them by giving sweets. Then the priest gives notice to the *meenamruthu* (fish offering as *prasadam*) offering. The entire male in the community carry stick (*choorakol*) and net in their hand. The priest gives *prasadam* to everyone. After the circumambulation of the shrine the males run to the *Kavayikayal* to catch the fish. They arrive to the shrine in evening with musical instruments and put the fish in the leaf of coconut tree. This procession is called *meenamrthuezhunallathu*. After offering to Bahgavathi, they distribute the fish to all the members of the community. They conduct this ritual for the protection of Bhagavathi during the time of their voyage in the river[86].

To surmise from the above discussion, the world view connected with the rivers in the world in general and in India particular can be extracted from the lore of the folk found in their expressive verbal and non-verbal traditions, behaviours and practices. As seen above the mythologies, beliefs and practices related to rivers reveal

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[84] See for details in the Chapter Number III.

[85] Devi k.k, Iruvazhanjippuzha, In *Puzhayude Naatarivukal*, Vijayakumar Menon (Ed.), Kottayam: DC Books, 2004, Pp.51-52.

[86] Koramangalam Narayanan Nambuthiri, "Meenamrthinte Artha Thalangal", in Neerarivukal, A.Nujoom (Ed.), Kottayam: D.C Books, 2004.

overtly two conceptual frames. The one is the natural phenomenon of the river as experienced by human cultures, the other, the cultural phenomenon through which humans appropriate rivers in their daily lives.

In the natural phenomenon of river course in south India in general one can find river in three forms based on seasons. During the monsoon the river flows with full vigour wherefore appears with life. Antithetical to this phenomenon, during the summer seasons the river almost dries-up denoting the death of the river. In between these two seasons river is also found in stagnant stage wherein the water never flows but remains in small pockets of low lying beds of the river indicating the state of 'onto' which means being or in existence. In the following diagram this phenomenon is shown as 'Rivus Triangle'

Diagram No 2.3: Rivus Triangle: River as Natural Phenomenon
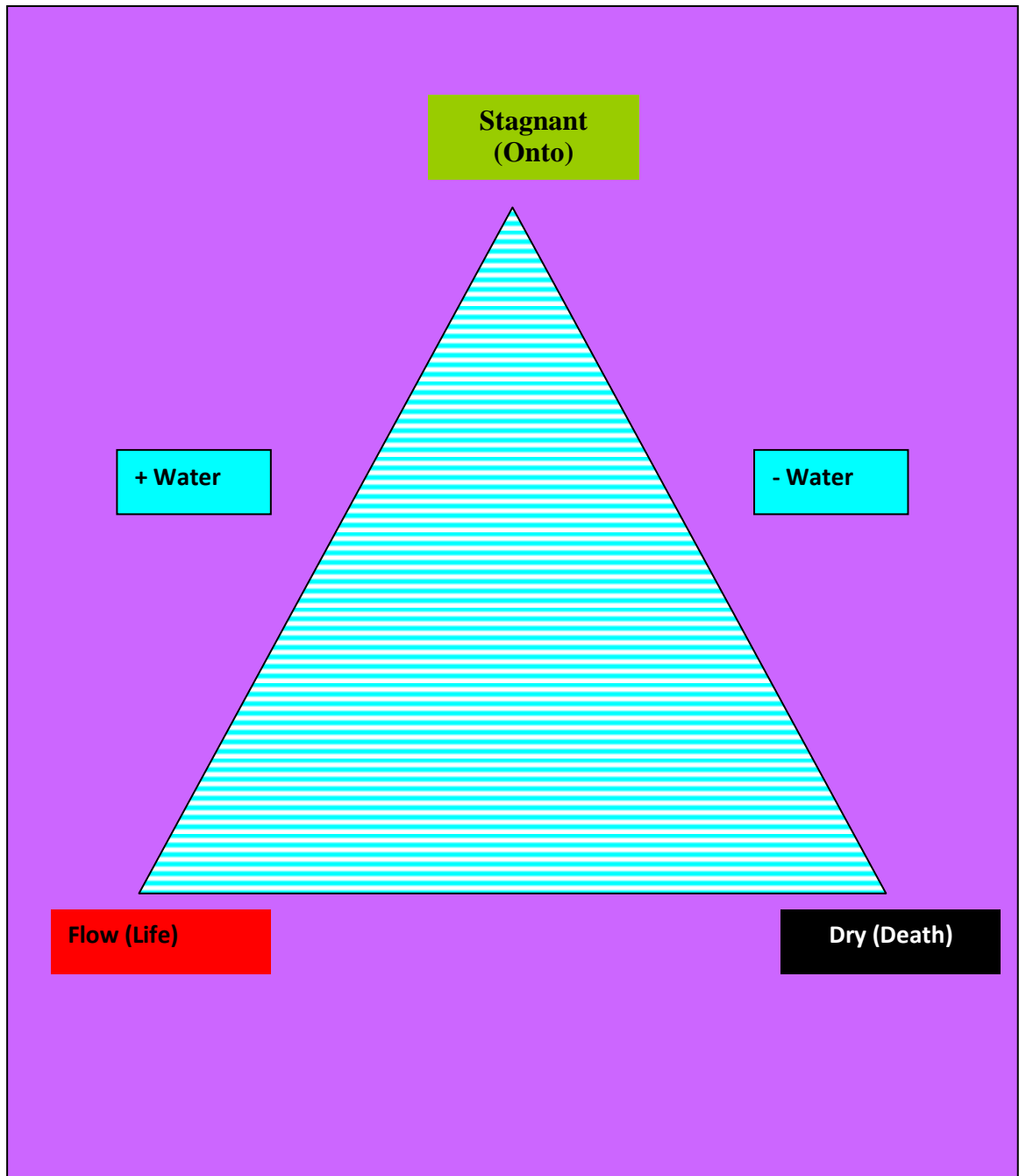
As per the above diagram the natural phenomenon of river depends on the presence or absence of water in the river. Flowing with water represents life and without water represents dry/death. In between the river is also found in stagnate form (Onto form). From stagnate form river can come to life with flow of water or evaporation of water can cause dry/death of the river. Therefore, flow and dry are oppositional and this symbolically is equational to life and death as binary.

<div align="center">

Flow X Dry **:** Life X Death

Mediation: Stagnate (Onto)

</div>

In the natural phenomenon of the river the first stage is two opposite's i.e. flow and dry without any mediation which is the core of the structural feature of the river. The next process is that this binary is replaced by a triad of two opposite poles i.e. flow and dry and mediation as stagnate. In the next stage one pole and the mediation are replaced by another triad i.e. life and death which comprises two opposites and its mediation is 'onto' (or being or in existence). Thus, there are very many mediators; mediators of the first order second order and so on. This can be illustrated in the following manner:

Diagram No 2.4: Structural Scheme of Rivus Model

Structural Scheme of Rivus Model
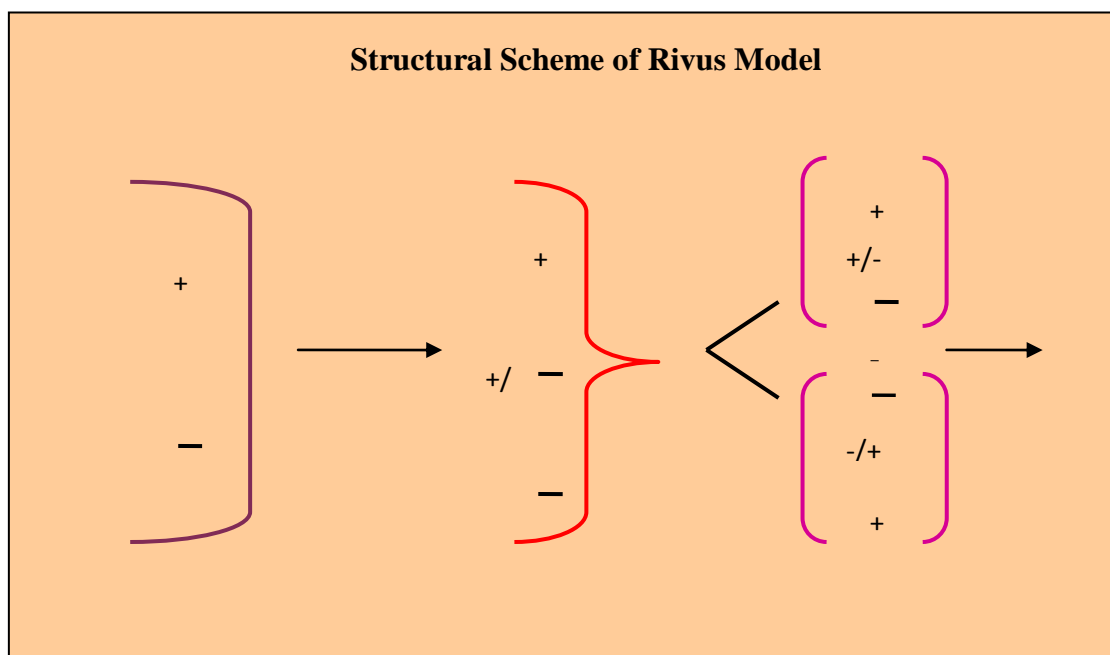
As shown above the river can be found in three different forms or in combination of these three forms. Through the analysis one can go from the different order of triads into the deep structure where the core of the binary system that regulates the whole human knowledge system can be found. The same binary structural feature is reinforced even in the cultural phenomenon of the river. The following 'Rivus Triangle' exemplifies this phenomenon.

Diagram No 2.5: Rivus Triangle: River as Cultural Phenomenon
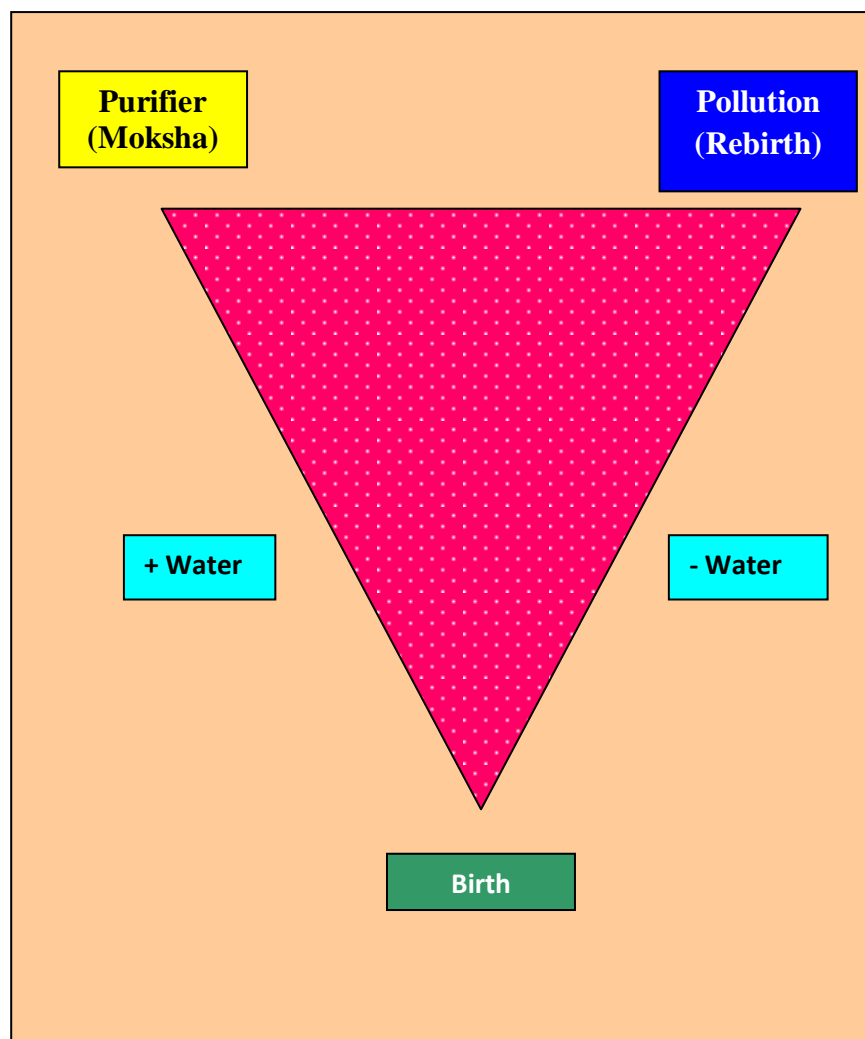
The cultural phenomenon of the river reveals human attitude towards rivers in India as depicted in the above diagram. The belief related to rivers show that the rivers are revered as they have ability to deliver the soul from sin and rebirth. This

idea is pervaded in almost all religions in India and people therefore use river or river waters for purification. Dipping in the water would attain purification which eventually would lead to *moksha* and binary to this act would result in pollution causing rebirth. Pollution can be caused by drowning one own self in the river (suicide/accidental death) thereby the belief is that the soul gets polluted and wander as demon (evil spirit). If the cultural phenomenon of 'rivus triangle structure' is superimposed over the natural phenomenon of 'rivus triangle structure' the following diagram emerges.

At the ideational level both 'nature and culture' structures are congruous and infact not antithetical as viewed by Claude Levi-Strauss[87] but reinforces the idea of binary structure prevalent in nature as well as in culture. The human mind understands nature through sensory organs by conceptually placing the phenomenon in binary oppositions and mediations. This forms the basis of human knowledge. What is true of human understanding is true of human creation i.e. culture. As the binary opposition and its mediation to understand nature is the basis of knowledge, all human creations also follow the same paradigm to construct culture. Binary opposition and mediation get different transformations and manifestations in culture resulting in complexity of culture. To get a clear understanding of culture one has to go deep into the process of finding out the basic binary opposition and its mediation. The following diagram attest to this fact.

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[87] By studying the culinary practices of human being, the structuralist anthropologist, Claude Levi-Strauss describes the concept of culinary triangle. He follows the concept of binary opposition of Roman jackbson. The base of this triangle is the binary oppositions such as normal vs. transformed and culture vs. nature. The triangle is the totality of three types of cooking such as boiling, roasting and smoking. In the process of roasting the meat is into direct contact with the agent of conversion i.e. fire without the intervention of any cultural elements such as water. In a way this is a partial-roast meat and partly cooked. Boiling is a process which needs the mediation of both water and vessel which is the element of culture. Smoking is a process of complete cooking and without the mediation of any cultural apparatus. In a way roasting and smoking are natural process of food and boiling is a cultural one. But humans consider smoked foods are the part of culture not roast and the boiled food is attached to nature. For further details, Claude Levi Strauss, "Le Triangle culinaire," L'Arc(Aix-en-Provence), No 26(1965), translated by Peter Brooks as "The Culinary Triangle," *Partisan Review* 33, no. 4 (Fall 1966): 586–95. See for further details see the four volumes Mythologiques by Claude Levi-Strauss, translated to English from 1969-1981 by John Weightman and Doreen Weightman and Jack Goody, *Cooking, Cuisine, and Class: A Study in Comparative Sociology* (Cambridge, 1982), chap. 2, 10–39.

Diagram No 2.6: Structural Reinforcement of Nature-Culture Rivus Triangle
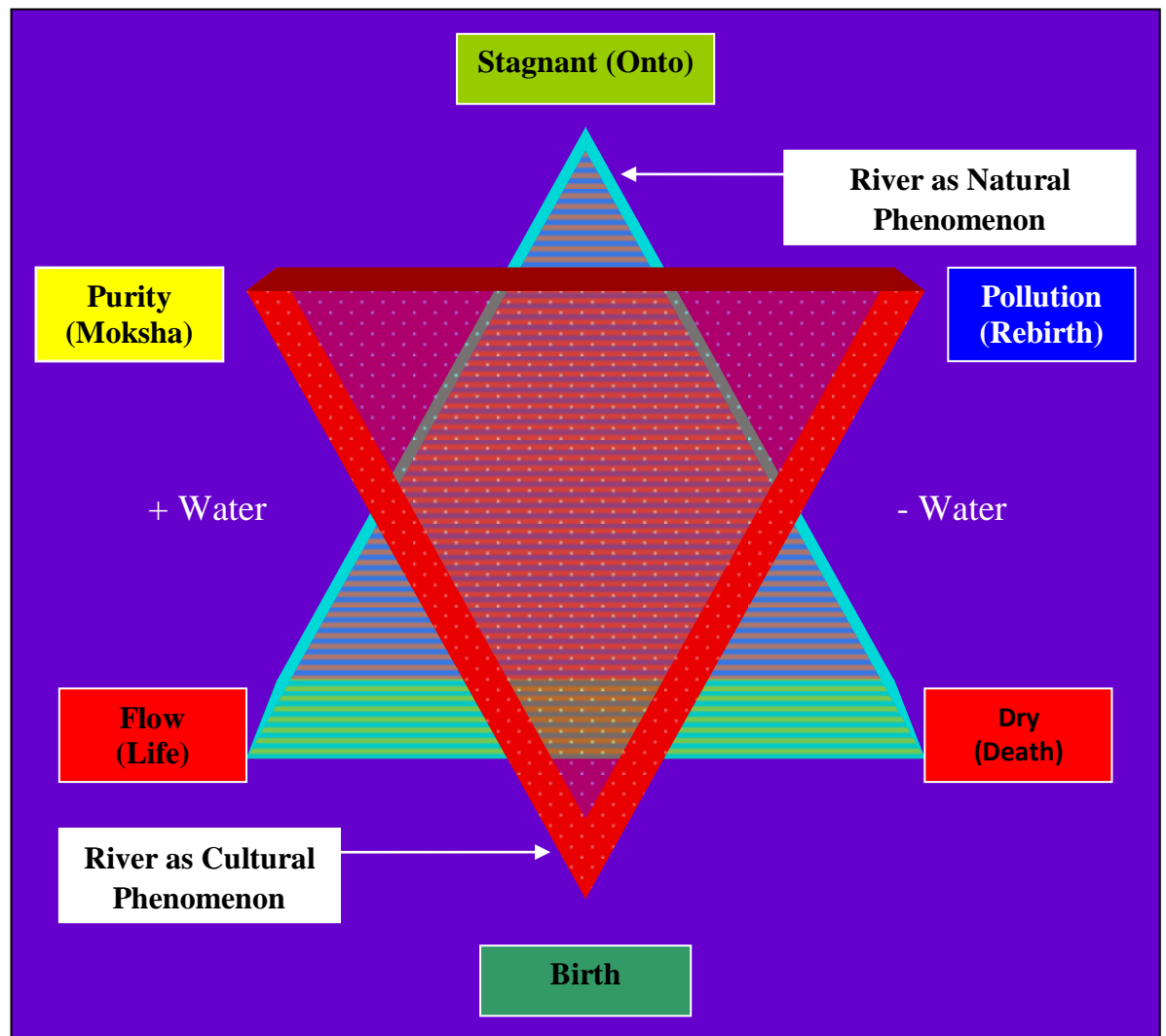
The above diagram can also be seen in the following formula.

Flow X Dry : Life X Death ⎤
                           ⎬ Natural phenomenon of river
Mediation: Stagnate (Onto) ⎦

Purity X Pollution **::** *Moksha* X Rebirth ⎤
                                            ⎬ Cultural phenomenon of river
Mediation: Birth ⎦

In both the triangles water becomes an essential feature for demarcation. This signifies the role of water not only in the physical realm but also in the cultural sphere. That is why it is found in different genres of the lore of the folk such as mythologies, tales, proverbs, beliefs, rituals and practices etc., as discussed in this chapter. Thus, the study on rivers as cultural phenomenon is as important as the study on the physical phenomenon for it sustains not only the life on earth but also the life that is emergent. The forthcoming chapter concentrates on the Bharathappuzha River as a part of cultural and natural landscape denoting the worldview of the folk that are living on the banks.

Chapter-III

Natural and Cultural Landscape of Bharathappuzha

Landscape constitutes the visible features of an area of land including the physical elements of landforms like mountains, hills, water bodies such as rivers, lakes, ponds and the seas, living elements including indigenous flora and fauna, human habitations depicted by, buildings and structures, and transitory elements like lightening and weather such as lighting and weather conditions. Combining both their physical origins and the cultural overlay of human presence, often created over millennia, landscapes reflect the living synthesis of people and place vital to identity formation, be it local or cultural or national. Landscapes, their character and quality, help define the self image of a region, its sense of place that differentiates it from other regions. It is the dynamic backdrop to people's lives. The landscapes are of mainly of two types, the natural and the cultural landscapes. The natural landscapes are those that are originally emerged like valleys, caves, rivers etc. The latter are those that are emerged due to the intervention of the culture, i.e. human being with the nature.

Alexander von Humbolt who travelled extensively in South America became the first to conceptualize a natural landscape.[1] The natural landscape is a place under the current control of natural forces and free of the control of people for an extended period of time. It remains unaffected by human activity. A natural landscape is intact when all living and nonliving elements are free to move and change. The nonliving elements distinguish a natural landscape from a wilderness. A wilderness includes areas within which natural processes operate without human interference, but a

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[1] Alexander von Humbolt (1769-1859) is a German geographer and his studies contributed much in the field of Bio-Geography. His studies of plants were based on the idea of distribution of organic life as affected by varying physical conditions. His approach to science was needed that could account for the harmony of nature among the diversity of the physical world. He conducts intense fieldwork to get the inner dynamics of natural world with the help of sophisticated scientific instruments. The quantitative methodology which he followed known as 'Humboldtian science'. See for further details, Alexander Von Humboldt, *Personal Narrative of Travels of the Equinocial Regions of the New Continent during Years 1799-1804* (London, 1814), Vol. 1, Pp.34-35; Chunglin Kwa, Alexander von Humboldt's invention of the natural landscape, *The European Legacy*, Vol. 10, No. 2, pp. 149-162, 2005.

wilderness must contain life. As implied, a natural landscape may contain either the living or nonliving or both.

A cultural landscape is a physical representation of how humans have related to, and transformed their environment; it highlights the significance in built form, natural features, and the interaction between the two. According to United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization "cultural landscapes represent the combined works of nature and of man". They are illustrative of the evolution of human society and settlement over time, under the influence of physical constraints and/or opportunities presented by the natural environment and of successive social, economic and cultural forces, both external and internal"[2]. National Capital Commission viewed "Cultural landscapes are geographical terrains which exhibit characteristics or which represent the values of a society as a result of human interaction with the environment"[3]. The study of geographical features of an area is essential to understand the engagement of humans to their natural settings. In this context, "a cultural landscape is defined...as a set of ideas and practices, embedded in a place. This definition is used to capture the relationship between the intangible and tangible qualities of these sites"[4]. In the earlier period to the present age human life was dependent on the surrounding environment in which they have inhabited. This meant that from the onset of human life there exist a relationship

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[2] UNESCO, Operational Guildlines for the World Heritage Convention, Paris: Inter-governmental Committee of the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, February, 1994, Pp.13. The International Convention for the Protection of the World's Cultural and Natural Heritage, referred to as the World Heritage Convention, and was adopted by the General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in 1972. The World Heritage Convention of 1992 became the first international legal instrument to recognize and protect cultural landscapes. This international treaty established a unique international instrument for recognizing and protecting both the cultural and natural heritage of outstanding universal value. The convention of December 1992, of the World Heritage Committee adopted three categories of cultural landscapes to be integrated into their operational guidelines. The operational guildlines of the World Heritage Committee was based on recommendations prepared by an expert meeting, held in La Petite Pierre in France in October 1992. See Lucas, P.H.C. 1992. *Protected Landscapes: A Guide for Policy-makers and Planners.* London: Chapman and Hall; P.J Fowler, *World Heritage Cultural Landscapes 1992-2002*, Paris: UNESCO World Heritage Centre, 2003.

[3] The National Capital Commission of Canada (NCC), *Parks Canada Workshop*, 1993, Canada; Susan Buggy, Parks Canada Architectural History Branch, *Cultural Landscapes in Canada*, Draft Article, 1994:1.

[4] Julian Smith, *Definition and Assessment of Cultural Landscapes of Heritage Value on NCC Lands*, December 2004, Canada: National Capital Commission.

between man and his environment. This can be attributed to have an influence on the origin and development of different types of cultures in diverse environmental zones.

This chapter is divided into two sections; section one deal with the natural landscape and the second section brings out nuances of cultural landscape of the river, Bharathappuzha.

Section I - Natural Landscape of Bharathappuzha

The main natural resources attributed to a region are landforms, soil, climate, vegetation, water etc., and they act as pivotal element in moulding the culture of the people. Here, each one of these has been dealt with to understand the natural settings and how far they have been helpful for the inhabitation of the people on the banks of Bharathappuzha.

Kerala is situated on the southern part of Indian peninsula and is divided into three major natural divisions- highland, midland, low land.[5] The land is rich in terms of availability of water and there are forty four rivers flowing through the state, of which forty one flows towards the West and the remaining three towards the east.[6]

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[5] P. Basak, *Water Atlas of Kerala, Kozhikode*: Centre for Water Resources Development and Management, 1995.

[6] The Kabini, Bhavani and Pambar originate from Kerala and flow eastwards. Kabini originates in Wayanad districts of Kerala and flows to join the Kaveri River at Tirumakudalu Narasipura in Karnataka. The Bhavani originates from the eastern slope s of Western Ghats in Attapadi reserve forest of Palakkad district of Kerala and joins the Kaveri river at the northern part of Erode district of Tamilnadu and the Pambar originates in the Anamudi hills of in Idukki district of Kerala and flows east of Kerala and joins to Kaveri at Karur Tamil Nadu.

Map.No 3.1: Rivers in Kerala
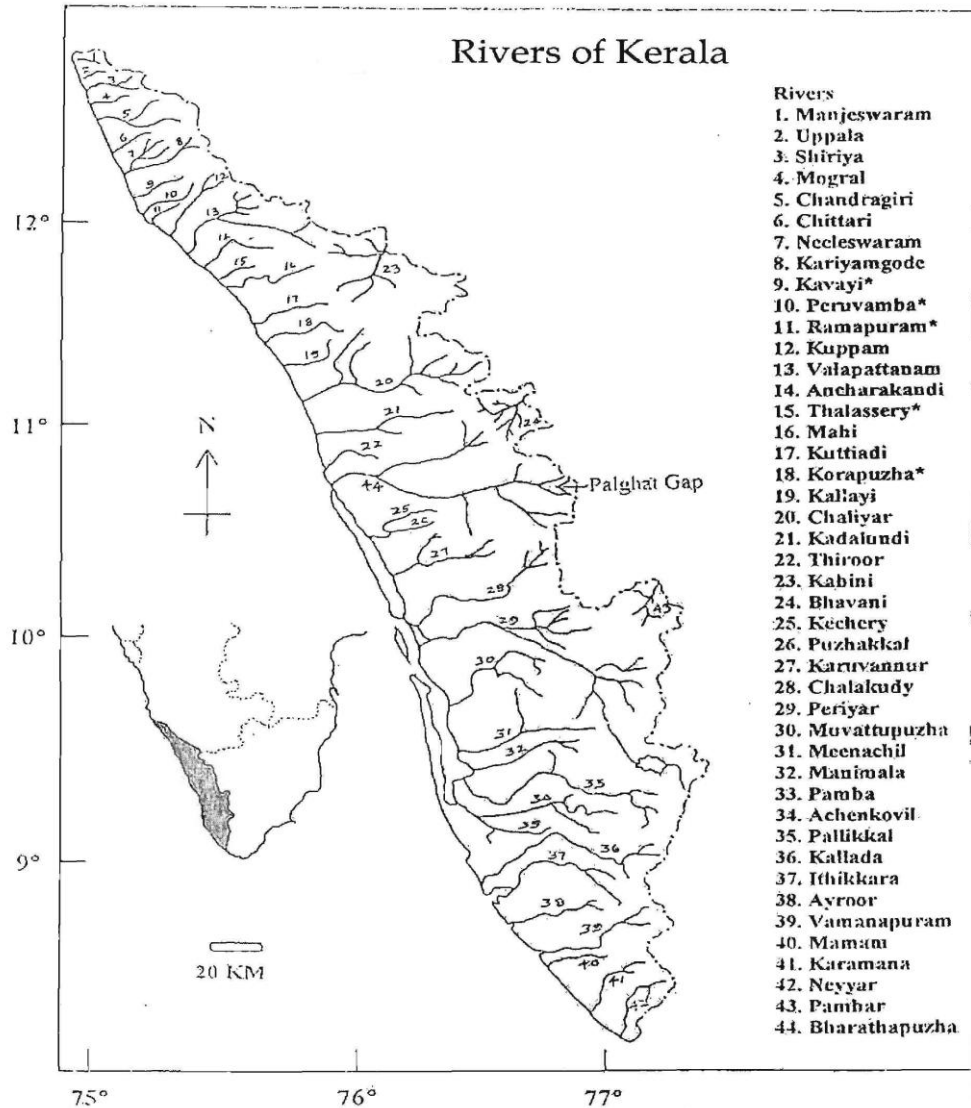
Rivers of Kerala

Rivers
1. Manjeswaram
2. Uppala
3. Shiriya
4. Mogral
5. Chandragiri
6. Chittari
7. Neeleswaram
8. Kariyamgode
9. Kavayi*
10. Peruvamba*
11. Ramapuram*
12. Kuppam
13. Valapattanam
14. Ancharakandi
15. Thalassery*
16. Mahi
17. Kuttiadi
18. Korapuzha*
19. Kallayi
20. Chaliyar
21. Kadalundi
22. Thiroor
23. Kabini
24. Bhavani
25. Kechery
26. Puzhakkal
27. Karuvannur
28. Chalakudy
29. Periyar
30. Muvattupuzha
31. Meenachil
32. Manimala
33. Pamba
34. Achenkovil
35. Pallikkal
36. Kallada
37. Ithikkara
38. Ayroor
39. Vamanapuram
40. Mamam
41. Karamana
42. Neyyar
43. Pambar
44. Bharathapuzha

It is interesting to note that the water streams in Kerala are known as *'puzha'*. The Malayalam word *puzha* means a small river/stream of water or water flows. Generally in India, the large natural stream of water known as *nadi*. The word *nadi* is derived from Sanskrit root word *'nad'* meaning channel, stream or flow. In the case of Kerala, almost all water streams are small comparing to other parts of India and the people name it as *puzha* (small water stream). Even though it is very small, it never denotes the English word river which is a large natural stream of

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water flowing into the sea. All *puzhas* in Kerala are small in size. There are two kinds of water streams that exist in Kerala i.e *puzha* and *aar*. The *puzha* is the water stream merges into the sea whereas *aar* flows or merges into lake. The major *aar* in Kerala state are Periyar, Shiriyar, Meenachilar, Manimalayar, Pambayar, Achenkoilar, Pallikalar and Kalladayar which flows to the *kayal* (lake) such as Vembanatukayal, Kumbala lake, Vembanatukayal, Pamba, Vembanatukayal, Vembanatukayal, Kozhikode canal, Ashtamudikayal respectively.

Bharathappuzha River is also known as *Nila* (long/blue), *Perarua* (peru + aaru) and *Ponnanippuzha* (Ponnani + puzha). It is considered that, Bharathappuzha is originated from a small lake of Anamalai hills in Western Ghats. Each region attribute local name to the river that flows in their region. In India, most of the rivers are considered as goddesses. But it is interesting to note that Bharathappuzha is not recognised as god or goddesses for the world view of the folk of Kerala perceived it as a stream rather than as a river. This is because of the very geographical local of the State of Kerala. It is situated in a strip of territory between Western Ghats and the Arabian Sea, infested with thick vegetation obstructing the eyes from clear and long view of the water flows at any given point of space. In the neighbouring States the river flows are visible clearly for very long distances unlike in the State of Kerala. Perhaps due this very physical feature, the folk of Kerala considered the river as *puzha* or *aar* denoting stream.

Table No3.1: Rivers of Kerala

S. No	Name of the River	District which river basin is located	Length (KM)	Main Tributaries	Irrigation Projects
1	Achenkoilar	Pathanamthitta ,Idukki Alapuzha	128	kallar	Nil
2	Anjarakandyppuzha	Kannur	40	Kappu Thodu Idumba Thodu	Nil
3	Ayroorppuzha	Kollam,Thiruvananthapuram	17	Nil	Nil
4	Bharatha ppuzha	Palakkad, Malappuram &Thrissur	209	Gayathrippuzha Chittoorppuzha Kalpathippuzha Thoothappuzha	8 Nos
5	Chalakudyppuzha	Thrissur, Palakkad & Ernakulam	130	Parambikulam Sholayar Karappara	1
6	Chaliyarppuzha	Kozhikode Malappuram &Wayanad	169	Karimppuzha Kanchirappuzha Cheruppuzha	6 Nos

7	Chandragirippuzha	Kasargod	105	Payashani Chandragiri	Nil
8	Chittarippuzha	Kasargod	25	Kalnad ,Bekal Chittari	Nil
9	Izhikkarayar	Kollam Thiruvananthapuram	56	Vattaparambu Vattam Thodu	Nil
10	Kadalundippuzha	Malappuram Palakkad	130	Olippuzha ,Veliar	Nil
11	Kalladayar	Kollam Pathanamthitta Thiruvananthapuram	121	Kulathuppuzha Chendruni	1
12	Kallayippuzha	Kozhikode	40	Nil	Nil
13	Mamomppuzha	Kollam Thiruvananthapuram	27	Nil	Nil
14	Karamanayar	Thriruvananthapuram	68	Kaviar ,Thodiyar	Nil
15	Kariangodeppuzha	Kasargod Kannur	64	Mundore Padimalahole Ariakkadavuhole	1
16	Karuvannurppuzha	Thrissur	40	Manali ,Kurumali Chimmani	1
17	Kavvayippuzha	Kasargod Kannur	31	Nil	Nil
18	Keecherippuzha	Thrissur	51	Choondal Thodu	1
19	Korappuzha	Kozhikode	40	Agalappuzha Pannurpuzha	Nil
20	Kuppamppuzha	Kannur	82	Cheriya Thodu Kuttikilppuzha	Nil
21	Kuttiyadippuzha	Kozhikode	74	Onippuzha Thottilapalam Kannathil	1
22	Maheppuzha	Kannur and Kozhikode	54	Nil	Nil
23	Manimalayar	Kottayam Pathananthitta	90	Kokayar Elakkal Thodu	Nil
24	Manjeswarmppuzha	Kasargod	15	Pavuru	Nil
25	Meenachilar	Kottayam	78	Kadappuzha Kalathukadavu Kurisumalai	1
26	Mogral	Kasargod	34	Nettipadi,Muliyar	Nil
27	Muvattuppuzha	Ernakulam Kottayam	121	Kallar Thoduppuzha Kothamangalam	1
28	Neyyar	Thiruvananthapuram	56	Kallar Karavaliyar	1
29	Nileswaramppuzha	Kasargod and Kannur	46	Aryangal Baigotehole	Nil
30	Pallikalar	Kollam Pathanamthitta Thiruvananthapuram	42	NA	Nil
31	Pambayar	Pathanamthitta Idukki	176	Kakkiyar ,Kallar Arudai	1

		Alappuzha		Pamba	
32	Periyar	Idukki Ernakulam	244	Muthirappuzha Idamalayar Mangalappuzha Perinjankutty	1
33	Peruvambayar	Kasargod Kannur	51	Macharu Thodu Mathamangalam Challachal	Nil
34	Puzhakkalar	Thrissur	29	Para Thodu Nadu Thodu(etc.)	Nil
35	Ramapuramppuzha	Kasargod Kannur	19	Nil	Nil
36	Shiriyar	Kasargod	67	Kallanje Thodu Kanyana Thodu Eramathihole Kumbla	Nil
37	Thalasserippuzha	Kannur	28	Dharmadom ppuzha	Nil
38	Tirurppuzha	Malappuram	48	Vallilappuzha	Nil
39	Uppalayar	Kasargod	50	Uppala	Nil
40	Valapattanamppuzha	Kannur	110	Valiyappuzha Venippuzha	1
41	Vamanapuramyar	Kollam Thiruvananthapuram	88	Nil	Nil
42	Kabinippuzha	Wayanad	63	Nil	Nil
43	Bhavanippuzha	Palakkad	39	Nil	Nil
44	Pambar	Idukki	26	Nil	Nil

Configuration of Bharathappuzha River System

The Bharathappuzha is the longest river in Kerala and is situated almost in the central part of the state. The total length of the river is 255 km wherein 46 km flows in Coimbatore district of Tamil Nadu and the rest of 209 km course flows through Kerala state from the east to the west. The river originates from a small lake of the '*Thrimurthy hills*' of Anamalai in the Western Ghats at about 610.26 metres above mean Sea Level.[7] It flows through Coimbatore district in Tamil Nadu, Palakkad, Thrissur and Malappuram district of Kerala.

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[7] Water Resources of Kerala---An Advance Report, 1958, p. 110. M.S.L. = Mean Sea Level.

Map No 3.2: Bharathappuzha:
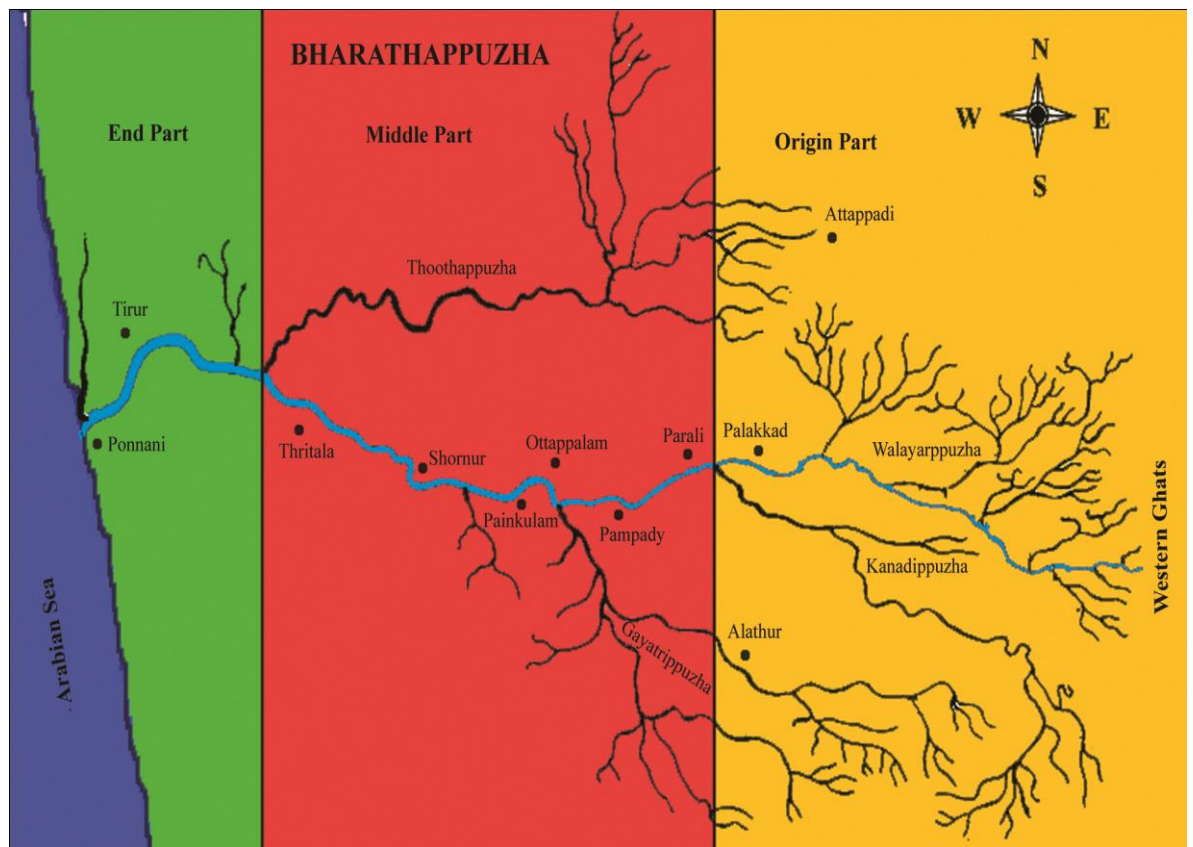
In Kerala the river flows through Chittoor, Alathoor, Palakkad, Ottapalam, and Mannarkkad taluks of Palakkad district, Thalapilly taluk in Thrishur district and Perinthalmanna, Thirur, Ponnani taluks of Malappuram district. Kerala's heavy monsoon rains swell up the river before it slams into the Arabian Sea at Ponnani's scenic estuary in Malappuram. It has an extensive catchment area of 6186 sq.km. Bharathappuzha is bestowed with a rich web of tributaries and sub-tributaries. The river basin receives an average rainfall of 2,300 mm and the annual average stream flow is estimated to be 5,082.9 cubic metres. The earth surface by the isolated mountains and hillocks gives birth to the number of water course to the river. Coverage of earth is caused by the resistance substance of lateritic, bed rocks and a belt of hard rock to reduce the quantity of rain water infiltration into the earth. Even under such conditions the river flowed continuously throughout the year in the olden days. But in contemporary times, it is drying up well before the summer. The major part of the Bharathappuzha River flows through Palakkad district running through Thrishur district and the ending in Malappuram District. Hence, it is important to

look at the physical features of the area that might be highly influencing the entire nature of the river.

Main stream of the river originates from the Anamudi peak in the southern portion of the Western Ghats. It gushes down from the point of origin and traverses through the upper basin of the *Aliyar* dam and then falls in to the main dam constructed at 300 metre above Mean Sea Level in Tamil Nadu. From the dam, it runs into the north-east direction and confluences with another river called *Palar*, which originates from another part of the hill range- then flows west in to Kerala through the Palakkad gap, having 32 Km in width comprised of the Western Ghats, the originator of the river. The river flows in Kerala along the length of this gap procuring three major tributaries which originate from different parts of the Western Ghats. Hence, the river is flowing across the originator and is running about 255 Km length before joining the Arabian Sea at Ponnani in Kerala State. The river-system dominates 6,186 k.m on the earth surface. Out of this, 1,786 km is in Tamil Nadu and the balance of 4,400 km is shared by Palakkad, Thrissur and Malappuram Districts in Kerala State.[8] The irregularity of earth surface gives birth to the large number of gutters and streams on the landscape.

The flowing path of the river is divided into three parts: the upper, middle, and the lower parts. In the upper part, it flows through the hilly tract of the Western Ghats and falls into Aliyar dam, constructed at 300 metres above Mean Sea Level in Tamil Nadu. In the middle part, it is travelling with average gradient from the dam to the Moolathara regulatory in Kerala-Tamil Nadu border. From the regulator, it flows in to Kerala with a variable gradient and falls in the Arabian Sea at Ponnani.

The river is flowing 17 km length in the Southern part of Chittoor, with the gradient of 3.47m/km in length. Then it flows along 27 km distance to the location of the Kannadi Bridge in the west of Palakkad town by reducing its rate of gradient up to 1.22m/km. From the location of the bridge to the Kalpathippuzha junction in Parli, it flows to18 km distance by increasing the rate of gradient up to 1.61 m/km. Then it flows 6 km up to the location of Mankara observatory with 1.5 m/km gradient. Then it runs from Mankara to the Cheerakuzhi river junction near Ottapalam along 16 km length by reducing its rate up to 0.75 m/km. Then it flows

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[8] P. Basak, Water Atlas of Kerala, Plate No 43, Kozhikode: Centre for Water Resources Development and Management, 1995.

with almost flat in 0.2/km up to Shoranur. Additionally, it runs along 15 km length to the location of Pattambi, by increasing its rate up to 0.67 m/km. Finally it flows along 41 km from Pattambi to the sea coast and reduces its rate up to the average of 0.49 m/km and hence the river is flowing 155 km length in Kerala with a variable gradient.[9] The entire water on the upper region except the overflows of dams by the particular season is being blocked and diverted through the canals, producing the reduction on the flow of the river.

In olden days, frequent floods were quite natural in Bharathappuzha due to continuous long lasting and heavier rain falls. According to the elderly, the tremendous floods like deluges occurred in 1924 and 1941which lasted for number of days. But, from 1941 onwards there has not been a frequent flood as in the older days due to the decrease of long lasting, heavier rainfall and the blockage of sources by the dams in different locations of the Bharathappuzha river.

Form of the Bharathappuzha

The Bharathappuzha has four main tributaries. They are Kalpathi, Kanadi, Thootha and Gayathri. Kalpathi flows from the north-eastern part and joins the river Kanadi or Chittoor River (flowing from the south eastern part) on the north eastern part of the *Palakkadan* plains at parali and from that place onwards this river is known as 'Bharathappuzha'. Then it flows to the Western part and joins with another tributary known as Gayathri from the southern part at Mayanoor. Later on its way, it joins another tributary, Thoothappuzha coming from north-eastern part of Pallippuram. Before the Bharathappuzha joins the Arabian Sea in the Ponnani estuary, another river Tirurppuzha joins in the right side of this river. Finally the river merges with Arabian Sea.

River *Thootha* is one of the tributaries of the Bharathappuzha which originates from the northern part of the Ankida hills of silent valley in the Western Ghats. There the river is known as 'kunthippuzha'. Kunthi, flowing towards the southern part of silent valley, the gorge of Pathrakadavu reaches at Mannarkad plains and then turns towards south western area and joins with Nellippuzha (from Kuttipuram near to mukali-kallamal area) and again joins with Kanjirappuzha (from the western

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[9] Krisnan. K, Possibility to the project of sand mining on Bharathappuzha (Unpublished).

slope of Siruvaaani hills). Later it joins with Thupanattuppuzha (from south east) and then the river is known as Thoothappuzha. Finally it joins with Bharathappuzha in Pallippuram.

The Walayar River originates from the Walayar hills of the Western Ghats and joins with Korayar. Then the river is known as Korayar and joins with Malamppuzha. From here, the river is called as "Kalpathippuzha".

The Palar originates from the slope of Anamallai hills and it joins with Nallar and later joins with Uppar (from Nelliyampathi hills). This Palarppuzha turned to north and north-west and merge with Aliyar. The Aliyar crossed Kerala boarders and known as Chittoorppuzha. The Chittoorppuzha flows to the North West and joins with Kanadi and finally merges in to Kalpathippuzha. The different water streams flowing from the slopes of Nelliyampathi hills are known as Chulliyaar. It flows towards west and meets Meenkarappuzha and from there onwards this river is known as Gayathrippuzha. Padagiri hills are the origin of Ayloorppuzha and flowing towards North West. There are two rivers flowing from the north western part of Nelliyampathi hills. They are Vandayi (east part) and Cherukunnuppuzha (west). Ayloor River joins with the streams of Vandhazhi River and flowing towards the north western area. Later, it merges with Cherukunnuppuzha (from south) and is known as Mangalamppuzha. In Taroor, Mangalam River joins with Gayathri at Tharoor. Finally Gayathri flows to the Northern area and merges with the Bharathappuzha at Maayanoor.

Map No 3.3: River Bharathappuhza and Tributaries:
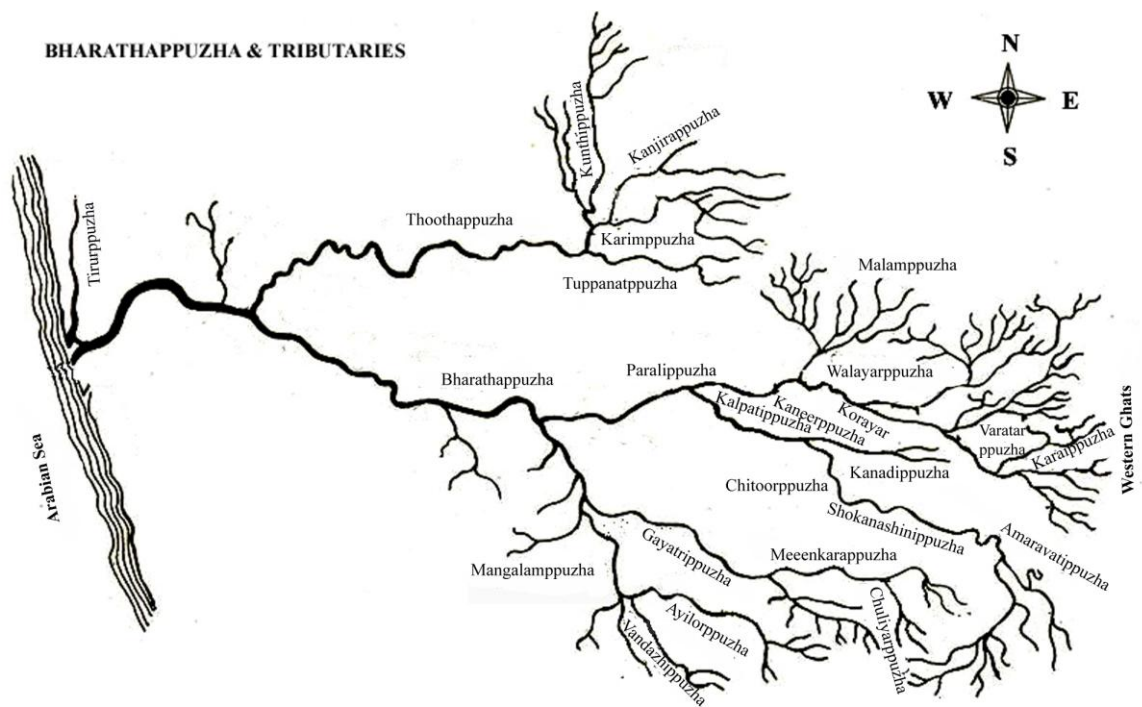
Water Wealth of Bharathappuzha

The river culture of a particular area will be affected if there is any change in the availability of water on the river banks. There are no hills in the eastern part of the Bharathappuzha valley, and this is one of the distinguishing features of the Bharathappuzha River in Kerala flowing to the western area. In summer, it is very hot in Palakkad and the extreme eastern part of the Bharathappuzha (the plains of Coimbatore and Pollachi of Tamil Nadu). *Edavapathi* (south west monsoon) wind blows through these slopes throughout six months in a year (from May to October) and the remaining months have dried in eastern wind. As a result, a good amount of water loss occurs with evaporation. Moreover, the earth heats the geographical features of this land and the atmosphere heat is very high. The compression due to funnelling effect of this area and the receiving capacity of heat in the black soil in Chittoor cause high temperature. The increasing amount of paddy fields leads to the destruction of the density of the forest. The peculiar nature of this land gives a special pattern of river discharge. Along the hill slope, many tributaries and sub-tributaries flow through the plains of Palakkad.

A plethora of dams such as *Parambikulam, Thunakadavu, Peruvarippallom, Mangalam, Pathundy, Malamppuzha, Moolathara, Meenkara, Chuliar, Walayar, Kanjirappuzha* are constructed along the course of the rivers for irrigation, and most of them are constructed in the sub tributaries of this river. For the construction of dams, many forests were destroyed and there is very little water in these dams and resultantly people divert these for agricultural purposes. In short, there is acute shortage of water in this river even after the south-west monsoon.

Topography of the River Basin

Physiographically, the area of the river basin is divided into three parts. They are the upper, middle, and the lower parts. The upper part of the basin is covered by the hilly tract of the Western Ghats. In the middle part, only a few areas of plain land are available in Coimbatore District of Tamil Nadu and in the east and south of Palakkad Township in Kerala state. The remaining area of the middle part and the entire area of upper region of lower part are covered by isolated mountains and hillocks, made up of harder, durable, resistance substance of lateritic, bed-rocks and the belt of hard rocks.[10] Coverage of earth by hills and mountains produces the irregularities on the earth surface. The irregularity of earth is made up of sedimentary rocks, and it facilitates more erosion products. The river-basin has a wide area of natural forests in two areas. They are the reserved forest on hilly tract of mountain belt in the side extremities of the river-basin and the local forests of private parties in central part (plain land of river basin) of the basin area. The lower land and some area of the middle land are situated in Malappuram district which is on the coast of Arabian Sea.

Land, Soil and Minarets

The bank of the Bharathappuzha majorly covers Palakkad, Thrishur and Malappuram Districts. The total geographical area of Palakkad district is 4480 sq.k.ms. There are five taluks: Chittoor, Alathur, Palakkad, Ottapalam and Mannarkkad. Palakkad, Chittoor and Alathur taluks are plains. The district falls in the midland region except Attapady that lies in the high land region. There are three types of soils (1) Laterite Soil seen in Ottapalam, Alathur, Chittoor and Palakkad

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[10] P. Basak, Water Atlas of Kerala, Physiographical Division, Plate No: 2, Kozhikode: Centre for Water Resources Development and Management, 1995.

taluks (2) Virgin forest soil of Mannarkkad Taluk, Ottapalam taluk- the narrow strip of land along the western boundaries of Palakkad and Alathur taluks and along the southern boundary of Chittoor taluk and (3) Black soil in Chittoor and Attapady valley which is used for the cultivation of cotton. Low grade iron ore (magnetic) is found in Kollangode, Mannarghat and Muthal Mada. Lime stone deposits are found in Chittoor and Kozhinjampaara areas. Muscovite mica is reported in Sholayar villages. Large quantities of gypsum deposit are found in Walayar forest area and a Kerala government's cement factory is also situated there.

Malappuram District has a total area of 3,638 Sq. K.M. Tirur and Ponnani taluks in Malappuram District are in the middle land and low land regions. The mid land region has lateritic soil. The coastal belt (Ponnani) is covered with sandy loam.[11] The coastal belt sand contains illmenite, magnetite, zircon, garnet and monazite. Additionally, a small portion of Bharathappuzha river also flows through Thalapilly taluk of Thrishur district and this place belongs to the mid land region and the soil type is lateritic.[12]

Climate (Rainfall and Temperature)

There are different kinds of rainfall, and wind in the eastern area of the Bharathappuzha basin (eastern side of Palakkad). In the two sides of Palakkad and within the Bharathppuzha basin, there are hilly tracts measuring 1500 to 2500 meters which provide a complex topography. It is quite interesting that there are many regional variations in this area than the other parts of Kerala. These variations will reflect the land use pattern and the cultural practices of the people of the area.

The monsoons have been supplying the periodical rainfall, which feed the rivers of Kerala. But there is a marked variation in the amount of rainfall that each river-basin gets. In the case of the Bharathappuzha, 63.5% of the total rainfall is received in 75 days by the south-west monsoon and 19.17 % is received in 22 days by the north-east monsoon. The balance (17.32%) of the total amount contributes to

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[11] *District Gazetteer of Malappuram*, Ernakulam: Government of Kerala Press, 1976, Pp.869.

[12] A.Soman, *Geology of Kerala*, Bangalore: Geological Survey of India, 2002

the summer showers in 21 days time.[13] It means that the river-basin is blessed with the monsoon and summer showers. Therefore, a medium quantity of rainfall to the basin area is expected in the future also. There is a reduction of north-east monsoon and summer showers and thus the quantity of rainfall received in the central region is very less.

The temperature of Palakkad, recorded in seven years, indicates an average of 39.4 degree Celsius in March to May months.[14] From the month of June onwards, it gradually cools down owing to the heavy monsoon. An increasing trend of temperature is seen in September and October months. But normally it falls due to in November and December months. Again, it rises in March to May seasons. The cyclic system of the temperature changes and its natural variations give rise to the fluctuation of temperature in Palakkad District; thus facilitating more weathering on the earth surface, resulting in more quantity of erosion products.

The banks of the Bharathappuzha (Palakkad, Thrishur and Malappuram) have a humid climate with a very hot season extending from March to June. In the western part of the banks humidity is less in comparison to the eastern part. The main rainy season is during south west monsoon season which sets in June and extends up to September. About 60% of the annual rainfall is received during the south west monsoon period. During the period of October to December, the north-east monsoon rainfall gives 30% water and the summer showers (January to May) offer 10% water for the river. It shows that the water of the river depends upon monsoon season of this area.

Winds and Intensity of Wind

There is a moderate wind blowing during the south-west monsoon and in the summer, rain winds strengthen in the afternoons. As the south west monsoon advances nearer to the funnel of the 'Palakkad gap', its velocity increases. In September and October, the land winds blow at night and in the mornings. In the

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[13] Table No: 3-8-2, *Possibility to the project of sand mining on Bharathappuzha*, Krisnan.K, unpublished and P.7 Ground water Information Booklet of Palakkad District, Government of India, Central Ground water Board, 2007.

[14] *District Gazetteers of Palakkad*, Ernakulam: The Government of Kerala Press, 1976, Pp.46 and Possibility to the project of sand mining on Bharathappuzha, Krisnan.K, (unpublished).

Palakkad taluk, especially during February, March and April, a hot wind rushes in from the burning plains of Coimbatore, and dries up every green thing of miles around. In the other seasons, north-eastern winds are common in the mornings, while in the afternoons wind blows from directions between south-west and north-west.[15]

There is a chance of intensification in the wind on the river basin, because the river Bharathappuzha flows along the length of the 'Palakkad gap' and the wind which blows from the Bay of Bengal passes through this gap. The total area of river-basin in Kerala is 44,000 k.m. Only two observatories -one at Malamppuzha and the other at Pattambi - record the velocity of wind passing through. The other areas have no observatories to find out the wind action. According to K. Krishnan[16], the intensity of storm in summer is dreadful and taking off the thatched roof of huts is a common consequence. Since there are no such a scientific data to prove the wind velocity on the basin area, the two aspects such as the wind action on Malamppuzha and Pattambi, and the knowledge of senior citizens about the intensity of storm in summer are striking, that the velocity of air in contact with the earth surface of basin area is more. That produces the weathering by the disintegration of soil particles; and facilitates more quantity of erosion products. The intensity of wind on the river basin is a peculiarity of the Bharathappuzha that causes more evaporation from the water surface of river and the land evaporation.[17]

Sand and Classification of Sand in the Bharathappuzha

Sand is a natural product formalized as a compound of mineral fragments resulting from weathering. It originates in rivers, sea, lakes and dunes. The degree of roundness with grains is varied. Depending on the number of minerals that are

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[15] *District Gazetteers of Palakkad*, Ernakulum: The Government of Kerala Press, 1976. Pp.12

[16] He conducted a field trip and approached a number of senior citizens having good knowledge about the nature of wind on the river banks of Bharathappuzha and also those who reside at different locations on either side of the river, Krishnan. K *Possibility to the project of sand mining on Bharathappuzha*, (unpublished)

[17] P.Rajendran, *The Prehistoric Cultures and Environment*, New Delhi: Classical Publishing Company, 1989.

entered into the composition, the sand is distinguished into various kinds.[18] Depending on the number of minerals that enter into the composition of sand, the following kinds of sands are distinguished as:

(1) Mono mineral sands, comprising only one mineral; (2) Oligomictic sands, consisting of two minerals; and (3) Polymictic sands, with several minerals entering into their composition.[19] The widespread minerals in the sand deposits are quartz and feld-spar.

Rivers generally have their origin in high lands and during their downward journey towards the sea; they traverse through the vast country and naturally come across a variety of country rocks along its path of travel. Hence, the rivers transport the products of their own erosion and also the materials of other mass wasting process.

Flora and Fauna

The northern area of Thrishur district and southern coastal belt of Malappuram district were under Palakkad district. Separate accounts about the flora and fauna of this district are not necessary.[20] Palakkad has been blessed with many mountains, forests and fertile valleys with rivers and mountain streams. Different types of mammals (cat tribes, dog tribe); birds, reptiles (different kind of lizards, snakes, crocodiles, turtles and tortoise) and fishes are among the diversity. Being an inland district the local fishes can be seen from tanks and rivers are the natural treasure of this area.

For some miles on either side of Palakkad town, the hills have been rolled aside by some world convulsions, forming the famous 'Palakkad gap' which is about 25 miles broad. So the peculiar wind and different kind of soils help the land for good cultivation. The midland plains of Palakkad are so fertile and so productive that this district is also considered as the 'granary of Kerala'. Different kinds of crops and special paddy products are the leading cultivations of Palakkad. Tanks and pools and

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[18] A.V. Milosky and O.V. Kononov, *Sedimentation and Mineral Association of Some Sedimentary Rocks and Ores, Mineralogy*, translated G.G. Egyorovin, 1982.

[19] A.V. Milosky and O.V.Kononov, *Fragmented Rock, Mineralogy*, translated G.G. Egyorovin, 1982.

[20] *Malappuram District Gazetteer*, Ernakulam: The Government of Kerala Press, 1986. Pp.877

ditches are dug for storing water where the rainfall is less than that of the other districts. It is also the land known for rotation crops. It is the land of forests, edible fruits, and oil yielding plants, spices, seasonal herbs, palms, timber trees and medical herbs. There is no remarkable difference in the nature of flora seen in this district and it tends to resemble the flora of the neighbouring districts of Kerala. The low land on the banks of Bharathappuzha is situated in Malappuram district and it is a coastal area. There are no springs and spring heads in Malappuram District.

Land use Pattern and Agriculture

The area under cultivation in the district of Palakkad is 49% of the total area, where the entire state figure is 58%. Palakkad district is blessed with many resources like agricultural produces, minerals, cattle, forest products etc. The chief agricultural products of the area are rice, pulses, pepper, ginger, turmeric, betel nuts, mangoes, banana, tapioca, coconut, tea, coffee, and rubber. Palakkad leads in the production of paddy. The land of river banks is divided into wet, dry, and garden lands. The first two are used for the cultivation of paddy and the last for coconut, betel nuts, jack fruit, mango fruit etc. Palakkad is also famous for paddy, ground nut; betel nuts while Chittoor for Palmyra palm, cane sugar and tobacco.[21] A well established rotation of crops is its feature. *Chamai, panicum milliare, ginger, ragi* and in the drier parts of the district *sorgum vulgare, pennisetum typhoideum, castor* and other crops are cultivated in the manner. In the eastern part of the district near to Coimbatore district in Tamil Nadu, different variety of grains and crops such as ground nut, *varagu, ragi*, black gram, *cholam*, *chama*, horse gram and even cotton are cultivated. Black gram is a valuable and profitable crop in south Palakkad. The average land holding per house hold has shown a decreasing tendency over the years: in 85-86, 0.46 hectares per house hold, but in 90-91 holding came down to 0.43 hectares and in 95-96 it is 0.40 hectares.

Section II- Cultural Landscape of Bharathappuzha

Humans have shared deep rooted and multifaceted links with their environments. A cultural landscape is used to refer to a landscape defined spatially, symbolically, or physically by its relationship to a particular cultural group – or groups acting with it. A cultural heritage landscape is a geographical area that has

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[21] Bureau of Economics and Statistics, Trivandrum: Government of Kerala.

been modified, influenced, or given special meaning by people and which is of significance to the community. It may be associated with a historic event, activity, or people, embody the broad patterns of history, or display other cultural or aesthetic values. It may be valued for its designed, evolved, or associative qualities.

Water has been a continuing source of creativity and symbols of cultural activities. Rain, wells and rivers are the main sources of water. There exists folklore about different aspects of water sources in Kerala. It is believed in Kerala that one has to accompany the guest till seeing the river. The place for water sources such as wells and ponds identified with the presence of certain trees. This overt observation is based on the trees such as *kadambu* tree (Neolamarckia cadamba), *njaval* (Syzygium cumini), *karinochi* (Vitex Negundo), *athi* (Ficus glomerata), *ungu* (Pongamia pinnata), *neermathalam* (Crataeva magna) and if find any termite soil near to these trees, it shows the presence of water. Most of these trees are soft and it branches are long and hanging down. Bathing is an inevitable element in the life of Kerala people. One has to take bath before sunrise and also after sunset because the sunrise should not touch human body before bath.

Origin myth of Bharathappuzha

The origin myth of Bharathappuzha is prevalent among the communities. *There are three peaks in Anamalai range. Each one bears the name of the main deities of Hinduism-Brahma (the god of creation), Vishnu (the god of sustenance) and Shiva (the god of destruction). The sage Atri who was a strong monotheist observed penance in the Anamalai hills because he wanted a son who would be like god himself. Bahma, Vishnu and Shiva appeared before him one after the other, each claiming that he was the one and only god. This was meant to explain that god is known by different names but he is one. The three peaks came to be known by the three names of god. Together they are known as Trimoorthisringam- the union of the three gods. When the sage felt extreme thirst at the end of the period of penance, Anasooya, his wife prayed to the Ganga who appeared there in the shape of a small stream. After quenching his thirst, the sage requested Ganga to stay on. Then Ganga said that her presence will be there in the Bharathappuzha River as a small stream at the place of origin of Bharathppuzha.* Therefore *Bharathappuzha* is known as the '*Dakshin Ganga* (the *Ganga* of South)*, an honour that shares with the *Kavrei*.[22]

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[22] Once, the seven rivers were strolling in the Valley of Vindhya Mountain. They met a *gandharva* (celestial male) and he folded his hand in respect to them. This created an argument among all the rivers, as whom the *gandharva* respected and folded his hands. Finally there was a big argument between Ganga and Kaveri, while Yamuna, Sarasvati, Narmada moved away without much argument. Both of them went to Brahma for justice. Brahma replied that Ganga is great because she

Bharathappuzha – The Appellatives

Bharathppuzha has two other names which exist in the middle and ending part of Nila and Ponnani respectively. This is the only River in India known with its name as 'Bharatha'. From Parali, Amaravathippuzha and Kalpathippuzha joins and from that place onwards the river is known as Bharathappuzha. There are many legends/opinions with regard to the existence of the origin of the name Bharathppuzha.[23]

(1) After the war of Kurushekthara, Pandavas performed the *sradha karma* for the slain fellow warriors and ancestor. After the ritual they attained peace and therefore considered this river as sacred. Interestingly the places between the *swamesharam* and *ivor madam* are known as '*bharathakhandom*' and the river that flows in these places is known as Bharathappuzha.

(2) This is the widest river in Kerala. In Malayalam the word '*parathi*' means wider and the river flowing parathi as *parathipuzha* and later the river became Bharathappuzha due to the syncopation.

(3) *Nila* is another name of Bharathppuzha, which means *neelam* (long). It is a long river in Kerala and the name came from it.

(4) The land on the banks of this river was under the control of Zamorins of Calicut. They conducted market festival known as '*mamankam*' for the supremacy of this area. The king stands on the banks of the river in a place known as '*nilappadu thara*' during the festival to proclaim ritual sovereignty. The word *nila* may have originated from this.

(5) The Zamorins had trade with Egyptian merchants and the river is a path to carry mercantile products to ponnani port. The Egyptian merchants called the river Nila as it has resemblance with the Egyptian river Nile.

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is from the toes of Vishnu. Kaveri got angry and she went to make penance to Shiva. Shiva granted her request that she (Kaveri) is equal to Ganga in sacredness and she would know as *Dakshin* Ganga (the Ganga of the south). It is believed that river Ganga comes through underground and merges with Kaveri every year in Tula sign (October-November) and people bathe in the sacred water. See M.P Cariappa, *The Coorgs and their Origins*, Mysore: Geetha Book House Publishers, 1981.

[23] Alankode Leelakrishnan, *Nilayude Theerangaliloode,* Kottayam: DC Books, 2007; Rajan Chungath, *Nilayude Magal Sundhary,* Kozhikode: Poorna Publications, 2006; N.M.Namboothiri, *Malabar Padanangal-Samoothiri Naadu,* Trivandrum: State Institute of Languages, 2008; V.V.K.Vaalath, *keralathile Sthalacharithrangal-Palakkad Jilla*, Trichur: Kerala Academy of literature, 1986; Vaniyam Kulam Panchayath, *Vaniyamkulam Panchayath Vijnaaniyam,* Trivandrum: Kerala Council for Historical Research, 2001; V.T Vasudeva, *Nilayile Naattuvelicham*, Kozhikode: Mathrbhumi Books, 2009; Alankode Leelakrishnan, *Valluvanaadan Poorakazhchakal*; H.K Santhosh, *Folklore Vazhiyum Porulum*, Kannur: Samskriti Pubication, 1998; Rajan Chungath , *Nila-through time and space*, Edapaal: Vallathol Vishyapeedam, 2005; T.K Ponnani, *Ponvaaniyude Pravaaham*, Muslim service Society, 2010.

(6) This river originates from the Neelagiri hills of Western Ghats and the people consider the river as the daughter of hills. It is a common notion in India that river is considered as female and hill as male.

(7) Since the water in the river is very clean even the reflections of moon can be seen in the night. The river looks like blue so people termed it as *neela* (means blue in Malayalam).

(8) Bharathappuzha confluence with Arabian Sea in *Ponani*. The river is known as *ponanippuzha*. The name ponani is the combination of the word *pon* (gold), *vaani* (water), *ozhukuna* (flow), *sthalam* (place) which means water flowing with gold colour (*pon vaani ozhukuna sthalam*).

(9) In another version, once this place was ruled by a king called as '*ponan*' and the river was known in his name.

Table No 3.2: River Name – Appellative Derivation

S No	River	Attribution		
		Male	**Female**	**Place/Visual**
1	Barathappuzha	Bharatha		
2	Barathappuzha			Parathi means wide
3	Nila			Neelam means long
4	Nila			Nilappadu Thara means place where the Zamorin kings made decision takes.
5	Nila			Nile in Egypt
6	Nila		Daughter of Neelagiri Hills	
7	Neela			Neela means blue
8	Ponani			Pon (gold)
9	Ponani	Ponan King		

As seen form the above table the appellative derivation of the river comes from the very worldview of the folk. The naming of the river is almost akin to the physical appearance i.e., what the folk see and perceive is the driving force for naming.

Mythical Origin of Tributaries of Bharathappuzha:

The tributaries of Bharatapuzha though are natural streams, the mythical attributes are imposed by the human cultures as part of cultural landscaping in order to consume culturally.

1. <u>Chitoorppuzha</u>- The name came from the combination of chit+oor+puzha (small place river). The river flows through the place *Chitoor*. Another name for this river is called *sokanashini puzha*, the destroyer of sorrow (sokam+nashini). The people believed that if bath is taken in this river every sin will flow along with the water.

2. <u>Kalpathippuzha</u>- This river flows through the stone, kal+paathi (stone+path). Kalpathi is considered as the half of Kashi. In these two places, Vishwanatha (Shiva) is the main deity. There are many bathing ghats on this river. In southern part of this river *nellidaikalidam* temple and bathing ghats, *vaidhyanathapuram* temple and ghats *govindarajapuram* temple and bathing ghats, then *kalpathi* temple and ghats, finally *chathapuram* temple and ghat. The *shivalinga* of Kalpathi temple may take from Kashi. It is believed that in 1425 A.D, the king of Palakkad kingdom, Valiya Konikalidam Itti Komban Achan went to kashi for penance. One day Kashi Shiva appeared his dreams and told him that he will get a *shivalinga* in Ganga River and take that and install it in your country. So Ittikomban took and install it on the banks of *Kalpathi River*. Another version is that, Lakshmy Amma, a widow of Sekhari Puram village came back from Kashi and gave one thousand and three hundred and twenty gold coins to the king Itti Komban Achan 1425 AD and requested him to build the temple of Shiva. Hence, saying *'kashiyil pathi kalpathy'* (half of Kashi is Kalpathy). The Palakkad king invited Tamil Brahmins as the priest of this temple. They came and settled around the Kalpathy Shiva Temple. All these Brahmins came from the banks of Kaveri River. Another view regarding Kalpathy being linked to Kashi is that the main deity is Shiva and the temple is on the banks of the Nila *nadhi* (river) just as Kashi is on the banks of the Ganga.

3. <u>Gayathrippuzha</u>- River consider as the incarnation of goddess Gayathri. It originates from the *nelliampathi* mountains that are part of Anamalai ranges. The legend says that, Lord Sri Ram came to this place during his forest life (*vanavaasa*). Finding no water, he shot a powerful arrow at the rocks. The rocks opened up and sent forth a stream. His consort Sita bathed in the river. The spot where she took a dip is known as *sitarkund*.

There is also an interesting legend about the association of the Raja (King) of Kollamkod with the river. Centuries ago the King of Nakulapuram, a kingdom which was part of this area contracted the dreaded disease of leprosy. He performed severe penance on the banks of the Gayathri. The ritual performance consists of continuous reciting of the sacred Gayathri *mantra* and bathing in the river for a thousand days. The king and the queen went through the rigors with deep devotion. The king was cured from the disease. The queen gave birth to a male child during this period and named Hemangan. One day the child fell into the river and was washed away by the current. A *kollan* (blacksmith) rescued the child. The king conferred wealth and honours the blacksmith. The name of the place is thus derived from that of the profession of the man who rescued Hemangan. Hemangan became the king of Kollangod.

4. <u>Thoothappuzha-</u> (Bubbles of milk+river- River appeared like the bubbles of Milk). The Kunthippuzha became Thoothappuzha when it reaches the place Cherpulasery. The river flows as milky (*pal*) white with bubbles (*thootha*). This name came from this nature of river.

5. <u>Kunthippuzha</u>- It is believed that the pandavas, the heroes of Mahabharata, camped for a while on the banks of this river. The river takes its name from that of their mother, Kunthi. They cleaned their vessels after their food. The place known as *paathrakadavu* (Vessel ghats).

Palar is a sub-tributary and known as 'river of milk' (*paal and aaru*). It could be from the milk white sand on the banks. Valayaar River, (valayaar+puzha) originates from the valayaar ranges of Anamalai hills. It is the only river to give her name to the mountain range from which she originates instead of deriving her own name from it. The name Varattar (*varat+aar*), may be from the nature of river because most of the time the river seems to be dried. River considered has the power to influence human life because of its nature and *kaneeer* river (Kanneer + puzha or Tears River). The river has the power to remove tears or sorrow (tears+river). Parali River is another sub tributary of Bharathappuzha and it flows through the place Parali. Ayloorppuza (River of Ayloor hills) may be its nature or the river origin from the ayloor hills. It is quite interesting that, a river got its name because of its colour and Karim+puzha (Black River-The colour of the river is black). So the river is known as karimppuzha. Thiroorppuzha joins with Bharathappuzha just before Bharathappuzha merging in Arabian Sea, Thiru+oor+puzha (good+place+river-River of good water). River flowing through the place is known as thiroor. *Kannadi (mirror)* is a sub tributary of Bharathappuzha and it appeared like mirror and shows the quality of water which flowing through this river. So it is called as Mirror River.

Table No 3.3: Tributaries of Bharathappuzha – Appellative Derivation

S. No	River	Appellative		
		Male	**Female**	**Place/Visual**
1	Chitoorppuzha			Small place river
2	Shokanashinippuzha			Destroyer of Sorrow
3	Kalpathippuzha			Stone path
4	Gayathrippuzha		Gayathri	
5	Thoothappuzha			Bubbles of Milk
6	Kunthippuzha		Kunthi	
7	Palar			River of Milk
8	Valayaarppuzha			From Valayaar hills
9	Varattar			Seems to be dried
10	Kanneerppuzha			Removal of Tears
11	Paralippuzha			Through the place Parali
12	Ayloorppuza			River from Ayloor hills
13	Karimppuzha			Black River
14	Thiroorppuzha			River of good place
14	Kannadippuzha			Mirror glaze

From the above table it is evident that the appellative derivation of the tributaries also comes from the very worldview of the folk. The naming of the river is almost akin to the physical appearance. Both in the case of Bharathappuzha and its tributaries the naming system of the folk is directly derived from the physical appearance of the water/river in a given geographical local therefore different names are found for the same river/tributary. This suggest that the worldview of the Kerala folk is related directly to their physical realm i.e., the natural surroundings and later to the metaphysical realm i.e., supernatural. The appellation (naming system) therefore is associated with the physical realm and later may crystallize drawing from mythology etc., connected with metaphysical realm. Perhaps this feature of worldview gave a sufficient platform to accommodate the communists/Marxist ideology (based on materialism where in the 'matter' is primacy) rampantly in the soils of Kerala. Infact the ritual and mythology in Kerala are prominently found as explanations for the unknown phenomena that are seen in the world of known. The following illustration reveals this phenomenon.

Diagram No 3.1: Appellation and Worldview- Kerala Folk
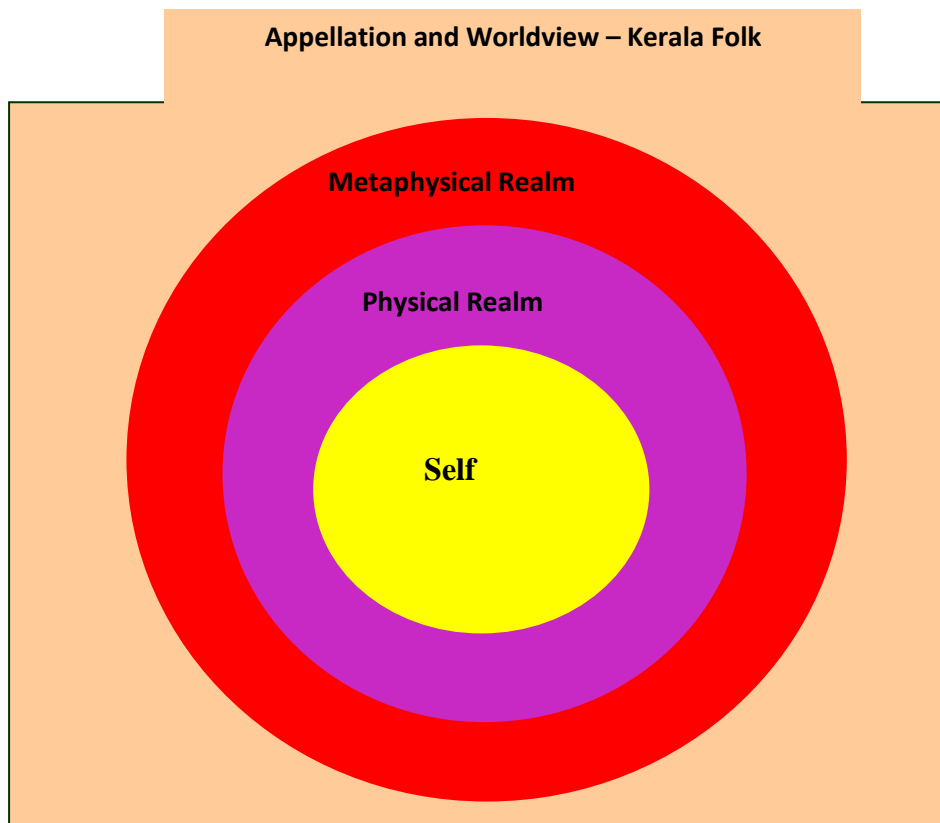
Appellation and Worldview – Kerala Folk

Metaphysical Realm

Physical Realm

Self

In the cultural landscape human intervention with nature is done to through the mediation of folklore such as myth, epic, legend, proverbs, songs etc., and transform the natural products into cultural products. In the process the non-verbal genres such as beliefs and practices exist to appropriate nature for social solidarity, economic organisation and politico-religious ideology. Generally folklore about water and its sources can be classified as verbal and non-verbal.

Verbal

(a) **Omens**

There are many omens still exist among the Kerala people about the arrival of rain. If there any presence of rainbow at the time of sunrise or sunset it shows the arrival of rain. If the frogs make continuous sounds and the cocks howl at day time by looking at the sky it is believed that the rain would come.

(b) Legend

The people of Kerala believe that the rain is the gift of lord Indra during the reign of Chera-Chola-Pandiya. The place under this kingdom was facing severe draughts. Then the three kings made a penance to Indra for rain. After their penance, Indra gave the boon and asked them to divide the rain based on their requirements. Following the suggestions, the kings divide the rain. The rains of Malayalam month *mithunam*, *karkadakam*, *chingam*, *kanni* got by Chera king; the rains of *thulam*, *vrishchikam*, *dhanu* and *makaram* by Chola king and the rains of *kumbham*, *meenam*, *medam*, *edavam* by Pandya king. After one year the kings met again. The Pandya and Chola kingdom got plenty of rain whereas the Chera kingdom got less rain. The Chera king requested the other two kings and the Chola king gave the *vrishchikam*, *thulaam* months and the *medam*, *edavam* rain month by Pandya king to the Chera kingdom. Finally the Cheran received rain for eighth month.

The rain of Mathur, one of the villages of Palakkad is bound by the story of a Muslim saint. One day a Muslim saint reached this village from Tamil Nadu. He wants to stay in that place and meet the landlord of this area. But the place was facing severe draught and the landlord informed his inability. Then the saint asked him to prepare the paddy field to harvest the rain water and he left the landlords house. At that night the village got enough rain. The very next day, the villagers searched for the saint and they found the dead body of the saint. They also found that his walking stick made out of kanjhira tree (Strychnos nux-vomica) was growing near to his head. The villagers constructed a mausoleum in the honour of the saint and currently it is known as *theruvathu mosque*. On the annual festival day, many people from Tamil Nadu also visit the grave and offer money. In addition they pray for the protection of animals and for good harvest. They receive the sand from the mosque and return home. They sprinkle this sand on the paddy field for good harvest.

(b) Proverbs:
There are many proverbs related to rain. The proverbs which related to water, rains are as follows:
1)
 Pala   thulli   peru   vellam
 Many   drops   huge   water
Deluges are made from many drops
Used to show the strength of unity of a group.

2)

Ozhukin ethire neenthuka

Flow   against   swim

Swim against the flow

Encourage the people to go against the present condition; always used as a complement for someone who dares the establishment/structure.

(3). *Kaaka kulichal kokakumo*
  Crow   bath   crane
  Will a black crow become white like a crane if it takes bath?
  Use to contempt the individual who wish to do things beyond his/her calibre

(4). *Nananjal kulichu thane kayaranam*
   Wet   bath   must come
   If you are wet you must take bath
   It is an advice to finish the work one which has started.

(5). *Vellathil varacha vara*
    Water   draw   line
   The line draws in the water
   To inform the people that your wish/ work/ action will not fulfil

(6). *Marubhoomiyile mazhapole*
     Desert   rain
    Like a rain in the desert
    To tell the arrival of certain good things without expectation

(7). *Vellathil kidakunna thavala vellam kudikathirikumo*
     Water   laid   frog   water drink
     The Frog in the water can't avoid drinking water.
It always justifies the misdeeds done by some who are in the power.

(8). *Vavainu   ikare   kaka   akare   kadakilla*
   Full/new moon this shore crow   the opposite shore   cross
   The crow cannot cross the river in the full/new moon
Used to show / predict the heavy rain in the month of Karkadakam

(c) Songs

There are some rain songs prevalent in Kerala such as:

mazhe mazhe thulli thulli va, mazhe mazhe vellaram kallinmel thulli thulli vaa

(hai rain come, come with giggling sounds);

mazha mazha aanaykum paapaanum mungi kulikaan vellamilla
(Rain rain everywhere not single water to bath for elephant and its owner);

achan kombathu amma varambathu, kallen chakettu kondoy thinotee kanda mindenda, padikale patti kuraikanda
(Father is on the branch of tree, mother is on the paddy field, thief has taken jackfruit, let him eat and the dog in the door never barks);

kollaam ee mazha, kollaritheemazaha, kollaam kollaam peythotte
(This rain is good and don't wet under this rain, let it rain let it rain)

mazhe mazhe peyyale, payyum kutti padathu nellum vithum veyilathu njanum ente ammeyum thanelloo
(Rain rain not comes now, calf is on the field, seeds are under sunlight, myself and my mother are alone);

kodumpaapi chakaliyo kodamazha peyyaliyo aarum paapichakaliyo aadimazha peyaliyo
(Let kodumpaapi die, big rain has to come and the rain of karakadaka come) .

Non-verbal

There are some signs about the arrival of rain. If the colour of earth becomes red it signifies the rain. The tribals of Wayanad district decide the nature of rain by opening the fruit of *pulachi* tree. If the fruit has more seeds it shows the increase of rain. The people of Kerala conduct some rain making ceremonies. The people of Thrishur area make small bund in the water canal of temple with rice for the coming of rain. On the banks of Bharathappuzha, the people offer the first seeds of paddy and coconut to the lord Ayyapa in Ponnani area by placing them in the river.

The Kodumpapi and Koppiyala are the two rain making ceremonies in Palakkad district. The people make the effigy of a human being with hay of paddy and drag it through the streets by saying '*kodumpapi vane kodum mazha peythe*'(kodum papi has come and huge rain will come). They believe that the place has become draught because of the sinful actions of one. They visit every house for alms for conducting the ritual. Finally at evening they burn the effigy in the street and believe that rain will come.

The Koppiyala is a ritual performance of women for rain. The women folk of village perform a circular dance with ten performers and each participant hold neem leaf (Azadirachta inaica) and goblet made of clay on each hand. They dance in front of the house by praising the rain god. After the performance they believe that the rain will come in the following days.

The southern Kerala is the land of many lakes and it is famous for annual *vallam kali* literally means boat race. The boat racing of Ambalapuzha, Aranmula, and Haripad is attached to the sacredness of temples of this area. In addition the people sing different boat songs while working in the boat.

Ambalapuzha Champakulam Moolam Boat Race

This is one of the popular snake boat races in Kerala. Its origin has a mythical background connected with the nearby Sri Krishna Temple at Ambalappuzha. Maharaja Devanarayana of Chempakasseri, as instructed by the royal priest, built a temple at Ambalappuzha. But before the installation of the deity in the temple, the priest informed that the idol was not auspicious. The king was worried, but his minister suggested him to bring down the beautiful idol of Sri Krishna, presented to Arjuna by the Lord himself, from the Karikulam temple in Kurichi.

The minister with a few others went to Kurichi, met the authorities there and returned with the idol. After getting the idol from Karikulam temple, the Raja's men set forth by boat for the return journey. While returning to Ambalappuzha, night set in, and, as instructed by the Raja, they took shelter at a Christian household, the home of Mappilassery Itty Thommen, in the village of Champakulam. Itty Thommen and his family received the men and the idol with great honour. The next day, the Raja and his entourage turned up at Mappilassery, accompanied by a huge mass of people. *Pujas* were offered to the deity and Itty Thommen and his men also traveled with the flotilla to Ambalapuzha where the idol was duly consecrated and installed. The Raja, pleased with the love and affection shown to him by his Christian subjects, declared that henceforth, to commemorate these events, a great water carnival would be held at Champakulam every year, on *Moolam* day in the Malayalam month of *Mithunam*. Thus began the Champakulam Snake Boat Race and related functions, which continue to this day. The procession is re-enacted

before the Champakkulam *Moolam* Boat Race takes place. A procession of water boats decorated with colorful umbrella and performing arts before the race.

Aranmula Uthrattadi Boat Race

Aranmula boat race, known as the Uttratati boat Race is related to the Parthasarathy Temple of Aranmula. The two day boat race conducted during Onam in river pampa. The snake boats are decorated and singers assemble near the temple early in the morning and then move to the boat and make procession. The boat race is held in the afternoon. The Aranmula Boat Race is conduct in memory of a legend of a Brahmin devotee, who made a votive offering of feeding one pilgrim a day. It is believed that one day Lord Krishna himself appeared to him and the overjoyed Brahmin vowed to offer 51 measures of rice and all the provision for the *thiruvona sadya* (the sumptuous Onam feast) at the Aranmula Parthasarathy Temple. Once, the *thiruvonachilavu thoni* (the boat carrying the offerings) was intercepted by rivals from another village, but the Brahmin's own villagers came to the rescue on snake boats. From then on, the offering was carried by a fleet of forty eight boats representing the nearby backwater villages. The event is marked by a colorful procession of boats by carrying the effigy of Sri Krishna in procession on the lake with children dressed as nymphs and princesses.

Haripad Payippad Boat Race

Payippad Jalotsavam is associated with the myth of the installation of the deity at the Subramanya Swamy Temple, Haripad. The three day annual festival on the Payippad Lake is an attractive event for the people during the Onam day celebrations. The myth related to the Payippad boat race is that the people of the village decided to build a temple with Sri Ayyappa as the presiding deity. However, after the construction of temple completed, the villagers had a vision asking them to a find the idol of Sri Subramanya, which they would find in the Kayamkulam River under a whirlpool. Finding the idol of Subramanya, the people brought back in a boat, escorted by the devotees in other boats ceremoniously. In remembrance of this event a three day water festival is conducted each year.

Thus the legends, myths, proverbs, songs, tales, beliefs and rituals knitted around water sources, rivers streams, as part of cultural landscaping on one hand enhanced the usage of water resources and on the other abused the same affecting the natural landscape. As a result the river Bharathappuzha is at the verge of decline.

Bharathappuzha at the Verge of Decay

The river which is being a site of Folklife since the days of yore is now on the verge of collapse in the matters of cultural practices and human sustenance not only in the vicinity of the main river, but also in the regions that cover the course of this magnanimous river. Several factors including natural, cultural, politico economic and social are playing decisive role in the process. They are explained as follows:

(A) Natural Causes:

Natural landscapes have been undergoing various transformations over the ages. The spatial and temporal changes in land cover and land use will be helpful to understand the environmental status of a region. Decay of rivers is a crucial concern discussed in different parts of the world and it is one among the major challenges that humans are facing. There are various reasons behind the decay of a river. This section tries to look at two issues namely; the environmental problems/reasons that lead to the damage of Bharthappuzha river system and what would happen to the culture on the banks of this river, if the river is dying. The major factors leading to the decay of Bharathappuzha are as follows:

Climate

The geographical location of Bharathappuzha is different from the rest of Kerala. The general trend of temperature in the banks shows a trend of significant increase. Temperature and rainfall are the major factors of the water resources in the river and its banks.

Table No 3.4: Mean Temperature of Palakkad 1993-1999

S. No	Year	Palakkad			
		Maximum		Minimum	
		Month	Temperature	Month	Temperature
1	1993	April	40.6 C	June	25.4 C
2	1994	March	39.4 C	July	25.2 C
3	1995	April	39.4 C	July	24.8
4	1996	March	40.00 C	June	23.8

5	1997	March	38.00 C	July	23.8
6	1998	May	40.00 C	June	32.2
7	1999	February	38.6 C	July	24.00
		Average	**39.4 C**		**24.31**

Source: Temperature Register Office, Palakkad Civil Station, 2000 and P.P Nikhil Raj and P.A Azeez, Temperature Rise in the Bharathappuzha river Basin, Southern India, Current Science, Vol.101. No. 4, 2011.

The data show the increasing trend of temperature in Palakkad. The average temperature of Palakkad during the British period is 34.491 degree Celsius and at present it is 39.4 degree Celsius.[24] Therefore the variation in the temperature of Palakkad 4.909 (39.4-34.491=) degree Celsius shows the change of climate and its effects on the rainfall at the banks.

Rainfall

There is a marked variation on the rainfall in the origin, middle and ending part of Bharathappuzha.[25] While the hilly tract of south and north extremities gets 2668 mm and 2304 mm rainfall respectively, only 1631 mm rainfall is available on the middle banks of the river. The higher rainfall of 2630 mm which is received by the lower regions of the basinal area is quite natural by the vicinity of the sea. Hence, the quantity of rainfall received in the central area is comparatively less when compared to the side extremities because the reserved forests in Palakkad district is concentrated mostly on the hilly tract in North-east extremities of the basinal area. The hilly tracts on the south extremities are part of Thrissur district having forest coverage with 34.61% of the geographical area of the district.[26] The hilly tract and its wide area of forest coverage in extremities provide facilities to the condensation of clouds that are accumulated in that area. But in the plain land of middle banks, the clouds just move away without getting condensed due to the lack of forest coverage as the local forests of these areas are converted into rubber

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[24] *Gazetteer Malabar*, C.A Innes and F.B Evans (ed.,), ICS Madras, 1951,

[25] N Raj and P.A Azeez, *Historical Analysis of the First Rain Event and the Number of Rain Days in the Western Part off Palakkad Gap*, *South India*, *Climate Change*: *Global Risks, Challenges and Decisions* IOP Conference Series: Earth and Environmental Science, 2009.

[26] P. Basak, *Water atlas of Kerala Plate* Number 13, Land Use, Kozhikode: Center for Water Resources Development and Management, 1995, CWRDM.

plantation and for some other purposes. Consequently the loss of natural forest coverage results in the reduction of rainfall on the middle banks of river basin.

In the presence of vegetative cover, rain will not be able to compact the soil. It also provides a layer of decaying organic matter promoting the activities of borrowing insects and animals which in turn produce permeable soil structure. Both of these factors help to increase the infiltration capacity of that soil to a considerable extent. But loss of forest cover removes the protective cover of soil and removes the cushion of falling rain drops. This increases their impact and consequent damages. Destruction of forest cover removes the obstacles in the path of flowing water which increases the surface run off and reduces the quantity of infiltration. In another sense, the loss of forest cover leads to the reduction of the quantity of rain water infiltration into the earth's surface.

Vegetation is an important element for the preservation of water sources. This is because if there is a dense forest or thick vegetation, evaporation will not happen there. But the absence of sufficient area of natural vegetation (because of deforestation) increases evaporation.

The middle river basin has no wide area of vegetations, other than the forest in side extremities. As a result, it is difficult to preserve the water sources because the quantity of infiltration will be reduced while the evaporation will be increased. Therefore, the water sources to the wells and tanks are reduced before the summer, leading to the seasonal drought on the middle basinal area which in turn leads to the reduction of sources to the rivers. The monsoon of India is a major water source for the rivers of Kerala and each river basin has variations in the amount of rainfall received.

Table No 3.5: Mean Annual Rainy Days on the three areas on Bharathappuzha Banks

S.No	Place	South-West Monsoon June-Sep		North-east Monsoon Oct-Dec		Other than Monsoon Jan-May		Total Rainy Days	Percentage
		Days	%	Days	%	Days	%	Days	%
1	Palakkad (origin)	69	65.7	20	19.5	16	15.3	105	100
2	Mannarkad (middle)	77	62.00	25	20.2	22	17.7	124	100

3	Ponnani (end)	79	62.7	23	18.3	24	19	126	100
	Average	**75**	**63.5**	**22**	**19.17**	**21**	**17.3**	**118**	**100**

Source: Plate No: 8 Mean Annual Rainy Days, Water Atlas of Kerala, 1995.

The total rainfall received in south-west monsoon is 63.5% of (75 days). This quantity of rainfall will not be sustained either by the earth or the dams constructed on the river-head. Hence, more than 60% of the rain water unnecessarily flows to the seaward course. Whereas, 19.17% of the total rainfall, from north-east monsoon (22 days) and the 17.3% from the summer showers (21 days) has helped to maintain the continuous flow of the river in the olden days.[27] The river flowed continuously in this system with the water of north-east monsoons and summer rains. In addition to that, one has to look at the area-wise analysis of rainfall.

Table No 3.6: Area-wise Rainfall on Bharathappuzha

S. NO	Classification of Locations	Year of Rainfall in mm				
		1989	**1990**	**1991**	**1992**	**Total**
1	South extremity of origin area	2355.5	2522	2665.66	3031	2668.5
2	North extremity of origin area	2990	1937.75	2377.75	2811.25	2304.187
3	Central area	1362.3	1507.9	1777.5	1955.5	1631.5
4	Lower area	2102.75	2449.00	3003.00	2965.5	2630.125

Source: KERI, Peechi, *Thrissur District*, Kerala State.

The entire area of the river-basin is divided into four divisions. They are the hilly tract in north and south extremities of the river-basin, the plain land and the lower part in the vicinity of the sea. As on the above table, while 2668.5mm of rainfall is received by the south extremity, the north gets 2304.187mm of rainfall. At the same time, the plain of river-basin (central area) gets only 1631.5mm. But, the 2630.125mm of rainfall received by the lower part is quite natural due to the vicinity of sea. According to the area-wise analysis, the quantity of rainfall,

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[27] P.P.N Raj and P.A Azeez, *Changing rainfall in the Palakkad plains of South India*, Atmosfera, Vol. 23, No. 1, 75-82, 2010.

received on the plain land of basin area, is very less when compared to the other areas.[28] Hence, the status of the rainfall on the river-basin is unfavourable.

Loss of flood plains

Floods are the natural phenomenon of rivers caused by the act of dynamical agencies of the nature. At the time of floods, the streams overflow its channels and deposits are formed. The area on both sides of the river that has been formed by the flood deposits is called 'flood plains'. The clay and other mineral deposits of the river provide fertility to these plains.

The demand of bricks has increased due to the construction of new buildings in Palakkad region. Brick clay is taken on a large scale from the flood plain deposits along the length of the river. At the same time the process of depositing clay and other mineral deposits on the river side has not been sustained due to the lack of floods compared to olden days. Therefore, the continuous removal of clay deposits and the absence of floods have led to the loss of fertility of soil and also the loss of natural coverage on the earth's surface. The loss of natural coverage affected the temperature on the banks. It produced more evaporation through the small holes that are present on the earth. The temperature from the brick kilns also facilitates more evaporation from the land and water surface.

In the olden days, frequent floods were quite natural in Bharathappuzha due to the continuous heavy rainfall. According to the statements given by old timers, the tremendous floods occurred in 1990, 1924 and 1941 are the most important ones having lasted for a number of days.[29] But, from 1941 onwards there are no such frequent floods compared to olden days due to the failure of periodical monsoons and the blockage of sources by the dams in different locations of the same river.

Water Losses

Intensity of Wind on River-bed

The process of evaporation also depends upon the prevailing nature of air in a region. The Bharathappuzha flows along the length of Palakkad gap and through

[28] P.P.N Raj and P.A Azeez, *Trend analysis of rainfall in Bharathappuzha River basin*, Kerala, India, international Journal of Climatology, 2010, published online in Wiley Online Library (www.wileyonlinelibrary.com) DOI: 10.1002/joc.2283.

[29] *Vaniyamkulam Panchayath Vijnaneeyam*, Trivandrum: Kerala Council for Historical Research, 2001.

this gap wind blows from the Bay of Bengal. The effect of wind velocity is a peculiarity of Bharathappuzha. Therefore, velocity of the air in contact with the water surface of the river is more. The saturated film of air containing the water vapours will move easily and the diffusion and dispersion of vapour will become easier, causing more evaporation.[30] But, as a result of the prompt supply of periodical rainfall, the evaporation losses by the velocity of wind on the basinal area were not felt in olden days.

Depth of Water

In Bharathappuzha basin, the ground water is commonly seen within 6 to 10 m depth. The short depth of earth produces more evaporation because the evaporation depends upon the depth of water table. If the water table is high, the land evaporation will be more and if it is lowered the land evaporation will reduce. Hence, the land evaporation may be more in the basinal area. But, this activity did not occur in the olden days due to the periodical supply of rainfall by the monsoon and summer showers.

Loss of Natural Springs

Now-a-days, the natural springs that had been flowing continuously for years are drying up before summer. According to K. Krishnan[31] the reason for the loss of five springs in the area of different Panchayaths in Palakkad is deforestation. This is because earlier the upper region of these springs was covered by the local forests of private parties. But, they used the land for rubber plantations that produced more evaporation and reduced the quantity of rainfall infiltration into the earth's surface. The springs flowed throughout the year in the olden days. But, now they are getting dried up before summer. Moreover many pumping wells are situating on the waterfalls of these springs. They are interrupting the sources of springs. In addition, the water which gets into the well are taken by using different sizes of motor pumps which in turn is causing the desiccation of water sources. Conversion of local forests to the rubber plantations

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[30] Santosh Kumar Garg, *Influence of depth on rate of evaporation*, in *Water Losses*, *Water Resources and Hydrology*, Santosh Kumar Garg (Ed.), 1979 (Third Edition). Pp. 231
[31] He has conducted study about the loss of springs in the ten panchayaths such as Lakkidi, Mannur, Mankara, Mundur, Keralassery, Kongad, Kadambuzha, Parli, Pookotu Kalikave and Ambalapara in Palakkad Distrct.

and the construction of wells on the upper region of the springs are equally responsible to the loss of springs.

Vibration of earth surface

The earth's surface is under disturbance due to different kinds of vibrations both feeble and severe. These vibrations on the earth's surface create problems on the water resources of that area. Therefore, the mining activities, fireworks in festival grounds, blasting works in wells are the major causes for the vibration of earth's surface.

The mining activities such as production of metal/stone for construction works, limestone for cement production also create adverse effects. There are many quarries seen in the Palakkad region of Bharathappuzha basin. But only few of them have license. The daily use of high power explosives in a competitive work of producing materials in each quarries produce the local level vibrations on earth. It also loosens the natural compactness in the outer layer of earth. The chain of vibration from different quarries produces a combined effect on the wide area of earth's surface. It leads to the weathering effect and also results in the exposing of old cracks and joints in the earth. In that place, many pores are visible at the time of continuous rainfall and are drying up along with the end of rain fall. Before infiltrating into the deeper level, the water flows along the outer place through the joints and cracks. Naturally, the quantity of infiltration has been reduced and it has led to the drying of the surroundings before summer.

Use of fireworks during the ritualistic performance days at the *kavu* is a feature on all the banks of Bharathappuzha.[32] The explosive on an average of 100-110 kg is used in the fireworks. It produces vibrations on the earth's surface.

People construct wells adjacent to their houses without proper scientific knowledge of the hydrological condition of that place. They construct wells in accordance with their own convenience and blast rocks in the wells. Loss of water by the blockage of rocks on water transit to the wells is a common phenomenon. Lack of knowledge about the blasting technology of rock in wells has created problems in the layers of rocks in wells. Sometimes the fractured rocks slip away from each other, cutting the relationship between the existing parts of the layer and

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[32] All most all the shrines on the banks of Bharathappuzha conduct fireworks as a part of annual ritual performance such as Vela, Pooram and Thalapoli.

the slipped blocks. Therefore, the wells constructed in the slipped blocks are drying up by the faults across the waterways. In addition to this, the rain water and natural water flows of earth, flows to the outer place by this water transit. Whereas the wells on the existing part of the layer indicate the rise of water level by this blockage. All these activities harm the surface of earth with vibrations.

Topography of an area controls the relation between the surface drainage basin and underground drainage basin. In some places both drainage basins are equal. In other places the area of surface drainage basins are greater than those of the underground drainage basins. Sometimes the underground drainage basins are larger than the surface drainage areas. It means that the surface of the earth in the basinal area of Bharathappuzha is in an imbalanced condition due to the above mentioned human activities and natural causes. This leads to a different infiltration process on the banks.

Table No 3.7: Earthquakes in association with Bharathappuzha

S. No	Year	Location	Magnitude/Intensity
1	24/06/1865	Near Coimbatore	4
2	28/02/1900	"	7
3	29/07/1972	"	6
4	1981-1993	Central part of Palakkad Gap	1-2
5	15/03/1989	Near Vadakkanchery (middle part)	3
6	26/02/1993	"	3.6
7	02/12/1994	"	4.3
8	26/02/1996	"	3.0
9	06/09/1996	Thrissur	3.0

Source: Research Communication Vol.70 of February 1996 and Mathrbhumi daily dated on 03/02/2001.

Emergence of Vegetation

The rivers carry pollutants along with it as it flow into the sea. Naturally, the river becomes free from pollution. But, at present the rivers have no such continuous floods when compared to olden days. It means that, the river has reduced and has gradually stopped the cyclic processes of the geological work of running water. Due to the absence of these cyclic processes in a long time, the river will be filled with silt, fertile soil and granite powder. This kind of huge silt and soil deposit is one of the features of Bharathappuzha compared to the other rivers of Kerala. These deposits will fill the water volume and in the soil settled at the edges, terrestrial grass starts growing.

This enables other seeds to grow and new species gets established in the river. Shrubs get growing up in the river. These shrubs first grown at the middle part, spread to the other area of the main stream and the tributaries by means of dispersal movements. The chemical fertilizers, industrial waste and municipal sewages that flow from the vicinity, provide the nutrients for the growth of these emergent vegetations.

The nature and the flow of water in a river influence the life style and needs of human beings living at the banks. The activities of humans around their surroundings would also affect the health of a river. This reciprocal relationship decides the future of the culture of these people.

(B) Man Made Causes:

Deforestation

The deforestation rate in the Palakkad region is higher when compared to the other parts of Kerala.[33] Forest plays an important role in the self protective system of nature. The damage of forest would create ecological imbalances and affect the systematic management of nature or change of ecosystem. There are a number of groves on the local mountains and hills by private parties. As a result of human greed, forests are converted into rubber plantation and for some other purposes. Only a few of them are balanced and nationalized as vested forests. The total area of forest in Palakkad district during 1994 is 1614.055sq km whereas it decreased to1527.3564 sq.km in 2000.[34] Forests control the temperature of a region by absorbing carbon dioxide (CO_2) present in the atmosphere and therefore the shortage of forest coverage on the surface raises the temperature on the banks.

Dams in the River

The water in the Bharathappuzha is the life line of the four million populations on the banks from its origin to the ending part. The water resources in the irrigation dams supply 493064 hectare agricultural lands.[35] According to

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[33] C.S Jha, C.B Dutt and K.S. Bawa, "Deforestation and Land Use Changes in Western Ghats in India", *Current Science*, Vol 79, No.2, 2000: 231-238.

[34] *Kerala Forests and Wildlife Department*, Government of Kerala.

[35] CWRDM Master Plan for Drought Mitigation in Palakkad District, 2004 and S.P Ravi, C.G Madhusoodhanan, A.Latha, S.Unnikrishnan and K.H .A Bachan. *Tragedy of Commons: The Kerala Experience in River Linking*, Thrissur: River Research Centre, 2004.

the nature of the physiographic, the land use of the basin also changes. Even though, rice and coconut are the major crops at the ending part of the banks, the major crops in the mid lands are rice, banana, tapioca and seasonal vegetables. The origin part and some of the mid land areas also have rubber plantations with rice. The variation in the rainfall of this region has also affected the temperature from the last few decades.[36] This has caused the scarcity of water for various purposes such as drinking, agriculture etc and the river banks face severe drought situations.

The largest agricultural land of Kerala is on the fertile banks of Bharathappuzha. This has resulted in the construction of many dams in the river for the irrigation purposes of agricultural lands. There are eleven big dams constructed in different locations on the same river. The total storing capacities of these dams are 651.61mm3 of water. In addition to these dams, there are two regulator-cum-dams on the river namely Moolathara regulator on the main stream in Kerala-Tamil Nadu border and the Cheerakkuzhi regulator in Cheerakkuzhi River, located at the upper side of the river.

Table No 3.8: Details of Dams in Bharathappuzha

S. No	Name of Dams	Location in State	Catchment area in km2	Quantity of water storable in Million m3
1	Upper Aliyar dam	Tamil Nadu	140.52	26.55
2	Aliyar dam	Tamil Nadu	196.89	109.35
3	Thrumurthy Dam	Tamil Nadu	80.31	46.05
4	Attapady Project	Kerala	43.20	60.73
5	Kanhirappuzha Project	Kerala	70.00	60.00
6	Malalppuzha Dam	Kerala	147.60	226.00
7	Pothundi Dam	Kerala	31.00	50.91
8	Meenkara/Gayathri Dam	Kerala	90.65	12.75
9	Chulliya Dam	Kerala	29.78	13.70
10	Mangalam Dam	Kerala	48.85	25.50
11	Walayar Dam	Kerala	106.37	20.08
12	Moolathara	Kerala	---------	9.769

[36] N. Raj and P.A Azeez, *Historical Analysis of the First Rain Event and the Number of Rain Days in the Western Part of Palakkad Gap, South India, Climate Change:Global Risks*, *Challenges and Decisions*, IOP Conference Series: Earth and Environmental Science, 2009.

	Regulator			
13	Cheerakkuzhi Regulator	Kerala	---------	-------

Source: Office concerned of the dams and environmental problems on water resources of Bharathappuzha River System by Krishnan.

The construction of dams and its impacts on the natural flow of rivers are complex and multiple. It also affects the quality of water in the river. All these dams are closed immediately after the rainy season. Therefore, the water which can be stored by these dams are being blocked and diverted to the irrigation canals.[37] Besides this, the remaining water on the upper area of the dams will be diverted to the canals. Hence, the entire water on the upper regions, except the over flows of water from dams during particular seasons are blocked and diverted through the canals which in turn again reduce the sources to the river.[38] Therefore, middle part of the river is affected by drought during the summer.

Change of Joint Family System

Since 1970, there have been reforms in the ownership of lands. The enormous landholding of the *Naduvazhi* (landlord) has been transferred to the public by the Land Reform Act of 1971. This act also resulted in the alteration of the socio-economic structure of the state. The existing family structure (joint family system) of Kerala has changed in general and also on the banks of Bharathppuzha in particular. The joint family system shifted to nuclear family system.[39] Nuclear family is understood as the totality of husband and wife with their unmarried children. This resulted in a need to have more houses for nuclear families and it created high density of population and caused the conversion of natural landscape into construction sites.[40]

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[37] G.Prabhakaran, Staff Reporter, The Hindu Daily, March 17, Coimbatore (Edition)

[38] Biju Kumar and Kurian Mathew Abraham. *Impact of Check dams on the Hydrography of a Tropical River, Bharathappuzha, Kerala, India*, Екологія та ноосферологія (Russian), 2008. 19, No 41, Pp.11-18.

[39] P.N. Sushama, *Transition from High to Replacement Level Fertility in a Kerala Village, Health Transition Review*, New Delhi: Office of Population Health and Nutrition, Vol.6, 1996, Pp.115-136.

[40] R.Mahesh, *Farm Size-Productivity Relationship: Some Evidence from Kerala, KIED Working paper*, Trivandrum: Kerala Institute for Environment and Development, 2000; G.Gopikuttan and

There is no record/evidence that are available to prove this phenomenon. Even though, K. Krishnan has conducted a survey to find out the increase in the number of individual unit of ration cards by removing their names from the joint ration cards and the family partitions recorded in the sub registrar offices.[41] This shows the increase in residential buildings for nuclear families and how the land in Palakkad region has been portioned further. The agricultural land of Palakkad has been transformed legally for the construction of houses based on the Land Acquisition Amendment bill of 2007.

Influence of Gulf money

The employment opportunities with high salaries in Gulf countries have influenced the construction of various buildings in Kerala in general and the rural areas on the banks of Bharathppuzha in particular. The non- resident Keralites especially from the Gulf Countries send money to the state and most of this amount is spent on the construction activities of the State and on the banks of Bharathappuzha as well.[42] The modern and newly designed enormous buildings are a symbol of status to Gulf Malayalees.

In addition to this, the cheap availability of land is also a reason for the concentration of people in the rural areas of the district. The increasing area of houses has reduced the quantity of rain water infiltration into the earth's surface. It has then resulted in the reduction of water replenishing sources to the rivers.

Table No 3.9: Trend in Growth of Buildings in a year on selected Panchayaths during 1980-90

SN	Name of Panchayath	Growth rate on One km2
1	Mannur	5.83
2	Lekkidi	3.605
3	Kongad	3.38
4	Mankarai	6.48
5	Vanikyamkulam	4.56

K.N.P Kurup. *Paddy Land Conversion in Kerala an Inquiry into Ecological and Economic Aspects in a Midland Watershed region*, Trivandrum: Centre for Development Studies, 2004.

[41] K.Krishnan. *Environmental problems on water resources of Bharathappuzha River System*, 2001, Pattambi, SNGS.

[42] P.P.N raj and P.A Azeez. "Real Estate and Agricultural Wetlands in Kerala". *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol.44, No 5.200, Pp.63-66.

	Average Or 5 buildings/km2 in a year	**4.77**

Source: K Krishnan, Environmental problems on water resources of Bharathappuzha river System, 2001, Pattambi, SNGS. and Panchayath Concerned

Construction activities

Increasing Demand of Water

The demand for water has been increasing rapidly with the continuous increase of population and the continuous increase in per-capita demand. It is also linked with concerns like sewage disposal, use of gadgets such as air cooling and air conditioning devices, washing machine etc and the re-structuring of recreational activities.

Wells on the banks

During the summer, many streams dry up because of the lack of surface water but they may carry an appreciable quantity of water as underflows. In Bharathappuzha, the sources which flow as underflow channels have been sucked away due to the construction of a number of infiltration wells across the river banks. The chain system of wells at different locations on the river length has caused drought before summer.

Growth of Wells for Domestic Purposes

In the 1981 census the population at the banks was 2 million whereas it has increased to 4.6 million in 2001.[43] The system of separate well for each house is a feature in Kerala. Because of this, the density of wells dug for domestic purposes has increased. The Centre for Water Resources Development, Kozhikode carried out a statistics survey about quantity of water takes from the dug wells for domestic purposes. The survey on 44 samples from all over the three physiographic zone of Kerala indicates that the density of dug wells in coastal belt varies between 90 and 285 wells per sq.km with an average density of about 200 wells per sq.km. In the midland region, the density varies between 65 and 245 wells per sq.km with an

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[43] *District Census Handbook of Palakkad*, 2001; *District Census Handbook of Thrissur*, 2001; *District Census Handbook of Malappuram*, 2001; *District Census Handbook Palakkad*, 2001; *District Census Handbook Coimbatore*, 2001, Published by The Registrar of Census of India.

average density of about 150 wells per sq.km and the density of high land varies between 25 and 197 wells per sq.km with an average density of about 70 wells per sq.km.[44]

The Palakkad District has been an agrarian land. Now it has become a major industrial centre of Kerala. The growth of industries has caused an increased demand for water. Therefore, in order to meet the water requirements, these factories that are located near the river take water directly from the river or from the water supply of various projects. At times when this quantity turns out to be insufficient, they seek the ground water through the dug wells or the bore wells of their own. Thus the industries have given birth to the large number of wells at the banks.

Agricultural Wells

Demand of water for agriculture was increased by the advent of Green Revolution Policy of Government in 1960. Through this policy the independent India encouraged the conversion of fallow lands into agricultural lands, by providing loans to construct wells and tanks. This has resulted in the increase of irrigation scheme for dug well system. In addition, the cultivation of coconut, pepper, areca, plantain and betel leaf has been increased resulting in a further increased demand of water to irrigate them.

The summer cultivation of vegetables is the main occupation of poor farmers in rural area. They are depending on the dug wells or the tanks to irrigate them. As on the evidence of records, 5704 hectares of land has been irrigated by using water from the private tanks and 5719 hectares land has been irrigated by the private wells in Palakkad Distarict.[45] Hence, the number of tanks and wells used to irrigate this area is conceivable and it has been increasing over the years. The valuable quantity of 10400 hectares land has been irrigated by the dug well scheme of minor irrigation in Palakkad District.[46] It has been increasing over the

[44] K.Krishnan, *Environmental problems on water resources of Bharathappuzha river System*, 2001, Pattambi, SNGS.

[45] P. Basak. *Source-wise net area irrigated (1985-86) in different District of Kerala Plate* No: 27, in *Water Atlas of Kerala*, Kozhikode: Centre for Water Resources Development and Management, 1995.

[46] P.Basak. Area-*wise irrigated by minor irrigation scheme*, in *Water Atlas of Kerala*, Kozhikode: Centre for Water Resources Development and Management, 1995. Plate No: 28

years. Therefore, the influence of dug-wells for the minor irrigation purposes has also increased.

<u>Growth of Bore-wells</u>

At present, the tendency to construct bore wells has increased. The first reason is that it can be constructed within a small area of one's house compound. Secondly, this type of wells can be used to take water from a deeper level. Thirdly, construction of bore well in a house compound is cheaper than the construction of wells. With these reasons, the number of these types of wells has been increasing day by day. In another way, the growth of bore wells construction, without proper scientific investigation of the nature of earth, has caused the reduction of ground water storage.

<u>Ground Water Potential and Utilization</u>

The comparative statements of various agencies on the ground water potential and utilization indicates that the storage of ground water in Kerala is 6732.5 km3 (average). Out of this, the 1082.5km3 of water has been used already and the ground water left is 5650 km3. This has been further reduced by human activities.[47]

Water, is an inevitable ingredient in construction activities. The trend in the growth of buildings in rural areas, gives us an idea about the quantity of water used for construction activities in a year. The large quantities of water used for this activity that are mostly taken from wells and tanks are an unaccountable extraction from the earth.

<u>Industrial Developments</u>

There are multiple reasons for the conversion of natural areas. Among them urbanization is one among the major causes of the land use changes.[48] In the case of the banks of Bharathappuzha, the conversion of land for construction activities has caused unprecedented changes to the natural settings and natural resources especially

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[47] *Ground Water Potential and Utilization*, in *Water Atlas of Kerala*, Plate No: 23.

[48] M.G Turner, W.H Romme, R.H Gardner, R.V O'Neill and T.K Kratz. *A Revised Concept of Landscape Equilibrium: Disturbance and Stability on Scaled Landscapes, Land Ecology*, Vol. 8. No. 3, 1993: 213-227.

the water resources.[49] Deforestation and conversion of wet lands to construct buildings influence the recharging capacity of ground water and the flow of water.

The bank of Bharathappuzha especially Palakkad area is an agrarian belt and it is becoming a major industrial centre. The climatic-geographical conditions, cheap availability of lands, transportation and availability of water facilities and the vicinity of a major industrial centre at Coimbatore in Tamil Nadu (in a neighbouring state of Kerala, Tamil Nadu) an influence the industrialists to concentrate Palakkad as the hub for major industrial units. As per the 1984 records of district industries' centres in Palakkad, there were forty eight units/numbers of large and medium scale industries located there whereas, in 2001 it has increased to 75- units/numbers.[50]

The number of Small Scale Industries (SSI) registered in the district until 1986-84 was 1524 and it has grown up to 6525 within the period of 1992-93. Later it further increased to 17293 as in the year 2000. Hence Palakkad is a major industrial area in Kerala that has supported a large area for industrial infrastructure. The increase of institutional buildings such as civil stations, courts, police stations, recreational buildings and non-governmental buildings have also paved way for the opening of more industrial units.

Construction of Roads

The Mysorean ruler, Tipu Sulatan was the pioneer of road constructions in Malabar. He suggested a scheme for connecting all the main places of Malabar by an extensive chain of roads. The banks of Bharathppuzha were connected to Coimbatore by a number of roads.[51] Later Britishers gave birth to the metal and concrete roads in Malabar. In the second quarter of the twentieth century, a few numbers of concrete roads of short length were constructed. As a result of population growth, urbanization and industrial and social development, the large number of roads that were made of tar and concrete created problems to the water resources of the river. The roads made of these materials are relatively solid. This

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[49] J.Wilk and D.A Hughes. *Simulating the Impacts of Land-Use and Climate Change on Water Resources Availability for a Large South Indian Catchment, Hydrology Sciences*. Vol. 47. No.1, Pp.19-30.

[50] *District Census Handbook of Palakkad*. Government of India, 2001: 23

[51] CA Innes, ICS. *Malabar Gazetteer*, Means of Communication, Chapter No 7, by. Pp. 268 & 269

artificial layer caused the reduction of rain water infiltration into the earth. A 1704 km length of tar and concrete roads has dominated the land surface of Palakkad district.[52] The present road density on the banks of Bharathappuzha is 16.24 km/100km2 and it has been increasing day by day. Therefore the earth is drying up before the summer which in turn has led to the reduction of water sources to the river.

Table No 3.10: Total land cover (in %) on the banks of Bharathappuzha as a proportion to the total area and change from 1973-2005.

S. No	Land cover	1973	1990	2005	Change during(%) 1973-2005
1	Agriculture	27.84	27.54	19.15	-8.69 %
2	Natural Vegetation	44.43	12.07	12.28	-31.15 %
3	Plantation	7.46	14.20	8.64	1.18 %
4	Roads	7.61	8.40	16.24	8.62 %
5	Urban Centres	9.83	32.63	41.76	31.93 %

Source: P.P Nikhil Raj and P.A Azeez, Land Use and Land Cover Changes in a Tropical River Basin: A Case from Bharathappuzha River Basin, Southern India, Journal of Geographic Information System, 2010, 2, 185-193.

Indiscriminate Action on River

The indiscriminate action on river banks destroys the river. Sand deposits in certain height are formed in the upper and the middle part of the river. Instead of cleaning the river by taking the yearly settling deposits, the persons who are engaged in the profession of sand stripping are taking these products according to their own convenience. It is against the scientific principles of sand draw.[53] Such types of activities result in the production of multiple sand heaps on the river and the growth of vegetation on the river. The emergence of these materials causes significant reduction on the quantity of yearly deposits at these locations. Earlier the river that had flowed flattish is now concentrated through the channels and are subjected to expel the sediments to the sea-ward course by the velocity of flowing water that are concentrated in the channels.

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[52] *District Census Handbook of Palakkad*, Published by the Registrar of Census of India. 2001

[53] M.K Prasad. "Manalvaaraam Puzhayariyathe" (in Malayalam), *Deshamithram Weekly*

The vegetation on river would not be allowed to settle the sediments by the force of water flowing in the river. Therefore the sands are reasoning to expel to the sea-ward course. Middle part of the river is filled with sediments and the river flows are sluggish. Instead of cleaning the river by removing the sand heaps, the sand takers are interested to take the middle part deposits.[54] This unscientific method of sand looting has resulted in the diversion of the flow of river, reasoning to uplift more and more sand heaps in the river.

Rubber Plantation

One of the other reasons that led to the loss of natural vegetation is the expansion of plantation on the banks of Bharathappuzha. Physiographical condition, periodical supply of rain, increasing rate of cash crops, marketing facilities of rubber and the greed of humans are the reasons to introduce rubber plantation in Kerala general and banks of Bharathappuzha in particular. As a result, the area of local forests on the isolated mountains and hillocks are converted into the rubber estates. Therefore, the rubber plantations dominated the banks of Bharathppuzha. Survey shows that the production of rubber in 1990-91was 14660 tones.[55] In 1951 to 2000 the area under rubber plantation was increased by 62 %.[56] This expansion happened in the origin part of the river because the hilly area of this part were less occupied compared to the middle and ending part of the river banks. In addition the change of crop for more profit and the socioeconomic shifts in the state also caused the conversion of agricultural wetland to the plantation of rubber and betel nuts.[57]

Generally the area of rubber plantation is not cool as in the area of natural forests. Thus the process of condensation is reduced and results in the reduction of rainfall. The warm atmosphere in the rubber estate is a reason to cause more evaporation. Rubber comes in the deciduous group of vegetation and the foliation takes place in autumn and reproduces the leaves copiously before the summer. Hence, loss of water by the transpiration is more because the role of transpiration depends up on the sun light, available moisture and the stage of growth.

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[54] K. Krishnan. *Possibility to the Project of Sand mining on Bharathappuzha*, Pattambi, SNGS. 2001.

[55] *Industrial Potential Survey of Palakkad District*, Table Number 3:4:2

[56] B.M Kumar, "Land Usse in Kerala: Changing Scenarios and Shifting Paradigms", *Journal of Tropical Agricultural*, Vol.42, No.1-2, 2005:1-12.

[57] M.Eapen, *Economic Diversification in Kerala: A spatial Analysis*, Trivandrum: Centre for Development Studies, 1999.

Activity of burrowing insects is comparatively less in rubber estates due to the use of pesticides. Therefore, infiltration of water is again reduced. Rubber plant extracts more water from the ground. Therefore, the earth's surface quickly dries up. In a nut shell, the rubber estates fade the earth and leads to the destruction of ground water in the area and its surroundings. Above all it results in droughts.

To conclude, human intervention and adaptation to natural environments inevitably led to cultural landscape. In order to exploit the natural resources like rivers and streams for their sustenance the folk communities habituated on the banks and made huge settlements. The constant interaction and activities of the communities with the water resources caused disruption to the course of the river flows. Nevertheless, the communities engaged in various forms using the water attributing sacrality especially with the construction activities of shrines and temples and thereby conducting rituals and ceremonies on timely intervals. To understand the ritual activities and the worldview behind these activities it is imperative to know about the communities living on the banks of Bharathappuzha. The ensuing chapter aims at bringing out the settlement patterns of the communities on the banks of Bharathappuzha.

Chapter-IV

Folk Communities on the Banks of Bharathappuzha

Cultural Geography has made a distinctive contribution to the understanding of relations between landscape and culture. This idea can be seen on the conceptual understanding of cultural geography through the ritual performances of the community. Cultural landscape on the banks of river Bharathappuzha from Palakkaad to Malappuram is more than two thousand years and immensely rich and has huge diversity of expressive behaviours. In this belt along Bharathappuzha, the richness is unique in different ways.

The course of river in different parts of the geographical region constitutes the life of the people on the banks. In the case of Bharathappuzha, the presence of water in the river has professed the distribution of communities from the beginning to end part of the river. This chapter looks at the relationship between the folk communities and their engagement with the river. For the sake of study, the river Bharathappuzha is divided into three parts (the tripartite methodology) based on its course – (i) origin part of the river, (ii) middle part of the river and (iii) ending part of the river- based on the flow of the river to understand the relationship between the communities and the river.

Bharathappuzha in the beginning is the totality of many small streams of water flowing in the full swing to the place Parali. The area from the beginning of small streams to Parali is considered the origin part of Bharathappuzha. The middle part of the river is the place from Parali to Kudaloor. Here less water flows are visible in the Bharathappuzha River and so sands are seen. The ending part is the place between Kudaloor to the confluence of river to Arabian Sea. The river flows with full of water. This nature of Bharathppuzha River is a vital element in the settlement of communities on the banks.

Communities on the River Banks

To understand the emergence of different communities on the banks of Bharathappuzha one has to look for the historicity on the life on the banks of the river. During historical times, several political powers fecilitated the settlements of different

caste groups and communities for their sustenance. As a result, several social groups with different ocuupations were encouraged by the rulers to settle on the banks for the expansion of agriculture, trade, commerce and industry for augmenting the resources. For this reason a brief account of history of this region is essential.

Historicity of Bharathappuzha Valley

Geography has a pivotal role to decide the historicity of that area. Humans have migrated from place to place and later settled in one place. These migrations have created many complexities and Kerala is not an exemption. Infact, the history of Kerala is the history of migrations and immigrations.

The banks of the river Barathappuzha are one of the early inhabitants inKerala.[1] The area is very rich in megalithic monuments such as dolmens; pot-hole, *kudakkallus* (hood stones), *topikkallu* (umbrella stones) and rock cut caves[2] found in various parts of the banks of Bharathappuzha; especially on hills and forests. Literate rock cut caves have been noticed at Tavanur *amsom* (area) in Ponnani taluk and megalithic sites have been noticed in an area of two to three acres in Pallavur area and Chittor taluk. In Attapadi and Pallavur area, a number of hero stones and a megalithic burial site have also been discovered, respectively.

Sangam Age

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[1] Willaim Logan, *Malabar Manual*, Delhi: Asian Educational Services, 1887 In Malayalam, Mathrubhumi Books, 2008, Kozhikode; Elamkulam P.N. Kunjan Pillai, *Studies in Kerala History*, Kottayam: National Book Stall, 1970; A.Sreedhara Menon, A *survey of Kerala History*, Chennai: S. Viswanathan Publishers, (1967) revised edition, 2003; MGS.Narayanan, *Perumals of Kerala: Political and Social Condition of Kerala Under the Cera Perumals of Makotai* (A.D 800- A.D 1124)**,** Kerala: Xavier press, 1996. It was Prof Elamkulam who made the first attempt to write about major issues related to Kerala history. But he never attempted to address dark periods from 300 AD to 800 AD. According to him there were no direct evidences to analyse the history of dark periods. He never thought of common people, settlements, markets, network of sacred groves, family systems, customs and manners and such direct and indirect evidences. It was because he neglected the lower and local administrative factors of the Kulasekhara rulers. Later, Dr M G S Narayanan started the investigation and analysed the Kerala history and he also could not narrates the history of these periods. Following the works of the former scholars, N.M Namboothiri looked to study the village history of Kerala based on toponymycal data. It was taken up to understand the social and cultural history of *Malayala Naatu* and these studies are generally termed as Janapadanam or settlement studies.

[2] For a detailed study of the major pre-historic sites of Kerala the following book and articles may be referred to: (1) A.Sreedhara Menon, *A Survey of Kerala History*, Kottayam: DC Books, 2007; (2) V.D Krishnaswami, "Megalithic Types of South India". *Ancient India*, 1995, No.5, Pp.35-46.

It is the *pazhamtamilpattu* (Sangam literature) that helps to understand the history of South India during the first centuries of A.D. and Kerala was the part of old *tamizhakam*. So the socio-economic and political system of this period also reflects the history of Kerala. Modern scholars have divided *pazhamtamilpattu* into three. They are *ettuthukai*, *pathupaattu* and *pathinenkizhikanaku*. It explains history of the Chera administrations, the lineage of kings such as Uthiyil Chera Lathan, Nedum Chera Lathan, Narmudicheral, Cheran Chenguttuvan etc and their achivements, the wars, love, family life, geographical features of old *tamizhakam* and so on[3]. It was the Ezhimalai kingdom which ruled the northern part of Kerala at the Sangam age. This region lay to the north of Cannanore and Tulunadu, making Ezhimalai as their capital. Nannan was the powerful king of the Ezhimali kingdom. He expanded his territory to the mountainous region such as Wayanad, Gudaloor and the northern part of Coimbatore districts. As part of the expansion of his kingdom, he fought against the Cheras many times and his success over the Cheras is mentioned in the literature of Akananoru and Puramnanooru. Later the Chera king Naar Mudi Cheral defeated Nannam in the battle of Vakaiperumthurai and brought the Ezhimali land under the control of Cheras. The history of the Ezhimalai kingdom after the death of Nannan is not clear.

The 1st kingdom of Cheras was an important power in Kerala in the early centuries of Christian era. With the expansion of the Chera kingdom, the members of the Chera family settled in various places such as *Vanchi, Tondi* and *Karur*. On the basis of collective succession (*Kuttuvazhcha*), the eldest member of the family ascended the throne. In the case of Kerala history, the Post-Sangam age (6, 7, 8 Century) is considered as a dark age. The only information about this period is from the records of south Indian powers who ruled Kerala, such as the *Chalukyas*, Pallavas, and *Pandyas*.

After the 3rd C, the socio-political system of old *tamizhakam* underwent a change and it was during this time that the Pallavas, Pandyas and Chalukyas became a prominent power in *Tamizhakam*[4]. In 7th Cetury, the Chalukyas conquest of the

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[3] KN Ganesh, *Keralathinte Inalakal*, Trivandrum: Government of Kerala, Department of Cultural Publications, 1997.
[4] N.M Namboothiri, *Akavum Puravum*(Mal), Tenjipalam: Calicut University Central Co-Operative Store, 2003.

Alluvars of South Canara also helped the migration of another group of Brahmins from Karnataka to the northern side of Cheranadu (*Keralam*).

Advent of the Brahmins in Kerala

There is no clear cut idea about the period of Brahmin migration to Kerala among historians. During B.C 3rd C, Jains-Budhist religion reached Kerala from North India. Brahmins also migrated to Kerala as the continuation of the above people's migration. These Brahmins migrated to South India, especially Karnataka and Tamil Nadu before 3rd C B.C reaching Kerala through North Kerala (Tulu country) and the Palakkad area.

The advent of the Brahmins and their settlement has been a turning point in the Kerala history. There is no unanimous opinion among the historians about the date of the migration of Brahmins to Kerala. According to K.P Padmanabha Menon, the Brahmins reached in 3rd C A.D[5] where as William Logan opined that it was in 8th C A.D. Modern historians are not in agreement with the opinion of William Logan. Even though, they arrived in Kerala in the early century of the Christian era as the continuation of the migration of Jains and Buddhist groups from North India, the modern historians opined that one cannot assume that they have come to Kerala as a big settlement group rather than they came as small groups in different times and settled in various places. There are references of Brahmins in Kerala in Sangam literature.

Brahmins had known about Kerala through the trade and commerce of those days between North and South India. Once they reached to Kerala, Brahminism could not flourish like the North Indian Brahmanism/Vedic tradition in Kerala. In *pazhamtamil* literature, they are mentioned as *Anthanar* and their main duty was to conduct *yagas* and other Vedic rituals for Cheras.[6] Brahmins gave ideological support and justification of the administration of the Chera kings. As remuneration, they got land and other valuable things from the king. Then the Brahmins became a strong socio economic power. The other classes such as Panar (Bards of Nayar community), Vedar (local tribe) and Kuravar (local tribe) who were getting help from the king were sidelined and downgraded their position to the lower strata of society.

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[5] K.P Padmanabha Menon, *History of Kerala* Vol. 1, New Delhi: Asian educational Services, 1983.

[6] Kesavan Veluthat, *The Early Medieval in South India*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2009.

Second Chera kingdom (Kulashekharas of Mahodayapuram)

The Cheras became a powerful group after the Sangam Age 800 A.D. Cheras revived their power under Kulasekhara Varman and they ruled over Kerala from 800-1102 A.D with their capital in Mahodhyapuram. The 'Kulasekhara Empire' is also known as 'Second Chera Empire'. During this period, Kerala became a homogeneous political unit till 1102 A.D. Kulasekhara Alwar, Sthanu Ravi Varman, Rama Varman and Bhaskara Ravi Varman were the main Chera kings.

After 8th C. A.D, Kerala became a special political and cultural centre under the 2nd Chera kingdom. They controlled the Mushaka dynasty of northern Kerala and the Azvars of southern Kerala. Kerala was the totality of many territorial division consisted of *nadus* (a district), *desham/desam* (small locality), *taras* and *cherries*. 'Nadu' was the highest administrative set up and Naduvazhi (ruler of *nadu*), a local chieftain was the head and under him were many *desham* for military purposes. *Desavazhi* (administrator of desam) is the head and *gramas, taras*, and *cherries* existed under him. *Gramam* (village) was constructed for the Brahmin settlement under the supervision of *gramini. Taras* for *Nayars* under *Tara karanavar* (head) and *cherries* for *izhuvas* and other castes were under the supremacy of *moopans.*

All the heads of this territorial land would meet at Tirunavai once in twelve years and they would elect the *rakshapurusha* (protector of entire area). This *rakshapurusha* would get the value of administrator. If there was any problem in selecting the *rakshapurusha*, the head of the assembly had the power to invite a member of the neighbouring ruling dynasty and would solve the problem. The Tirunavai convention invited the member of the perumals family and he got the *rakshapurusha* post. Thus, the Perumal era started. Kulashekharas may be one of the branches in the Chera migration of the western area of the Western Ghats from Trichinapalli. They came through 'Palakkad slopes' or some other parts of the Western Ghats and settled in the banks of Periyar River. Kulashekaras may have emerged from this group. Twelve perumals ruled and 12 years were the tenure of each *perumal.* But the last *perumal* ruled during three terms. At the end of the third term, he divided his kingdoms among his chieftains and appointed *Valluvakkonathiri* (Valluvanaattu Raja) to preside over the Tirunavai assembly. After the last Cheraman Perumal King, Rama Kulashekhara's (12th C A.D) kingdom shattered and many *nadus* such as *Valluvanadu, Vettathunadu, Tirumanasserinadu* and *Nedunganadu*

emerged. Thus all the royal dynasties of Kerala came into existence only after the break-up of the Perumal's empire.[7]

During the 9th and 10th C, the Cheras had a good relationship with the Cholas and they got help from them to defend the invasion of the Pandyas of Madhurai.[8] Later on the friendship relation between them slowly collapsed especially after the reign of Sthanu Ravi and during the time of Bhaskara Ravi they started many wars against Cholas. Cholas attacked the military centres of Cheras especially Thalakkulam, Karakandeeshwram and Vizhinjam. They captured the Southern Travancore and attached it to the kingdom of Cholas in the 11th C. The Cholas captured Kanyakumari, Parthipapuram, Thirunanthikara, Kottaar. As a continuation of this attack during the time of Raja Raja Cholan, Cholas attacked Mahodhayapuram and Quilom.

Later Ramavarma Kulashekara became the king of Cheras and he tried to recapture the lost territories of the Cheras from the Cholas. It led to many battles between them and he got many places back. After the reign of Ramavarma Kulashekhara, due to the attack of Cholas and other internal problems within the Chera kingdom, the reign of the second Chera came to an end.

History of *Swaroopams* (Local Kingdoms) on the Banks of Bharathappuzha

After the decline of the Cheras (12-13 AD) of Mahodayapuram, many small *swaroopams* (local kingdoms) became stronger. There were small areas under the Cheras but later they became bigger. The local governors raised powers and claimed the independence of their local area. This led to the rise of *swaroopams* in Kerala. The rest of the history of Kerala after the fall of Second Chera kingdom is the history of *swaroopams*[9]. The major *swaroopams* which were emerged on the banks of Bharathappuzha were Valluvanadu (Ponnani, Perinthalmanna, Thrishur area), Nedumpurayoornadu (Talappili, Palakkad and Chitoor area), Eralanadu (later Nediyirippu/Zamorins) and Kalkarenadu (Cochin). The expansion of agricultural

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[7] There are many opinions still existing about the last king of Cheras of Mahodayapuram and some scholars argues that Chera kingdom could end up in A.D 1102 or A.D 1122. See M.G.S Narayan, *Calicut- City of Truth Revisited*, Tenjipalam: Publication Division, University of Calicut, 2006.

[8] K.A Nilakanda Sastri, *The Cholas*, Madras: University of Madras, 1955, 1975(Reprint).

[9] N.M Namboothiri, *Akavum Puravum*(Mal), Tenjipalam: Calicut University Central Co-Operative Store, 2003

activities and settlement patterns, the increasing domination of Brahmins, division of caste based on the occupation and the rise of social order based on the administration of temple complex were the main features of the administration of the Perumals during the second Chera period.

During the period following the break-up of the Kulasekhara Empire (1102A.D), Kerala lost its political unity. A number of independent *swaroopams* rose in different parts of the country. Of these, the most important were the kingdom of Valluvanadu, Nedumpurayoornadu, Perumabadappu and Zamorins. The history of the banks of Bharathappuzha during the pre-Portuguese period is centred primarily on the kingdom of Zamorins (Calicut). Before narrating the history of the rise and growth of Zamorins, it would be appropriate to make an outline about the detail of other *swaroopams* and that will provide a clear understanding of the political history of this period especially on the banks of Bharathappuzha.

The main administrative system of medieval Kerala was *swaroopams*. There is no clear cut idea about the meaning of the word '*swaroopams*'. It could be the geographical locality under a Naduvazhi. All these *swaroopams* had a centre for their administration. During the time of the 2nd Cheras most of the *swaroopams* collected the surplus product and taxes from their region and became wealthy. Each *swaroopam* had its military group (*angarakshakar*) known as *akambadijanam*.

The name, capital and geographical area of the *swaroopams* are as follows.

Table No 4.1: Details of *Swaroopams*

S No	Name	Capital	Locality
1	Aaynad	Pothiyilmalai	southern part of present Trivandrum
2	Venadu	Quilom	Quilom, Kottarakar and Chirayinkeezhu taluk and the part of Nedumangadu and Trivandrum taluk
3	Odanadu	Kandiyoormattam kayamkulam	Karunagapalli, Mavelikara and Karthikapalli taluk
4	Nanruaynadu	Trikodithanam perunna	Area of Tiruvala and Changanassery
5	Moonjunadu	Kumaraneloor	Kottayam area
6	Vembolinadu	Kaduthuruthi	Vaikam and Meenachil area

7	Kizhmalainadu	Karikodu	Thodupuzha and Moovatapuzha area
8	Kalakarainadu (later known as Cochin)	Thrikakara	Ernakulum district, part of Thrishur district and Thrikakara area
9	Nedumpurayoor nadu	Kuruva	Talappili, Palakkad and Chitoor area
10	Valluvanadu	Angadipuram	Ponnani, Perinthalmanna, Thrishur area
11	Eralanadu	Nediyirippu	Ernadu area
12	Polanadu	Poloor	Kozhikodu area
13	Kurumburanadu	Kuttipuram	Koyilandy and Southern Wayanadu
14	Puraikizhenadu	Not known	North Wayanadu and Gudaloor area
15	Kolathunadu	Chitaikal	Kannur and Kasargode area

All the above were the *udayavar* in the Kulasekhara period and after the fall of the Kulashekharas they became independent and known as *naduvazhi swaroopam*s. Among the fifteen *swaroopams* mentioned above, three *swaroopams* played a promonent role in this region.[10] The interencine warfare among the *swaroopams*

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[10] The most important were the kingdom of Valluvanadu, Nedumpurayoornadu and Perumabadappu. The Valluvandu family on the banks of the Bharathapuzha was founded by Rajasekhara who lived during the 10th C A.D. The original capital of the swaroopams was Valluvanagaram (modern Angadipuram). The Valluvakonathiri presided over the Mamamkam festival at Tirunavai before the place was conquered by the Zamorin in 13th C. A.D. Sangam literature gives some hints about 'aadivalluvanaadu'. The aay kingdom was situated on the southern part of the *cheranadu*. Until the 5th C of the Christian era, the ayans lived and ruled the Madhura and Tirunalvelli area. After the attack of the Pandyas at Tirunelvelli, the aay kingdom collapsed and migrated to different parts. One of the branches of aay kingdom known as *Vel* (around AD 8, 9 C) became *venadu*. In 10th C, southern Valluvanadu (Aynas of Vizhinjam) collapsed at the time of *varagunan*. One branch migrated to northern area, they were known as vadakkan valluvanadu, and thereby the eldest member of the family was known as *vadakkan valluvanadu udayavar*. It was a princely state in Kerala state, extending from the *Bharathapuzha* River in the south and to the Panthaloor hills in the north. On the east side, it was bounded by the Attapadi hills and on the west by the Arabian Sea at Ponnani. Nedumpurayoor kings were the chief under the second cheras and after the fall of chera kingdom Nedumpurayoor proclaimed independent rule in their region. According to Pathittupathu (Tamil literature), Porrainadu was the part of the Chera kingdom in AD 2-Century. During the reign of Kotharavi, *kongu cheras* invaded Chittoor and Palakkad. It was in AD 918- and with the help of *Valluvanadu, Perumpadappu, Eranadu,* Nedumpurayoor won the war. But in later period, the fight between Cholas and Nedumpurayoor became strong and finally Nedumpurayoor became weak. They were later known as Taroor *swaroopams*. In 1761, Zamorins went to attack Palakkad and captured some part of Palakkad In 1757. Perumbadappu swaroopam or Cochin was an independent principality after the decline of the Kulashekhara Empire and they started to reign at chitrakoodam in the Perumbadappu village vanneri till the end of 13th C. in the last half of the 13th C, the perumpadappu swaroopam moved to Mahodhayapuram from Vanneri palace. They continued to use Mahodayapuram as their capital till

became a common feature for supremacy over this region. Ultimately Zamorins emerged as victorious.

Zamorins Kingdom

Calicut was the major power in northern and central Kerala in the medieval period. It was considered that Kondoty (20 mile away from Calicut town) was the ancestral villages of Zamorins. Calicut is said to have existed since the 13th century AD. After the fall of Kulashekara of Mahodayapuram, Calicut was formed as part of Polanadu by Porlathiri. For the purpose of getting a coastal line, the Eradis of Nediyirippu marched with Nayar (a warrior community) towards Panniankara and attacked Porlathiri. Finally, the war ended in the victory of Eradis and the Porlathiri escaped to Kolathunadu (North Malabar). After conquering of Polanadu, the Eradis shifted their headquarters from Nediyirippu to Calicut and constructed a palace. The Zamorins, also called the *Erlatiri* (chief of Ernad) and *Nediyiruppu Muppan* (chief of Nediyiruppu *swaroopam*),[11] started commerce with Arabs and Chinese in Calicut port. They began to conquer neighbouring kingdoms and expanded his empire. The most important attack was against Valluvakkonathiri in south Malabar and had many intentions.

The banks of Bharathappuzha were the fertile lands for growing pepper and forest wealth. The Travancore kingdom, Cochin raja and Palakkad king were in needed of this area. The Zamorins began to conquer neighbouring areas. The main aim was to capture the natural resources. Valluvanadu and Palakkad were the places of paddy cultivation. Zamorins needed more paddies and the importing of paddy was a liability to Zamorins. Because of the non-fertile land, Calicut was not fit for paddy

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1405 and later changed its name to Cochin. The continuous attack of Zamorins on the banks of the Bharathapuzha influenced the decision of the Perumpadapu chief to shift his capital to Cochin because Cochin was outside the orbit of the Zamorins conquests. After the fall of the Cranganore port, Cochin port became an important place for trade. This element helped Perumabadappu rise as a power in central Kerala in 15th C A.D. They also captured the place around the periyar riverbanks. For further details see Willaim Logan, *Malabar Manual*, Delhi: Asian Educational Services, 1887 In Malayalam, Mathrubhumi Books, 2008, Kozhikode.; Elamkulam P.N. Kunjan Pillai, *Studies in Kerala History*, Kottayam: National Book Stall, 1970; N.M Namboothiri, *Malabar Padanangal Zamoothirinadu*, Trivandrum: Keral State Institute of Languages, 2008; Willaim Logan, *Malbar*, Vol 1, New Delhi: Asian Educational Services, 1989; T.K Gangadharan, Kerala *Charithram* (Mal), Tenjipalam: Calicut University Central Co-Operative Stores Ltd,1997 .

[11] N.M Namboothiri, *Malabar Padanangal Zamoothirinadu*, Trivandrum: Keral State Institute of Languages, 2008, p-39.

cultivation and for the growth of trade he needs to collect forest products. Palakkad *churam* (steep ascent/slope) are the good path to connect the Kaveripoompattanam and Bharathappuzha which is the continuation of river Kaveri. It means that Kaveri flows along the other side of the Western Ghats. Bharathappuzha is a corridor between Palakkad *churam* (steep ascent) and Ponnani port. According to Logan, the Bharathappuzha had a unique strategic importance, as it provided a connecting link between the harbour on the west coast and the hinterland in Tamil Nadu.[12] A major portion was under Valluvanadu and Palakkad *churam* was under Taroor *swaroopams*[13]. Zamorins captured the northern part of Bharathappuzha to defeat the local king of Nedunganadu area and he appointed *eralpaadu* (local administer) as the administrator of that area. So, the banks of Thoothappuzha were under Zamorins.

In the process of expansion of the kingdom during 13th and 14th C A.D, Zamorins waited for a chance to interfere in the land on the banks of the Bharathappuzha. Already there was rivalry between Panniyoor and Sukapuram gramam (village) which was among the 32 settlements of Nambuthiries (Kerala Brahmins) in Kerala. Panniyoor and Sukapuram were two Nambuthiri villages and while the former group was 'vaishnavaite', the later was 'saivate' respectively. It was a local conflict between two villages. Valluvakkonathiri and Perumbadappu helped the Sukapuram group and they attacked Tirumanasseri Nambuthiri (leader of Panniyoor group). This Nambuthiri appealed to Zamorins for help and offered Ponnani as a reward. Zamorins did not miss this opportunity and he defeated the Valluvakkonathiri and captured Ponnani (Tirunavai) from him. Later Zamorins assumed the unique position of the *rakshapurusha* or the protector of *mamankam* festival.[14]

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[12] William Logan, *Malabar*, Vol.1 p.3, New Delhi: Asian Educational Services, 1989.

[13] V.V.K Valath, *Keralathile Sthalacharithrangal* (Mal), Palakkad District, Thrishur: Kerala Sahithya Academy, 1986, 2005 (Reprint). Pp.52.

[14] The *mamankam* was a festivals held in every twelve years on the day of *makam nakshatram* (a star in Malayalam month) in makha (malayala month, February) month on the banks of *Bharathapuzha* (thirunavaya). Firstly, it was conducted for the checking of administrative power of perumal, which he got from other local kings and they celebrated some martial arts. But later, Zamorins captured this area from valluvanadu king and the position of presidency of *mamankam* and he started the *mamankam* festival. During this time, valluvanadu king came and fought against zamorins army. The conflict between these two local kingdoms known as '*mamankam*' and the last *mamankam* held in 1755.

Tirunavai was the place of a great assembly that met in the lunar month of Magha, once in 12 years. In the post-Chera period in Kerala, this place came under the Raja of Valluvandu and by virtue of this position he was to preside over the grand festival as the *rakshapurusha* (protector).[15]

Two princes of Valluvanad had been killed in the battle between Zamorins and Valluvakonathiri. The hereditary bodyguard of the king of Valluvandu took a vow to avenge the death of the princes. The protracted struggle was manifested in the form of suicide squads (*chaver*) attacking the Zamorin during each *mamankam*. The heroic *chavers* of Valluvakonathiri jumped into the midst of the thousands of well armed warriors of Zamorins and they could not conquer Zamorins even in any *mamankam*.

Later, Zamorins continued their conquest and brought Nilamboor, Manjeri, Malappuram and Venkatakotta (Kottakkal), under the control of Calicut. In addition, Zamorins captured Nedunganadu, a principality lying between the domain of the Valluvakonathiri and Palakkad king (Taroor *swaroopams*). Zamorins dealt the Kollangode (Vengunadu) and gave some rights and controlled under his power. Thus, Zamorins got control on the southern part of Palakkad.

Conflict between Zamorins and Cochin

The Cochin kingdom (old Perumbadappu *swaroopam*) had friendly relation with Vengunadu as they needed *Palakad churam* and controlled Chittoor (Palakkad king) and Talappili. Cochin got the southern bank of Bharathappuzha (Talappili) from Palakkad *swaroopams*. The territorial division of the southern banks of the *Bharathappuzha* was as follows. Kolangode was the east, Talappili was the west, and the southern part of Ponnani was under Perumbadappu. Perumbadappu *swaroopam* (Cochin) interested the internal politics of this area for the ownership of Palakkad *churam*. It indicates that, Zamorins were the rulers in the northern banks of *Bharathappuzha* and Cochin kingdom were the ruler of the southern banks of the *Bharathappuzha*. Zamorins had proclaimed that he was the king of Kerala and controlled the Perumbadappu, Chavakkad and Ponnani area. From Sukapuram (Brahmin village) onwards to the east of the southern bank of Bharathappuzha (Vengunadu) was controlled by Cochin. Cochin did not have an access to Ponnani

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[15] M.G.S Narayan, *Calicut- City of Truth Revisited*, Tenjipalam: Publication Division, University of Calicut, 2006.

because Zamorins had captured Tirunavai (a river way to Ponnani from the east to the west and conducted *mamankam*) and blocked the place. The *mamankam* festival at Tirunavai assumed all Kerala significance with the growing power and prosperity of the Zamorins. The rulers and chieftains of the land who came under the Zamorins used to send tribute and flag to show the supremacy of Zamorins over them. The following was the picture of the banks of Bharathappuzha in Medieval Kerala.

Map No 4.1: Medieval Kerala, A.D. 1498

The conflict between Cochin and Calicut began in the 15th c. After the successful campaign in the Thrishur area, Zamorins turned against the Palakkad king and Kollankod, Venganattu Naduvazhis. Later, they came under the control of Zamorins. Thus, when the Portuguese landed in the Kerala coast in 1498, Zamorins were s powerful sovereigns who had by then (under their control) almost all the chieftains of north Kerala including the king of Cochin as their vassals.

Advent of the Europeans

Vasco da Gama has reached Calicut (Kappad) in 1498 and this led to the starting point for modern European colonialism in Kerala. Zamorins was the king of

most of the central part of Kerala and he received Gama with traditional hospitality. Later, Gama visited Kerala two more times. For the Portuguese, the voyage of Vasco da Gama brought commercial gains. Zamorins insisted to pay customs duty for all trade activities provided by Gama in accordance of the law abiding in Calicut. Gama left Calicut in August and he started trade with Kolathiri Raja (king) who offered all facilities to the Portuguese. After Gama, another Portuguese voyager, Cabral, came to Kerala and he also tried to start trade with Zamorins. He could not follow the trade with Calicut and led to a fight with Zamorins. Finally he left Calicut for Cochin. Following Cabral, Almeida, and Albuquerque also came to Kerala. The frustrating experience of the Portuguese captains with the Zamorins helped to start trade with the rivalries of Zamonrins that is Kolathunadu and Cochin. Zamorins had to fight against Portuguese numerous times until finally in 1540, a formal treaty was signed between the Portuguese and Zamorins. Under this treaty, the Portuguese were permitted to carry trade from Zamorin's territory at the rates prevailing in Cochin.

As a continuation of European power, the Dutch had appeared in Kerala and conquered the Portuguese stronghold of Quilom, Cranganore, Purakkad, Cochin and Cannonore.[16] In 1663, the power of the Portuguese ended in Kerala. In 1603, a Dutch admiral Stevan Van Der Hagen reached Calicut and signed a treaty with the Zamorins in 1604. The Dutch were given facilities for trade at Calicut as well as the right to station merchant. Zamorins had the idea that if he made an alliance with Dutch, he could expel the Portuguese from Kerala. In 1795, at the end of war between England and Dutch, the Dutch ceded their territories in Kerala to the English. Thus, the Dutch became weak in 1738 due to the activities of the English and French on the one hand and the forces of Zamorins and Travancore in the other. Dutch had failed in the Kulachal war of 1741against Travancore and they withdrew from the land of Kerala.

The English also came to Kerala for the purpose of trade like the Portuguese and the Dutch. In 1615 Captain Keeling reached Calicut. He concluded a treaty with the Zamorins in which English were to assist Calicut in expelling the Portuguese from Cranganore and Cochin. Zamorins gave permission to establish trade in his land. But the English did not follow the agreement of the treaty and they tried to capture Ponnani. They made treaty with another local Naduvazhi of Kerala, Rani of Attingal and constructed a factory in Anjengo. Later in 1723, the British signed a treaty with

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[16] A.Galletti and the Rev P Groot, *The Dutch in Malabar*, New Delhi: Usha Publications, 1984.

the King of Travancore. At the beginning of 18th C, Britishers had established their supremacy over the different regions of Kerala. In 18th C, the picture of Kerala was as follows. Britishers controlled the North Kerala, Telichery as centre and in Central Kerala under Cochin kingdom and Southern Kerala under the Travancore kingdom. This division became strong and Kerala came under the domination of European power in the end of 18th C.

In 1698, the French settled in Telichery and in 1725, they settled in Mahe. They started their attack in Kadathanadu *swroopam* (a Naduvazhi under Kolathunadu) and conquered many places. In addition to that, they have faced war against Kolathunadu and the English. The Raja of Kottayam and Ali Raja of Cannanore fought against the French. The English captured Dharmadam and Kolathunadu from the French. But the French attacked Kolathiri and captured Neeleswaram. In 1761 as a continuation of the war between England and France in Europe, they fought in India. The French lost Pondicherry and Mahe in 1761. But later as treaty of Paris followed between the French and the English in Europe, the French get back their stronghold Mahe.

Meanwhile, the ruler of Mysore, Hyder Ali and Tipu Sultan conquered parts of Kerala around the Malabar region from Zamorins. During this time, war broke out between the English and the French in Europe (1778). As a follow up, Hyder gave help to the French in Kerala against the English. England fought against Tipu in many wars and Tipu Sultan was ultimately defeated. Finally by the treaties of Srirangapatanam signed on February 22 and March 18 1792, Tipu formally ceded Malabar to the British.[17] The Mysorean hegemony over Kerala ended in the establishment of the British supremacy and the whole of Malabar was now in the hands of the English. So the history of Kerala from 1500-1800 A.D is the history of the conquest of Portuguese, Dutch, French and British mostly for monopoly of the spices business.

On the whole, the migrations into the land of Kerala contributed to the development of history of the region. The following table gives an overview of the time frame of the migrations of different religious and racial groups.

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[17] William Logan, *A Collection of Treaties, Engagements and Other Papers of Importance Relating to British Affairs in Malabar*, New Delhi: Asian Educational Services, 1989.

Table No 4.2: Chronology of Migration in Kerala

SN	Group	Period
1	Jain and Buddhist	3 Century BC
2	1st Brahmins	3 Century BC
3	Christianity	1 AD. (St. Thomas AD 52)
4	Jews	1st AD (AD-68)
5	Islam	7 & 8 Century AD
6	2nd group of Brahmin migration	8 Century AD

From the above table, it is evident that the history of Kerala is the history of migrations which led to composite and complex social formation.

Social formation on the banks of Bharathappuzha

Over the centuries, several races and communities have made their contribution to the building up of the composite and pluralistic culture of Kerala which is noted for its vitality even today. There are three kinds of settlements in the Bharathappuzha banks.

The first one is that of the earliest inhabitants of the land from the hilly forest on the banks of Bharathappuzha were velar, Kuravar, Ayavar migrated from the deep forest and settled on the river banks. They began cultivation and were later known as Uzhavar and Pulayar according to their work. The second one is the Brahmins batch who reached Kerala in BC 3 C, following the Buddhists and Jains (Jains and Budhists reached the banks through Karnataka and Sravanbalgola).[18] Irrespective of the controversy with regard to the date of Brahmin implantation over the soils of Kerala among historians, all agree that the Brahmin settlements grossly contributed to the history of Kerala. Prior to their implantation it appears that the indiginious tribal communities in small numbers occupied the hilly terrains and forest regions. The third one is in the beginning of Aryan invasion of north India wherein the Dravidians joined their kinsman such as the Nayars, Vellalars, Kammalars, and Ezhavas etc. No formidable political proceses which can create history was present prior to the Brahmin implantation. For this reason the oral tradition of Kerala created a myth on the Brahmin implanation which is quiete popular even to this day. The myth is known as Parasurama myth.

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[18] On the view of William.Logan, the first Brahmins reached in Kerala only in 8 C AD. But most of historians avoid this opinion because there has many references about the Brahmins in the Sangam literature.

Origin myth of Kerala

The creation myth of Kerala is related to Parasurama, a warrior sage. He is one of the ten avataras (incarnation) of Vishnu. The sanskrirt word parasu means 'axe' and therefore the name Parasurama means 'Ram with Axe'. The aim of his birth was to deliver the world from the arrogant oppression of the ruling caste, the Kshatriyas. He killed all the male Kshatriyas on earth. After destroying the Kshatriya kings, he approached an assembly of learned men to find a way to get rid off his sins. He was advised by them that he must hand over the lands to the Brahmins which he had conquered. He followed the advice and sat in meditation at Gokarnam (northern Kerala). There, he was blessed by Varuna (the god of the Oceans) and Bhumidevi (goddess of Earth). He reached Kanyakumari from Gokarnam and threw his axe northward across the ocean. It was 160 katham (it is an old unit to measure the distance of place. one kathan means 16 kilometres) of land lying between Gokarnam and Kanyakumari. The place where the axe landed the sea moved backwards and formed as shore between the waters and the land. This portion of land is known as Parasurama Kshetram (the land of Parasurama) because the land was reclaimed from sea by him. Later it came to be known as Keralam. Parasurama distributed this land to Brahmins that he brought down from the north to perform sacred rituals and duties in order to expiate him from his sin of slaughtering the Kshatriyas. They are known as Nambuthiri Brahmins and are found more in the middle part of the Bharathappuzha. They formed sixty four Brahmin villages.

Within the sixty four villages, thirty two villages are in Tulu Nadu (north Kerala) and the rest of the thirty two is in the territory of present Kerala. This settlement expanded from North to South Kerala. Modern historians could identify the thirty one Brahmin settlements. They are Payyanur, Perumchaloor, Alathoor, Karanthol, Chokiram, Panniyoor, Karikad, Issanamangalam, Thrishivaperur, Peruvanam, Chamunda, Iringadikoodal, Avittaputhoor, Paravoor, Ayiranikalam, Muzhikalam, Kalavur, Adavur, Chenganad, Illibyam, Uliyanorr, Kazhuthanad, Etumanoor, Kumaranellor, Kadamaruk, Aranmula, Thiruvalla, Kidangoor, Chenganoor, Kaviyoor, Venmani, and Nirmani. Most of this settlement centres had fertile land and they have constructed many temples on these lands. In relation to this sacred complex, they had created a new socio economic system in Kerala. Most of this settlement centres were on the banks of the Bharathappuzha. In the 7th century A.D, the Brahmin settlement became one of the most prominent groups in Kerala.

The Kerala Brahmins known as Nambuthiris occupy the highest position in the cast hierarchy. Even now they are the dominant priestly group especially on the middle banks of Bharathappuzha.

As stated already, for the sake of analysis the banks of the Bharathappuzha is seen in three parts *i.e.*, origin part, middle part and end part. In each part, certain communities played dominant role in the social formation and accordingly all ritual performances are organised reflecting the social hierarchy. Therefore in this section only major community of each part of Bharathappuzha is taken for the study.

Map.No.4.2: Major Communities on the Banks of Bharathappuzha

(a) Origin Part: Major Communities

Nambuthiris

The Kerala Brahmins known as **Nambuthiris** are considered as the Vedic Brahmins.[19] They lead a highly religious life by maintaining ritual seclusion from the other communities. There are many versions on the origin of the word Nambuthiri. The word Nambuthiri is derived from '*nambuka*' (to trust) and *thiri* (an honorific

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[19] Date collected from the informents Jithin, 22, Kottayam; Rajan 53, Thirukunnapalli; Shankaran 68; Puthusseri; Ramesh Nambuthiri, 61, Allappey; Suresh Nambuthiri, 40, Chemarathoor.

suffix meaning sacred).[20] This meaning shows the position of the Nambuthiri held as the advisors to the kings. In another version, it is derived from '*nam*' (knowledge) and '*purika*' (to impart) which reflects their great Vedic learning tradition.

On the basis of the anonymous texts such as *Kerala Mahatmyam* and *Keralolpathi*, it is believed that Nambuthiris are the descendants of the Brahmins who were brought to Kerala from all parts of India by Parasurama after he created the land of Kerala. When they reached Kerala (*Parasurama Kshetram*); Parasurama distributed Kerala land and they settled in 64 *gramams* (villages). The thirty two villages are in Tulu Nadu (north Kerala) and the rest of the thirty two is in the territory of present Kerala. After their settlements, the thirty two villages divided into two sects, i.e., (i) Vaishnavaites headed by *Panniyoor gramakar* or inhabitants of Panniyoor village (ii) Shaivaites headed by the *Chovour/ Sukapuram gramakkar* or villagers of Chovaram/Sukapuram. These Panniyoor and Chovour (Sukapuram) are on the middle bank of Bharathappuzha.[21] Their houses called as *illam* or *manas* are situated in the midst of extensive compounds. In the compound they have tank for bathing.

Nambuthiris were the *sarvadhikaryakars* (prime-ministers), *karyakars* (governor), judges and *munsifs* in the villages on the banks of Bharathappuzha. Nambuthiris claimed that the land is their birth right and substantiate it with the myth of Parasurama. Nambuthiris were the owners of most of the lands on the fertile banks of Bharathappuzha. They as landlords did not cultivate the lands for themselves alone but gave them to tenants, mostly to Nayar castes and remained as absentee landlors. They became the advisers of kings during the times of second Chera kings and also handled judicial process of those days. Gaining the confidence of the chiefs, the Brahmins received major grants of land as *brahmadeyas* and *devadanams* and other privileges thereby established themselves as a considerable force in society and economy.[22] During pre-modern times in Kerala, land was held in two ways. The Brahminical groups held land as their own property (*brahmasvam*) and through sacred complexes as the property of the temple (*devasvam*). The other agrarian communities

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[20] Kannipayoor Shankaran Nambuthitippaad, *Aryanmarude Kudiyettam Keralathil* (Mal), Kunnamkulam: Panchangam Books, 1982.

[21] *District Gazetteer Malappuram*, Trivandrum: Government of Kerala Press, 1986.

[22] Kesavan Veluthat, *The Early Medieval in South India,* New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2009.

functioned under this land owning groups as tenants (*karalar*), share croppers/cultivators (*kutiyalar*) and at the bottom as the landless labourers (*atiyalar*).

The opening up of the river valleys for agriculture had brought about a major social change. Historians have looked upon this as one of the significant factors behind state formation in Kerala and the banks of Bharathappuzha became the core region for the formation of monarchical state by A.D. 11th century.

The newly rising agrarian settlements on the fertile river valleys must have contributed to the process of Brahminical dominance in Kerala. The settlements of Brahminical tradition of Kerala were well established since A.D. 9th century. By the close of 9th century, the vast areas of land had been brought under the plough for the cultivation of rice and a huge chunk of the tribal population was transformed into peasants. This resulted in the production of unprecedented surplus and its unequal distribution led to the social stratification. As the whole process was under the initiative of the Brahminical corporations, their power around the temples came to have immense influence on the economy and society.

In addition, there are various services in the temple, such as garland making, musical services, cleaning etc. One of the features of post- Chera period is that, the corporate bodies of the Brahmins have lost its character at the village level. During the time of Cheras, the brahminical bodies such as *sabha* of the *ur* functioned smoothly with great solidarity of the Brahmins. Later the jealous among the members, non-insistence of full attendance, lack of unanimity in decision, decrease in the strength of *sabha* and certain individual got domination and greater powers. The result was that, certain individual families came to acquire prominence and they imposed their control on the properties and *devasam* properties came to be known as *brahmasvam*.

There are six subdivisions that can be seen among the Nambuthiris. There is no difference in respect of honour paid to Nambuthiri. The classification is based on the performances of ritual rites and social role they had taken part. The subdivisions of the Nambuthiris are *Thampurakals, Adhyans, Visishta Nambuthiris, Samanyas, Jatimatras (jatimatras)* and *Sapagrasthas*.[23]

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[23] Aavinisherry Narayana Nabmbeeshan, *Brahmanippaattukal*, Trishur: Mangalodhayam, 1969.

Nambuthiris are considered as the true Vedic Brahmins. Learning Vedas is an obligatory to all Nambuthiris and all Nambuthiri children (*unnikal*) follow one year fasting and they have to complete their Vedic studies within this period. Besides the various individual routine, Nambuthiris have temples for worship either in their own or now a days working as a priest (*pujari*) in the temples of other caste. They worship the deities such as, Shiva, Vishnu, their consorts and various other forms include *Shakti* under various names or shape. The god and goddesses are represented by images which are either self grown (*swaymboo*) or iconic. Besides daily *pujas* in the temples, there are some festivals (*utsavams*) attached to each in certain months of the year. Besides the priest, the temple has its own staff of servants such as the light carriers, the musicians, the sweepers, the cooks, the vessel cleaners, the accountants, garland makers according the size and tradition of the temple.[24] Apart from this, they also practice the profession of medicine, sorcery, astrology and so on. The various divisions among the Nambuthiris now exist only in the name sake. The population of Nambuthiris is steadily diminishing. Nowadays, Nambuthiris have been occupying the highest position only in the matters of rituals associated with temples.

Apart from the Nambuthiris, another sect of Brahmins is also found in the origin part of the banks of Bharathappuzha known as Palakkad Brahmins who came from the Tamil soils. It is believed that they reached the banks of the Bharathappuzha through the Palakkad Gap during the reign of Nedumpurayoor kingdom which was under the Perumbadappu *swaroopam*. The tradition attributes that the founder of the Nedumburayoor kingdom married a low caste woman and the Nambuthiri Brahmins did not approve this relation and therefore, they moved away from Nedumpurayoornadu and settled elsewhere. In the absence of the availability of the Nambuthiri Brahmins, the king invited the Palakkad Brahmins for the administration of temples and they settled on the banks of the *Kalpaathippuzha*. They are more in the origin part of the Bharathappuzha where the deforestation and land reclamation for agrarian expansion was feasible.

The Tamil Brahmins also known as *Paradesi* or foreign Brahmins as they have migrated from Tamil Nadu to Kerala. They are titled as Iyer, Vadyar, Dikshitar and locally known as Pattar. They are also found in Ernakulam, Palakkad and Trivandrum. They are predominant in the Palakkad town. They use three horizontal

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[24] Babu Mundekkad, *Kallattukurupanamarude Kalamezhuhupaattukal*, Kottayam: DC Books, 2002.

lines (*namam*) on their forehead as an identity marker of Saivaite sect.[25] Tamil Brahmins are vegetarian and they have divided into three subdivisions according to the Vedas they follow. Each sect claims a sage (*rishi*) as their ancestor. They also held lands as *brahmasvam* and *devasam*. They gave their land for lease to the tenants for cultivation. In addition, they are engaged in priesthood which is mainly divided into two types (i) Vaidikas are engaged in presiding the religious ceremonies and (ii) Laukikas in other occupations.

They live in *gramam* or *agraharam* which consists of two rows of houses facing each other. There is no courtyard but only the common street. At one end of the street is the temple. The Pattar form an organisation for the religious and social matters known as *samooham*. For the administration of this *samooham* a leader and five members committee is elected among the community. They have definite number of priest called *vadhyars* for their ritual. Their main festivals are *pongal* (in January), *thaipuzham* (in January-February), *shivaratri* (February), *vinayaka chathurthi* (September), *navaratri* (September-November), *deepavali* (October-November) *and tarpan* (July-August) for the departed ancestors. In Palakkad, Kalpathi *ratholsavam* (chariot festival) in the month of November is one of the traditional festivals. They have been associated with the conduction of *tarpan* ritual on the Kalpathippuzha, one of the tributaries of Bharathappuzha. There is no *vaishnavaite* in the Palakkad *agraharams*. The family is patriarchal and sons inherit the property of their father. The worship of the deities in temples by the Tamil Brahmins does not differ from that of the Nambuthiris.

As stated already, the Brahmin implantation led to the agrarian expansion to the support of the peasant communities. The agrarian communities acted initially as tenants, sharecroppers, cultivators and landless labourers for the absentee landlords such as Nambuthiri and Pattar Brahmins. The foremost of these communities is Nayars who developed close relationship with the Nambuthiris and together formed the basis for agrarian expansion in the origin part of Bharathappuzha.[26] Later, some of

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[25] Edgar Thurston and K. Rangachari, *Castes and tribes of Southern India*, New Delhi: Asian Educational Services, 1987.

[26] Data collected from the informents, Soman, 51, Kallekulangara; Suresh, 49, Chunnambuthara; V.Pangajakshan, 60, Putthur; Ramachandran, 60, Malambuzha; Dhandapanini, 67, Kulangara; Murali, 42, Kulangara; Gopalakrishnan, 63, Vallikodu; Balan 67, Chinakathoor; Ramachandran, 56, Manappulli; Rameshan,45, Rayamangalam; Shivaraman,58, Peringot; Krishnan, 74, Aamakavu; Pradeep,25, Kootanadu; Narayani Amma, 66, Kootanadu ; Venugopal, 54, Kodikunnu ; Murali,47,

the families of Nayars became militia for the ruling class and acquired land as service tenures thereby became landed gentry and local chieftains.

Nayars

The Nayars are one of the major portions of the population in the origin part on the banks of Bharathappuzha. They consider themselves as a noble caste. Nayars were the military class under the local kings and they were also the rulers of some of these localities. The word Nayar is the honorific plural of *Nayan*. It is derived from *Nayaka*, which denotes a leader of the people.[27] According to an ancient Sanskrit text *Kerala Mahatmyam*, the Nayars are said to be the offspring of the Nambuthiri men with Deva, Rakshasa and Gandharva women brought in by Parasurama[28] where as the 17th Century text *Keralolpathi* describes Nayars as the descendants of the Sudras who accompanied the Brahmins to Kerala.[29] Some consider that Nayars came from Tibet where polyandry prevails and others consider them to be an early division of the Newars of Nepal.[30] The most accepted opinion among the Scholars about the origin of Nayars is that, they belong to the Dravidian race with mixture of Aryan blood.[31] The date of their arrival in Kerala cannot be accurately determined.

The Nayars of ancient times were the chief military group in the kingdom of Kerala. Nayar men were generally sent to *kalari* (martial) school at the age of seven to learn all manners of physical exercises and enable them to use the weapons. Nayars were the greatest and worst enemies of the Europeans. The Nayars whom the king selected in his military group were never dismissed and received their pay and rations. The warlike race like Nayars played very important role in the medieval history of

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Perumudiyoor; Unnikrishnan, 41, Kodumunda; Anil Kumar, 26, Kozhikottiri; Sujith, 16, Mulayankavu; Sharavanan, 30, Ullanoor ; Sheeba,27,Ullanoor.; Venu, 55, Palakkal; Suresh, 65, Varavoor; Suresh, 38, Varavoor; Dasan, 21, Deshamangalam; Raju, 21, Aarangottukara; Manikandan, 45, Kuttipuram.

[27] Others consider it as a derivation from the word *nagas* (snake worshipers). For further details see L.Anantha Krishna Iyer, *Tribes and castes of Cochin*, Vol 2, New Delhi: Cosmo Publications 1981.

[28] Gopinath Pillai, *Socio Economic Changes in the Nayar Community in Travancore from 1900-1947*, Kerala, 1984.

[29] *Ibid.,*

[30] M.N Srinivasadas, *Social Change in Modern India*, Madras: 1996, Pp 28.

[31] *Administrative Report of Travancore*, Travancore: 1901-2, Appendix, Pp. 26.

Kerala. In those days the Nayar has increased their population.[32] Later their weapons and modes of fighting have changed due to the influence of Europeans in Kerala.

They constructed their houses in large compounds. The strict customs of caste purity and pollution in olden days led them to construct houses in a vast land. They select the site in the margin of fertile paddy field to construct their houses. Within the Nayar community, some individual families acquired different professions and were known according to that. This created internal structure among Nayars and it handed down from generation to generation. The Nayars were divided into many subgroups based on their occupation. Each group had a separate function. The major subdivision exists in the origin banks of Bharathappuzha are as follows:

Table No 4.3: Subgroups of Nayar Community

S.No	Subgroup	Hereditary Occupation
1	Kiriyatil Nayar	Servants of Nambuthiri Brahmin for local administration
2	Illathu Nayar	Servants of Nambuthiri Brahmin House
3	Pallichan Nayar	Palanquin Bearers
4	Chakkalan	Oil Makers
5	Anduran	Pottery Makers
6	Attikurishi	Assist Nambuthiri Priest
7	Veluthedathu	Washerman
8	Velakathala	Barbers of Nayar and Nambuthiri Brahmin

The members of the Kiriyatil Nayar group serve the Kerala Brahmins in the administration. They bear the titles such as Panikkar, Kurup, Kaimal, Karta and Menon. The *Naduvazhi* (rulers of the nadu) and *Desavazhi* (rulers of the deshams), the military leaders and other *sthanis* (leaders) of Kerala include in this category.[33] They are considered as superior to the members of other subdivisions.

The maid servants of the Nambuthiri house belong to Illathu Nayar groups and follow strict vegetarianism and worked as servants. They clean the vessels and houses; collect wood for the *illam* (house) of the Nambuthiries. The ladies also work as servants during the post delivery period of the Nambuthiri woman (*antharjanam*).

[32] C.J Fuller, *Nayars Today*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976.
[33] F Fawcett, *Nayars of Malabar*, New Delhi: Asian Educational Services, 1985.

During the reign of *swaroopams* the local rulers used to travel different localities of their territories and there were no vehicles in those days. They used palanquin as vehicle and one of the subgroup of Nayar community carry them. These palanquin bearers called as Pallichan Nayar. The Malayalam word of palanquin is '*pallakku*' and those who carry the palanquin is known as Pallichan.

Oil was an inevitable element in the life of the people especially for the Nambuthiri Brahmins. The Nambuthiris used oil during different occasions such as bath, temple ritual, post delivery bath of Nambuthiri women, death ritual ceremonies (sradha ritual). It was obligatory to use the oil which was made by Chakkalans, a sub group of Nayars. They prepared oil from dried coconut and gingili. The instrument used to prepare the oil is called '*chakku*' and the name is derived from that. Chakkalans sell oil to each house of the region. In later times, the Arab Muslims were also engaged in producing oil in cheap rates which led to the end of oil business of the Chakkalans.

The Anduran Nayars are the manufacturers of earthenware for use in temples and houses. The people on the central Kerala used earthenware for cooking and Anduran also make tiles for the roof of the houses. The people practice *sanchayanam* ritual after the dead body is buried. In this ritual they use the earthen pot made by Anduran. In addition to this, they even prepare pot for temple ritual such as *kalashapanikal* (small clay pot)*, mulampanikal* (leaned pot) and *cheraths* (small clay lamps). It was the duty of Anduran to prepare *homakunda* during the rituals such as *upanayanam*, *samavarthanam* and *yagam* of the Nambuthiri. In contemporary times they distribute pot for ritual in the temples as their hereditary right and in return receive paddy and oil as reward from the temple authorities.

Nambuthitri Brahmin was the priestly class of Kerala and the Attikurishi Nayars assist the Nambuthiri priest during the death ritual of Nambuthiri community. They are the priests who officiate at funeral ceremonies of all sub castes above them. It was their duty to prepare *dharbha* grass, turmeric, sand, paddy for the death ritual and clean the place after the ritual was over.

The Nambuthiri Brahmins of Kerala follow strict practice of purity and pollution like the Brahmins of other parts of India. The dresses of Nambuthiri Brahmins were washed by the Veluthedathu Nayar. They were the village

washermen. The Nambuthiri would free from any pollution once they wear the washed cloth named as *mattu*. The story behind the origin of this occupation is narrated as; *once upon a time a Brahmin was washing clothes for one of his friend and on that account, he was thrown out of caste by Parasurama*. The descendents of this out caste Brahmin became Veluthedathu Nayar. They are the non-vegetarians but do not eat beef and pork. Besides this occupation, they also possessed land as property. They follow the customs from birth to death precisely similar to the Nayars. There is one more subdivision in the Veluthedathu Nayar, which is known as Velakathala Nayar. They are the village barbers for Nayars and for all castes above them.

In respect to the subdivisions among the Nayars, there are some variations that can be seen in different places. The Nayars affix their name as *Karta, Kaimal, Kurup, Panikkar, Menon, Assan, Achan, Mannadiyar* etc., based on their social status. The Nayars follow the *marumakathayam* (the law which regulates succession through the female line) law of succession.

In the past, the Kerala was divided into many *nadus* and *desham* (village) under *deshavazhi* (administrator of desam). Most of this *deshams* were under the control of Nayars. They were also the authority of the chiefs of the military division in these units which was hereditary in their respective families and accordingly appropriate some titles. The Nayars collect taxes from the villagers and they were also the supreme power in the social matters. In later stage of Malabar history some of the Nayar families became independent chieftains with their private properties which became the major sources of their income.

The Nayars follow the ritual practices of Hinduism and worship the deities such as Shiva, Vishnu, and their consorts in temples. They also adore *Bhagavathi* in the form of Kali mostly located in *kavu* (sacred grove) and the goddesses wishes are often interpreted by them through oracles which are known as *velichapad*. Nayars also follow sorcery and believe in animism. The worship of ancestors is found among them and they keep a separate place for ancestral worship adjacent to their house known as *thara* or special rooms.

They were at one time a military caste but in later times some of them became poor and lost their prestige and influence while few families maintain their ancient

position. The subclasses of Nayars, whose occupation were potters, oil mongers; servants and so on abandoned their traditional occupations.

Most of the Nayars in origin part of Bharathappuzha are agriculturists. These includes tenant farmers, agricultural labourers and very few engage in trade. Their sentiments generated by the old feudalism still exist in connection in their relations with other castes during the ritual occasion in temples/*kavus* in a great extent. The community is now well educated and working in government services though there are landlords and farmers among them.

The Nayars are divided into many subdivisions and many of them intermingle through marriage. The exact number of these groups cannot be enumerated as it is disputed whether certain of them have belong to Nayar community or not. The traditional occupation of the Nayars was soldiering but this does not mean that all Nayars were soldiers. The Nayars armies were disbursed in the 18th and early 19th century A.D and they took different professons in the modern times.

Panan

Another major community associated with agriculture in the origin part of Bharathappuzha is the Panan, Paraya and Pulaya who are the agricultural labour. Among the three, the Panan are the notable and dominant caste in this region. The Panan are populated in Pallathen, Elapully and Althur taluks of Palakkad district.[34] They may be the descendants of the hill tribe who have settled in the plains.[35] They belong to Scheduled Caste category. The word '*pana*' means singer. Panan is also called Malayan and Thiruvarangan. They follow matrilineal pattern. The traditional occupation is making Palmyra leaf umbrella. There is no sub caste among the Panans and the caste is endogamous. The caste men belong to different sects known as *kiriyams*. The name of some of the *kiriyams* in Palakkad is puthana kiriyam, Mangat kiriyam, Chera kiriyam, Kaniyathi kiriyam, Kallu kiriyam, Karutha kiriyam and Arriri kiriyam. Every village consists of a few families and live in small thatched huts. These huts are built in one compound wherein their gods are located.

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[34] Data collected from the informents, Sulochana Thichur; Mohanan Erumapetty; Ittyali Arangotukara; Parukutty, Kunjumon, Shrini, Kocha Koratiyam Kunnu Kanjirakode.

[35] L.Anantha Krishna Iyer, *Tribes and Castes of Cochin*, New Delhi: Cosmo Publications, 1981.

Marriage is endogamous and they have a kind of conjugal relation known as *sambhadham* to Nayars. The sons inherit the property of their father. Generally they are poor. There are magicians, sorcerers among them and they also perform for the high caste men. The spirits of Kali, Yakshi, Gandharvan, and Hanuman are propitiated by them with the help of *mantrams* (chants) and offerings. In Palakkad taluk, the attack of any demons in the house of any caste men is suspected, Panans are called to drive the spirits away. In order to gratifying the evil spirits, Panans conduct *homam* (sacred fire) to Kalladikode Neeli (the tutelary deity) and propitiate her with songs and offerings. They also practice black magic (*odi*). Their main gods are Mookan, Chathan, Kappiri, Malankurathi and Kali. These deities are represented by stones under neem or nerium tree and pujas are performed to them on the first of medam (April-May), Karkadakam (July-August) and on Tuesday in Makaram (January-February). They wash the places and offers *malar* (parched rice), plantain, coconuts and rice. They also worship the spirit of their ancestors and fast on new moon lights.

Their traditional occupation is to sing early morning song (*prabhatha ganam*) in the verandah of temple. In the month of Karkadakam (July-August) Panan perform a ritual called Thukilonarthuka (waking from sleep). A Panan with his wife, provided with a drum and *kuzhithalam* (cymbals) goes to the houses of Brahmins and Nayars after midnight and sing sacred songs. In return they get paddy, rice, gingerly oil and coconut. This is intended to drive away evil spirits which are believed to cause trouble in the month of karkadakam (April-July). Another ritual performance known as *Panankali/Pankali* is also performed by them.[36]

The dead bodies of Panans are buried. In Palakkad, when the *kapradan*(head of Panan community) dies, the Raja is informed and he sends to the chief mourner a sword, a shield, a spear, a few small guns with some gun powder for a few discharges, a silver bangle and few necklaces. The chief mourner, his son (wearing the ornaments) follows as the dead body is taken to the burial ground. The persons armed with weapons go in front of it and three discharges are fired. On the sixteenth mourning after the death, the son and his family bath and free from pollution and

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[36] This ritual performance is explained in the forthcoming Chapter VI.

provide feast to others. The next day he pays his respects to the Raja with an umbrella of his own making, when the Raja bestows upon him the title of *kapradan*.[37]

Panans is an umbrella maker. He makes the frame work and the covering is done by the female of his house. The cover is of Palmyra leaves. They also engage in all kinds of agricultural work and also build mud walls. Their women act as mid wives. They receive food from Brahmins and Nayars and abstain from taking the food of all caste men below them. They cannot enter the temples and neither allowed Brahmin Street in Palakkad.[38]

The Panan community praises the name of the deity in a particular *kavu* or temple. They sing the myth of the *kavu* and sometimes sing the Ramayana/Mahabharatha at the request of some house owners. They get money and paddy and cloth in return. After the four days fasting (*vratha*), on the first day of the *parayeduppu* (collection of paddy before the festival in the *kavu*), they will start this performance till the evening. Finally it will end at the *vela* (annual festival on the origin banks of Bharathappuzha) day and they will get blessing from the *Bhagavathi* in the *kavu*. They don't perform this song in the Shiva and Krishna temples. Even now they are continuing this taboo.

Apart from these major communities, the origin part also sustains the comminites such as Aasaaries (carpenter), Pulaya (Agricultural labourers) and Paraya (Bamboo makers).

(b) Middle part of river Bharathappuzha: Major Communities

Legend of Parayipetta Panthiru Kulam

The *Parayipetta Panthiru Kulam,* literally meaning the 'twelve castes born from Paraya woman', is an important legend which highlights the evolution of the social structure on the middle banks of Bharathappuzha. The legend is centred on the village of Shoranur, Pattambi and Thrithala areas i.e., middle part of Bharathappuzha. According to this story, a Brahmin named Vararuchi married a lower caste woman without knowing her true identity.

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[37] M.V Vishnu Namboothiri (ed), *Jeevithavum Samskaravum* (Mal), Vol 4, Kannur: Kerala Folklore Academy, 2004.

[38] G Bhargavan Pillai, *Porattunadakavum Mattum* (Mal), Kottayam: National Book Stall, 1979.

One day Vararuchi, the Brahmin king of Avanthy was invoking the support of the deity living under an aswastha tree (Ficus religiosa). Therein, he overheard a conversation between two Gandharvas on the tree. One of the Gandharva said that Vararuchi would marry a Paraya girl for whose birth the Gandharva attended and gave some offerings. Vararuchi thought that unless that child is put to death, the entire kingdom will be under threat. Accordingly, the little girl was traced, and branded with a nail mark on the forehead and kept in a small open box like object made out of banana plant peelings and then pushed it into the river. The box floated on the river waters along the down stream.

The box was, however, taken possession by a Brahmin who was bathing in the lower course of the river. He opened and found a beautiful girl whom he considered as a divine gift and looked upon her as his daughter. She grew to be a beautiful maiden.

One day the pious Brahmin was looking out for a guest to dine with him and saw Vararuchi passing by, whom he invited. He said he would accept the invitation only on condition that the host would arrange to prepare eighteen curries and give him what remained after feeding hundred Brahmins. The Brahmin host was quite embarrassed at the impracticable demand of his guest, but the step-daughter, who was close by consoled him by the promise that she would satisfy the guest's requirements and wished him to bathe and be ready to dine with him. She took out a long leaf and placed thereon a ginger preparation which corresponded to eighteen curries. A little of boiled rice placed along with it. This corresponded to the food offered to a hundred deities in the performance of the ceremony. Seeing this to be the work of the girl, he eagerly desired to have her as his wife to which the Brahmin readily consented. Vararuchi wedded her and lived a happy married life.

One day, while conversing about their past life he had a chance to see the nail stuck mark over her forehead and knew her to be the girl whom he had caused to be floated down the stream. Consoling himself that he could not avoid the sad irony of fate, he resolved to go on pilgrimage with his wife. Travelling from place to place and worshiping the deities in many temples at last he came to Kerala. During the course of the journey, the woman became pregnant several times, and every time she delivered a baby, Vararuchi would ask her if the baby was born with a mouth. On hearing a positive reply, he would ask her to leave her newborn, with the explanation that the god which gave the mouth would also provide the food. This went on until the twelfth baby was born. This time, the wife got disgusted and lied to the same old question of her husband. On hearing this, Vararuchi asked for the baby. But the mouth of the baby had really disappeared. Vararuchi consecrated the boy as deity on the roadside. The twelve children, except the last one who was left on the roadside taken care by members of different castes.

According to another version of this legend, *Vararuchi was the servant of king Vikramadhitya and belongs to Brahmin caste. One day king asked Vararuchi, which is the important slokas of Ramayana and which is the important sentence. King needs the answer within forty one days. Vararuchi did not get the answer before the last day. He went into a forest and prayed for all humanity and slept. In the forest he saw*

some angels walking on that side and heard them saying to the forest goddesses that they are going to drink the blood of a new baby. But the forest goddesses to accompanying them as Vararuchi prayed before going to sleep for the entire humanity. On the returning journey of angels' forest goddess enquired about the new born. They told that the baby is a girl of Paraya caste and Vararuchi would marry her in future. Vararuchi also heard the answer about the slokas of Ramayana from the angels. According to them, the most important verse was the advice given by Sumitra to Lakshmana, when Sri Rama, Seeta and Lakshmana started for forest exile.

'Ramam Dasaratham vidhhi, maam vidhhi Janakaatmajam
Ayodhya mataveem vidhhi, gaccha thaatha yattha sukham'

(Consider Rama as if he was his father Dasarathan, Seeta as mother
and the forest as Ayodhya; may the journey be a blessed one).

And the most important phrase in it was "Maam vidhi Janakaatmajam" (Consider Seeta as your mother).

Vararuchi then returned to King Vikramaadithyan's court and recited this most important verse of Ramayana which greatly pleased the king who presented Vararuchi with felicitations and he also informed the birth of the Paraya child. Later some Brahmins instructed that one girl was born in the village and the kingdom will collapse when she attains the age of three. King instructed to kill the girl. Vararuchi thought that killing of a girl is a big sin and he made a small boat of plantain tree and put an oil lamp and sends it in the river.

After long years, Vararuchi reached a Brahmin house for food on his journey. There he loved the girl who served him and married her. Later he saw a mark in her head and understood that it was the Paraya girl whom he had cast out in the river and learnt that the Brahmin who hosted him got her out of the river and brought her up as his daughter.

Then the couple went on a pilgrimage and the lady gave birth to eleven children and every child Vararuchi asked her to leave them to the care of gods by asking her that does the child have mouth, if he has, the god will provide food. So he asked to leave the children. Finally at the twelfth birth the lady give answer that the child has no mouth. Actually she told a lie. But when she looked at the child, the child had no mouth and they took the child. All the eleven children who were left by Vararuchi were brought up by different caste people.

The elevan children and their community are given in the following table:

Table No4.4: Eleven children - Their community and Occupation

S No	Name of the Children	Community	Chief occupation
1	Mezhathol Agnihothri	Nambuthiri Brahmin	
2	Naaraanathu Bhraanthan	Ilayathu Nambuthiri (temple servants)	Priestly and agricultural

3	Kaarakkal Maatha	Nayar Naduvazhi (landlord)	pursuits
4	Vaduthala Nayar	Nayar Soldier	
5	Paananaar	Panan (caste of musicians)	Bards
6	Perumthachan	Aasaari (carpenter)	
7	Rajakan	Mannan (washermen)	Artisanary pursuits
8	Paakkanaar	Paraya (Harijan)	
9	Akavoor Chaathan	Pulaya (Harijan)	Agricultural labour
10	Vallon	Valluvar	Servants of Nayar
11	Uppukottan	Muslim	Trade

The twelfth child was Vaayillaakkunnilappan and he was worshipped as deity.

As per the above table the eleven communities belong to different castes and creeds which reside in the middle part of the Bharathappuzha river.

With regard to the **Nambuthiris**, it is already discussed in the earlier passage of origin part of Bharathappuzha. They stand highest in the social hierarchy of Kerala with regard to ritual positioning.

Ambalavasis

The Ambalavasis is a generic name indicates all classes of temple servants in Kerala.[39] The word amabalavasi is originated from *amabalam* and *vasi* which means 'temple' and 'resident' respectively. Each group of amabalavasi community is associated with specific jobs and have fixed duties to perform. The major subgroups in the Ambalavasis include Ilayath, Variyar, Marar, Brahmaniyar and Kallattu Kurup.

Ilayathu

Ilayathu is originally Nambuthiri Brahmin who suffered social degradation for having officiated as priests at the funeral ceremonies of the Nayars. All customs such as *upanayanam* (sacred thread ceremony), marriage, funeral and law of inheritance are similar to the Brahmins. They did not study the Veda and they are their own priest.

Variyar

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[39] Data collected from Achuthan kutty, 67, Kallekulangara; damodaran, 80, Thavanoor; Nandhan, 41,Kuttipuram; Venu, 38, Alathiyoor; Satheesh Kumar,39, Thirur; Shashi, 30, Kodikunnu; Vijayaraja Menon,58, Vaileerikavu; Bhaskara Kuruppu, 59, Irimbiliyam; Chandrashekar, 62, Viruttanam.

Variyar is also one of the Ambalavasis.[40] There are many accounts about the origin of the Variyar community. It is believed that, they are the descendants of a Brahmin married to Sudra women. The word Variyar is derived from '*varuka*' which means to 'sweep'. They are the sweepers of the inner yard of the temple. Another account is that, an old Brahmin married a young lady and they offered flower-garland every day to the village god. In due course she conceived and it is believed that her conception was the result of the god's blessing. The posterity of this lady is known as Variyars. Their occupation is making garlands to the temple deity.[41] They are saivaites and have no *upanayanam*. Variyar dresses in the Brahminical style and use saivaite mark on their forehead. A Variyar marry women of his caste and sometimes formed *sambhandham* with Nayar girl. They follow inheritance from the female line known as *marumakathayam*. Now they are following *makkathayam* system of inheritance.Their dead bodies are cremated in the southern part of their house. Basically they are serving two ways in the temple such as garland making and sweeping. The house of a Variyar is *variyam* and the women are called *Varisar*. They are pure vegetarians. Land is their major economic resource and engaging labour from Pulayan and Paraya community. At present few persons of this community are continuing their traditional occupations. They worship Hindu gods and they are saivaites. Brahmin priests are engaged in performing pujas. They receive cooked food from Nambuthiri and Nayar and keep pollution with the other castes. They had close relation with the Nambuthiris because the Variyar women had *sambhandham* with the Nambuthiri. At the time of puberty and other pollution, they receive the services of the Mannan.

Marars

Marars are the drummers and the musicians in the temples. The name Marar is derived from the Tamil root *mar*, which means 'to beat'.[42] Their customs in connection with inheritance and pollution are similar to Nayar or the Brahmins. They have *sambhandham* with Nambuthiri men. Their own caste men act as priests for

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[40] Data collected from Bharathi Varasyar, 62, Poyilathu; SVS Variyar, 73, Vavanoor.

[41] L.Anantha Krishna Iyer, *Tribes and castes of Cochin*, New Delhi: Cosmo Publications 1981. Pp.138.

[42] Edgar Thurston, *Ethnographic notes in Southern India*, Madras: Government Press, 1906, 1975(reprint).

funeral and other ceremonies. They follow vegetarian food and cremate the dead body. They are also a small land owning community and after the land reform act, they became owners of the land. Many of them still continue their traditional occupations and Nambuthiri priest perform prayers for them and their main instrument is *chenda* (a round percussion instrument). As a drummer in the temples, they keep pollution with lower caste people below the Nayar.

Brahmaniyar or Nambiyar

Brahmaniyar or Nambiyar is another sub-group in the Ambalavasis. There are four classes among the Nambiyars, they are - Pushpakan or Brahmaniyar, Thiyatti Nambiyar, Chakkiyar Nambiyar and Chengazhi Nambiyar. The origin of the sub caste Pushpakan is that, a Brhamin had an intercourse with his wife during her menstrual period, for which they were out casted. In another story, a Brahmin suspected his pregnant wife of adultery and therefore out casted her. She gave birth to a female and died. The child was brought up by Parasurama and in due course married her. Their descendants referred as Pushpakans. They are not eligible to read Veda. As a sub group among Brahmins, they are also known as Brahminiyar.

Their marriage customs are similar to those of Brahmins, but their women had *sambandham* with the Nambuthiri Brahmin. Their woman is known as Pushpinis or Brahmanies. The Brahmaniyar follow the matriarchal systems of inheritance. Their birth and death pollutions last for eleven days, their traditional occupation consists of sweeping the inner grounds of the temples. The males are called Nambissan.

According to Thurston (1975), Pushpakan originate out of the union of a Brahmin woman in her menses with her husband. In another tradition, in primitive ages early marriages prevailed among the Malayala Brahamin (Nambuthiri), the family of the Nambuthiri allowed to marry her daughter before her puberty. So they excommunicated and became the Pushpakan. The Pushpakan sect is distributed in Thrishur, Kozhikode districts. They have resemblance with the Nambuthiri Brahmin in respect of their dress and customs. They are pure vegetarian. Among the Ambalavasis, they occupy the highest position and wear the sacred thread. In the past, the sacred thread (*punool*) wearing ceremony called *upanayanam* was carried out for four days but in the contemporary times it is observed only for one day. They cremate the dead body.

Land is the major economic sources. Most of them have small land holdings and most of the households are associated with a temple in which they perform. Each family is allowed some land by the temple authority. Elders in the family control other members. Those who violate the norms of the community were excommunicated. They formed a caste association Pushpaka Seva Samajam. They worship Vishnu, Shiva, Parvathi, and Bhagavathi. The Nambuthiri priests are engaged for performing pujas. They accept food from Nambuthiri Brhamin and even receive services of Mannan on the occasion of pollutions. The Mannan supply *mattu* cloth to remove the pollution.

Kallattu Kurup

Kallattu Kurup is an Ambalavasi community in Kerala also known as *kalam kurup* as synonym. Male members affix *kurup* to their names. According to the origin story of this community, *a sage by name Thirumanthadavu Maharshi was devotee of Thirumandhavu Bhagavathi. The sage was eager to have the true vision of the goddess and undertook penance and Bhagavathi appeared before him. The sage had an assistant from Nayar community to assist the pujas who was proficient in the art of drawing. Being an artist, he immediately drew the figure of Bhagavathi on a big stone. Then onwards he was called as 'Kallattu Kurup' which means 'one who draws the figures on stones'.* Thereafter, his descendant is known from this name and engaged in the occupation of *kalamezhuthu*, which is an art of drawing the figure of the deity on the floor with the help of colour powders from rice, turmeric, burnt charcoal, paddy husk and dried green leaves. They sing during the drawing of *kalam* (floral drawing) in Bhagavathi shrines. They draw *kalam* in shrines/temples, house of Brahmins as an offering to Bhadrakali during the time of temple rituals. Through the song they narrate the war between Kali and Dharika after drawing the full *kalam* of Bhadrakali. They are populated in Thrishur, Malappuram and Palakkad district of Kerala and follow vegetarian food. They claim that they are equal in rank with the Nayar but below the Nambuthiri Brahmin. Decades ago, the women of the Kallattu Kurup had *sambandham* relationship with the men of the Nambuthiri Brahmin. The children born out of this relationship belonged to the mother's caste and followed matrilineal system of inheritance. At present, it has been changed to patrilineal. Unlike the other Ambalavasi group, women of the Kallattu Kurup have no role to play in temple.

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Kallattu Kurup cremates the dead body. Agriculture and temple service are the major sources of their income. They own land and cultivate it by engaging labourers from other communities like the Pulaya on daily wages basis. The traditional occupation of the Kallattu Kurup is *kalamezhuthu* in Bhagavathi shrines. Some of them follow their traditional occupation. They follow Hinduism and worship Vishnu, Shiva, Ayappa and Bhagavathi. They traditionally do not accept food from communities such as the Pulaya and Mannan and in the past they observed touch pollution with these communities.

Vishwakarma

The chief artisan community of this region is Vishwakarma who believe that they are the descendants of Vishwakarma, the divine architect. Vishwakarma had five sons namely Manu (black smith), Maya (carpenter), Thwasta (moosari), Silpa (sculpture), Viswagna (goldsmith). They specialises in different forms of crafts. They are goldsmith (*tattan*), brass smith (*moosari*), black smith (*karuvan/kollan*), carpenter (*thatchan/aasaari*) and masons (*silpi/kaltachchan*). The five communities are not exogamous. Every village had this group. The term *perumthachan* and *perumkollan* denote great craftsman. Most of them worked under a master craftsman. The community has an important role in the economy of Kerala. Women subordinate the work.[43]

These five castes were the basic element of pre-modern Kerala village. The blacksmith manufactured agricultural tools of production like plough shares, hoes, axes and other implements. Their workshop is erected by the side of their huts and their furnace is a small place. They made weapons such as metal shields, swords, battle axes and javelins for the military group. The gold smiths received orders from the temple and also made jewellery for the palace, temple and also for the upper castes. The *moosaries* (metal workers) supply all kinds of house hold utensils of bronze and temple idols are made by them. The mode of payment to artisan was in paddy. The masons collect stones for house construction, walls and for other purpose. They are also called *shilpiaasaaries*. The *thattans* (goldsmith) make jewellery to the

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[43] Vijaya Ramaswamy, "Vishwakarma Craftsmen in Early Medieval Peninsular India". *JESHO*, 47.4, 2004.

villagers.[44] The houses of the artisan can be recognised from their surroundings that of a carpenter from the wood piled around it, a black smith from the shed with furnace, moosari with small workshop containing metal vessels.[45]

In Kerala, they are also known as *kammalan* which means 'one who lives with same occupation'.[46] The traditional occupations are pursued by the members of each caste and any deviation from the occupation of the community led to excommunication. The origin myth of vishwakarma[47] narrated in the Vishwakarma *puranam* which says that this universe is the creation of both Brahma and Vishwakarama. Five elements formed an egg and the universe originates from the burst of egg. Shiva and Vishnu emerged from it and created Brahma and Vishwakarma respectively. Vishwakarma had five faces and it represent the five crafts. The three were smiths and the rest of two were non-smiths. The colour of the faces of Vishwakarma shows the crafts of each group such as gold for the goldsmith, copper (brass) for the brass smith, black for the blacksmith, stony colour for the mason and a wooden colour for the carpenter. The Kammalans of Kerala are said to have been migrated from the Tamil Nadu to Malabar in the beginning of the 9th C.[48] They are listed in the OBC category of Kerala government.

Besides the *tali* tying marriage in their own caste, the Kammalans women had *sambhandham* with Nayars. Among the Kammalans the law of succession to property is in the patriarchal and women do not have any share in the family property. They have their caste assemblies which consist of the elderly members of the entire sub group. They meet special occasions of the community.

They worship Kali and Bhagavathi and also follow other deities of Nayars and other castes. Their dead bodies are buried. The Kurup is the priest who performs all

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[44] Data collected from the informant Sudheesh Pariyanampetta.

[45] Kaanipayoor Shankaran Namboothiripadu, *Manushyalaychandrika* (Mal), Kunnamkulam: Panchangam Books.

[46] Data collected from the informents, Bharathi, 53, Nellikattiri; Chandran, 60, Nellikattiri; Sudheesh, 16, Mulayankavu.

[47] Vijaya Ramaswamy, "Vishwakarma Craftsmen in Early Medieval Peninsular India"in *JESHO*, 47.4. 2004.

[48] Edgar Thurston, *Ethnographic notes in Southern India*, Madras: Government Press, 1906, 1975(reprint).

these rituals. There is always a great demand for the labour of these artisan classes and they earn high wages.

All the subdivisions of the Vishwakarma have the practice of inter-dining but never intermarry. When the services of the different group of the Kammalans are required for the construction of a temple, they bath early morning, go to the temple and the Nambuthiri priest gives them each a holy thread and starts their work. Further they also consult their mothers before going to work and if they are not ready to give them permission, they stay away from the work.

Aasaaries

Aasaaries (carpenters) are non-vegetarian and the descent is from the father's side. Father is the head of the family. They follow *makkathayam* system of inheritance and all the subdivisions cooperated in others work. The Aasaari designed the traditional houses of Brahmins *nalukettu* (mansions) based on the principles of *vasthu*. They make wooden materials for construction of buildings, furniture and agricultural implements. The Aasaaries are Hindus and worship Vishnu, Shiva, Bhagavathi, and Ganapati and also worship lord Vishwakarma. The Brahmin priests are invited to perform certain *pujas* in their houses. They also participate in the village festival of the Bhagavathi shrines. On the occasion of ceremonies, the five groups of Kammalans invite each other.

Musaries

Musaries (deal with bronze metal) are said to be the descendants of Tvashtas and they are non-vegetarian and do not eat beef and pork. Descend through the father and they are an endogamous group and follow patriarchal system of inheritance. The musaris generally make house hold utensils like goblet (*kindy*), frying pan (*uruli*), lamp (*vilaku*). They make the mould of the vessels first by using earth and cow dung. Wax is applied to this mould. Later metal is poured into it and heated for some time. They make the vessels as per the requirements of the villagers. All the Kammalans seeks the service of Mannan during the time of pollution.

Thattan

The Thattan known as *swarna panikaran* (gold smith) are non-vegetarian and do not eat beef and pork. In the past, property was divided equally only among the sons but now women also have the right in property distribution. Most of the

Kammalans do not own any cultivable land. They follow the occupation of jewellery manufacture which includes setting of stones, designing of silver and gold ornaments. All the Kammalans accept cooked food from Brhmin, Nayar and Ambalavasis and do not accept food from lower communities.

Kollan

The Kollan (blacksmith) also called as *Karuvan* are non-vegetarian and avoids beef and pork. Endogamy is the marriage rule. Patrilineal (*makathayam*) is the system of inheritance. Eldest son is the head of the family. The bodies of Kammalans are buried. The kollans are the traditional black smiths. They manufacture locks, keys, agricultural implements and small weapons. They have access to the temples and they lived in the lands of Nambuthirs and Nayars. After the land reform Act, some of them have got land.

Mannan

The Mannan is the washermen community in Kerala.[49] The word 'mannan' comes from 'mannuthan' which means, one who washes soiled clothes. Their traditional occupation is washing. They are also known as vannan because people use the sound 'va' instead of 'ma'.[50] There is no sub caste among the Mannan. The origin of Mannans is reflected in the following story:

Once when god Parameshwaran and his wife Parvati were trying to entertain each other, the latter made an elephant with earth which was accidentally trodden by the former, whence arise a man who stood bowing before them. He was called the Mannan because he came out from mun (earth) and to him was assigned his present occupation, which is washing.

The above narrative recites in song form on the fourth day of a girl's first menses, when she takes ceremonial bath to be free from pollution. The Mannan is found all over the middle part of Bharathappuzha banks and live in thatched huts in coconut garden of some landlords. They are very poor and use earthen utensils. Son's

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[49] Data collected from Kutty Shankaran, 58, Varavoor; Devaki, 54, Varavoor; Shivashankaran, 45, Palakkal; Govindan, 53, AArangotukara; Susheela, 54, Vavanoor; Anil Kumar, 35, Vaavanoor; Janaradhanan, 60, Chandanakavu.

[50] Chummar Chundal, *Mannan* (Mal), Kozhikode: Poorna Books, 1979.

inherits the property of their fathers. They have their caste assemblies, which consists of the elderly members who meet on all occasions affecting the welfare of the caste men and their decisions are final.

Mannans practice magic and sorcery. With the help of certain *mantram* (chants) and *bhasmam* (holy ashes) they propitiate goddess of small pox. They worship Chandan, Mundan, Kandakarnan, Karinkutty and Chathan all of whom are separately represented by stones. It is located underneath a tree in the corners of their compounds and offers rooster, coconut, parched rice to them on the tenth of Dhanu (last week of December), on Tuesday in Makaram (January-February) and on Kumbha Bharani (March-April). Chathan, Mundiyan, Kandakarnan, Karikutty and Malavazhi are the other deities of Mannan community. For devotion they sing songs in respect of the above deities. Each Mannan family has the *thara* (small shrine) of these deities.[51]

They adore goddess Bhagavathi and the spirits of their departed ancestors, who are believed to exercise their influence in the families of those people for every good and bad. Wooden images representing the spirit of their departed ancestors are located in a room of their house and worshipped with offerings on the death anniversary and other auspicious day.

The Mannans bury their dead body. The chief occupation is the giving of *mattu* (a washed cloth) to Nayars to wear before going to bath the day on which they are freed from pollutions. All the members in the family are to wear *mattu* during birth, menstrual and death pollutions on the 16th day. After bath, they wear the washed cloth and return it as soon as the bath is over. It may either belong to the washer man or have been previously given to him by the members of the family. He gets money and paddy for his service to the woman in the menses and birth pollutions.

Mannans refuse to give the *mattu* to low caste people. They first plunge the dirty clothes in water, mixed with cow-dung and beat them on a stone by the side of a tank and then immerse the clothes again in water, mixed with wood ashes (*charam*), after which they are exposed to steam for a few hours and again beat them on the stone, until they appears to be clean. They are then dried in the sun. When the clothes

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[51] M.V Vishnu Namboothiri, *Theeyattum Ayyappankoothum* (Mal), Kottayam: Current Books, 2000.

are dried they are neatly folded. They stand far away from the shrines and temples of high caste men.

The Mannan is distributed in the plain region of Bharathppuzha banks that is middle part. They belong to the Scheduled Category. They are non-vegetarian but do not eat beef and pork. A small number in the community poses cultivable land. Marriage alliances formed outside the community is regarded as offence and offenders are excommunicated. Now they have registered caste association namely, Mannan Maha Sabha works for the development of the community. They participate in the annual festivals of the Bhagavathi shrine with their ritual form, namely *thira and poothan*. They accept food from the Brahmins and Nayars but do not accept food from Pulayan and Paraya. They adorn themselves as the representative of goddess during the festival in the village shrine/temple.

Paraya

The Paraya belong to a lower caste of the middle Kerala next to the Pulaya.[52] The word Paraya is derived from '*para*' a percussion instrument (drum). At the time of *desavazhi* regime, all official orders were informed to the public in the street with the beat of the drum. It was the duty of Parayan to do this.

The Parayan delight in drum beating and are generally called on to act as drummers at funerals, marriages and village festivals. They are the agricultural labourers and manufacture of drums by tanning the leather from animals. Apart from this main occupation they also make baskets, bamboo mats grass mats, leather workers cobblers and umbrellas. Men supply bamboo to their women. They are treated as lowest of low castes. Their presence carries pollution to the members of high castes and cannot draw water from the wells of high caste. They take part in the festival and in the ordinary days, they cannot enter the temple. They belong to scheduled category who inhabit near the hill side. They were skin tappers of the animals and it was their right to bury the dead animal.

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[52] Data collected from Rajamani, 45, Palakkad; Karappan, 67, Kottathara; Kunjikuttan Choppan, 69, Kuttippuram; Vijayan Choppan, 66, Kuttippuram; Kurumban, 53, Chandhanakavu; Subrahmaniyan, 55, Vellarakkad; Velayudhan, 65, Varavoor; Unni, 42, Varavoor; Dillep, 24, Varavoor; Mani, 65, Varavoor; Paarutty, 53, Varavoor; Appu Thonukara,60, Thonukara paraya colony; Shankaran, 45, and Chandran49, Erumapetty.

It is believed that Paraya community originate from the improper/undesirable relationship between a Brahmin woman and a low caste man. There are many rituals and beliefs found among the Paraya community which is very similar to the *adivasi* (tribes) community. Most of the rituals are still continuing without any obstacles. The *Dharikavadham* is one of the ritual performances of paraya community on *Bharathappuzha* banks during ritual performance of the shrine.

There are three main opinions prevalent regarding their origin.[53] They are the descendants of the Tamils who may have immigrated to Kerala during early times; Descendants of a high caste Hindus who suffered social degradation for eating meat; Descendants of Pakanar, one of the twelve sons of Vararuchi with a low caste woman.

Though the Paraya occupy a low and despicable position in the places where they live, they still cherish the memory of their former greatness and regard themselves as original owners of the soil. Parayan are found in almost everywhere in the rural parts of Kerala. They follow *marumakathayam* law of inheritance. Caste assembly of senior members of the caste meet for important matters. They have no temples of their own, even though they worship Kali and Shiva. The Chathan and Karimkutty[54] are their minor gods. In every village, there are small Bhagavathi shrines for the deity in which they are devoutly attached and who look to their aid in times of illness such as fever, small pox, and cholera and also in times of personnel calamities.

They take part in the annual festival connected with the shrine. A few days before the festival, a piece of cloth is given to their oracle. A piece of red cloth is worn around his neck and few small bells (*chelamba*) tied on a string, round his leg. On the other hand, one person from this caste carry a basket of paddy on his head, two persons with drums, another with pipe goes to every Brahamin and Nayar houses and get paddy and continues to do so for seven days. On the festival day, the *velichapadu* (oracle) and other members of the caste go to a hut put up at a distance from the

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[53] K.S Singh, *People of India, Kerala*, New Delhi: East West Press, 2002.

[54] Chathan is the child born from the relation of Shiva and Koolivaka, a tribal woman. Karinkutty is the assistant of Chathan. See Geoffrey A. Oddie, *Religious conversion movements in South Asia: continuities and change, 1800-1900*, United Kingdom: Curzon Press, 1997; R. Raman Nair and L. Sulochana Devi, *Chattampi Swami: An Intellectual Biography*, Trivandrum: Centre for South Indian studies, 2010.

shinre (*kavu*) and delight themselves by dancing and singing to the accompaniment of drum, in honour of the goddess. They spend day and night and depart only in the morning. The performing party is given three measures of rice for their work by the temple authorities before they return home. It is performed on the day of festival. The collection of the paddy is also known as *para* (another meaning of Para is drum).

On the first of every month, they perform a ceremony known as *kalasam* on behalf of the spirits of the departed. They prepare fish, meat, toddy, rice, banana, coconut, *papadam* and put them on a long leaf in front of a lighted lamp. They stand in front of the ancesrtral shrine (*thara*) with prayerful attitude for a shortwhile and say, "dead ancestors, come and take these and protect us". The *velichapadu* (oracle) take the lead role and mediaite between them and the spirits. They have no temples but called as *daivapura* (a small hut containing stones) in front of their huts. They make burial for the dead body.

Paraya is also named as *sambavar*. The origin of the word 'sambavan' is from *samba* meaning Shiva. They consider as the descendents of the Pakanar lineage (*vamsham*) which originate from Nambuthiri Brahmin. The Parayan are non-vegetarian and eat beef. Their traditional caste council headed by an *avgasi* existed.

The main role of the sacred specialist '*karmi*' is to perform life cycle rituals and territorial rituals to protect or remove evil spirits. The umbrella is considered as a symbol of prosperity. In the past, during the marriage ritual, the parents has given an umbrella to the bridegroom as a dowry believing that their future life will be protected because Bhagavathi will be in the umbrella. There are different kinds of umbrella prevailed in the area such as, *vellattu velakkuda* (for festival), *marakkuda* (for nambuthiri ladies), *thoppikuda* (for the paddy field), and *children kuda* (for the children in entertainment). For the making of the umbrella for rituals in shrine (*kavu*) in each area (desham) a family is entruated with the right to do so within this com munity.

Pulayan

The Pulayan is one of the important communities that live in the middle part of the banks of Bharathappuzha.[55] They work as serfs in agricultural field. In the

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[55] Data collected from Madhavan,20, Mulayankavu; Shankaran,55, Maruningal; Kunjan, 75, Painkulam; Rajan, 38, Varavoor; Kamala, 57, Bhadramkulam.

northern part of Kerala, they are known as *cherumans*. They speak Malayalam amalgamated with Tamil words and consider that, they are the descendants of the original inhabitants of Kerala who must have been Tamil speaking, because the earliest form of the Malayalam language was *kodumtamil* (the oldest form of Tamil).[56]

There are different versions about the origin of the name Pulayan. The word *Pulayan* is derived from the word *pulam* means 'field' or 'place'.[57] The name Cherumans or Cheramakal is said to signify 'the sons of the soil'. Other opinion is that they are the *cherimakkal* (little children) and the name originates from the word cherimakal.[58] Malabar was part of ancient Chera kingdom. The cheras/cherumans may originate from the word 'cheranad'. Pulayans is also referred as kanakar. There is another story regarding the origin of Pulayan. They got a boon from god Shiva, along with a spade and an axe, the right to clear forest, to cultivate lands and to own them. When other people especially Nambuthiris reached Kerala, they captured the land of Pulayans and degraded the workers of the paddy field.

Considering the labour in the field, the Pulayans performed as the property of the *tampurans* (landlord). A man or woman work in the field and received a small number of paddies as reward which was not regularly paid to the landlord. In ancient times, slaves or Pulayans were transferred to the landlord in three modes: (i) *jenm* (sale) where the full value of the Pulayans was given and the property was entirely transfered to a new master (ii) *kanom* (mortgage) the proprietor received as a loan to show that his right over them still existed (iii) *pattom* or rent in this case for an annual sum, the master lent them to another man who commanded their labour and supported them. In fact the Pulayans were treated as slaves but these practices were later abolished by the Britishers in 1862.[59]

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[56] Joseph Mathew, *Ideology, protest and social mobility case study of Madras and Pulayas*, New Delhi: Inter-India Publications, 1986.

[57] The word Pulayans is derived from 'pula' meaning pollution. See L.Anantha Krishna Iyer, *Tribes and castes of Cochin*, Vol 1, New Delhi: Cosmo Publications 1981.

[58] K.S. Sing, *People of India-Kerala*, New Delhi East: West Press, 2002.

[59] K. Saradamoni, *Emergence of a Slave Caste: pulayas of Kerala*, New Delhi: People's House, 1980.

There were *janmis* (landlords) gave a small measure of paddy for the hardwork in the field during day time and for watching crops at night. There are subdivisions in Malabar among the Pulayans. The most important are Kanaka cherumans, Pulacherumans, Eralans, Koodans and Rolans. A proper classification in the order of social precedence becomes difficult because each group claiming superiority over the other.

Their inhabitation is generally called *mattams* constructed on the side of the paddy field so that they could watch the crops at night as they were polluted caste. The roof of the house thatched either with Palmyra or coconut leafs and sometimes the huts are made of mud walls.

Their marriage is endogamous. Marriage between the members of the same village or *koottam* (clan) does not generally permit. The system of inheritance is through sons. They have no real property. Pulayans has their assembly which consists of the elderly members of the caste. The head of the assembly called *vallon* or *valiyavan* (great man) preside their meeting, marriage, funeral and other ceremonies.

Their gods are Chathan and Karimkutty and they worship the spirits of their ancestors. Offerings to these gods are given in the month of Karakadakam (July-August), *makara sankranthi* (January) and other auspicious days. One of the Pulayans becomes *velichapd* (oracle) and speaks to the assembly. They are also devout to Kali or Bhagavathi, whose aid is invoked in all times of danger and illness. They participate in the village festivals celebrated in honour of goddess. Their priest is one of their own caste men.

The chief festival in which Pulayan take part is *pooram* (annual festival of Bhagavathi shrine on the middle banks of Bharathappuzha). This is an important festival held in the village Bhagavathi shrine/temples. The members of all castes take part and held either in *kumbham* (february-march) or in *meenam* (march-april). Toy oxes are made and attached to long bamboo poles and carried to the shrine. They dance to the accompaniment of rhythm of drum. The oracle goes in front of them and praying in honour of deity and they return home.

Pulayans celebrates *vittiduka* (harvest) festival. Pulayans are by occupation agricultural labourers and takes part in every kind of agricultural work such as fencing, ploughing, sowing, weeding, transplanting, reaping, pumping out of water,

thatching farm houses and watching the field of their landlords. Changes have occurred in their life style. Father is the head of the family. With the land reforms acts and due to the other social factors there have been improvements in their working conditions and wages. They accept food from high caste and not *vice versa*. In the past they were not permitted to enter the houses of high castes and the temple. They also construct wall with bamboos and known as *Mulayans* (bamboo).

Kusavan

In Kerala, the Kusavan are distributed in the district of Kozhikode, Malappuram and Thrishur.[60] Generally ten to fifteen families are found at one place. Males are called Kusavan, whereas females are called Kusuti. They are also known as Kumbaran which means pottar. The word Kusavan is said to have derived from the Sanskrit word, '*ku'* signifying earth, the material in which they work and *avan*, means a person (Thurston, 1975). The origin story of the Kusavan is that they are descended from a Brahmin father and Sudra mother. L. A. Iyer (1981) stated that they are immigrants from the Tiruchirapali of Tamilnadu. The Kumbara community is one of main community which intermingle with the banks of Bharathappuzha River. It is believe that they migrated from Andhra Pradesh years back. One who makes *kumbam* (pot) is called kumbaran.[61] There are five subdivisions among them whereas two subdivisions have disappeared and only five groups remain namely: Patakadan, Chelavan, Samudri, Jogan and Puliyantham. These five groups must participate in all the ritual of Kumbaran.

A myth exists on the origin of this caste. When *Devas* was doing *pujas* in *devaloka*, they did not get pot to make main *karmas*. They informed this to Shiva and Shiva plucked his hair and beaten it on his thighs and created one human being. He asked him to make a pot. Shiva gave his sweat as clay, Vishnu provided his *sudharshan chakra* as wheel and in order to turn the wheel, Shiva gave his *thishool* (trident) and *poonool* (sacred thread) to remove the pot from the wheel. After that Shiva put his saliva on the pot and asked the man to remove the polluted saliva. Shiva advised him to burn and pronounces *chudu kushava*. Thereafter they are known as

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[60] Data collected from the following Informants: - Gopalan Ezhumangad Kumbra colony; Rajan, Ammini, Krishnankutty, Chamy Pallam Kumbara colony.

[61] M.V Vishnu Namboothiri (ed), *Jeevithavum Samskaravum* (Mal), vol 2, Kannur: Kerala Folklore Academy, 2004.

Kushavan. The time of their arrival to their present habitat is not known. They are among one of the other backward communities (OBC) in Kerala.

The Kushavan are known vegetarians. They are an endogamous group. If a person marries outside the caste he is excommunicated. They bury the dead body. The major economic activity is pot making and they are still following this traditional occupation. Generally black clay (*kalimannu*) is used for pottery. Bricks and tiles are also made by them. Few of them are engaged as labourers. The marketing of pot is done mainly by the females. Now days, they have cooperative society for marketing pots.

In the past, they used to give pots to the Nayars, on whose land they lived. They have a council of elders and they act at the time of marriage, divorce and remarriage. In all the occasion, the elder members of the community meet under the headship of the *pattakaran* (headman). Women assist men in their work. People use their pot for cooking and also on occasions of feasts and rituals. They are Hindus and worship Vishnu, Shiva and Bhagavathi. They used to take food from almost all the castes. Their main deity is Mariamman[62], Hanuman and Veerabhadran.[63]

The elders of the five sub group were firstly served food by them in any ritual occasion. Before starting to make pot in the shed (*ala*) they decide the date. They live in colonies and settled in interior villages located in the river basin and paddy fields. This is obviously related to the raw material availability. The work area is mostly located adjacent to the homes. Most of the settlements have a shrine which is common to all the families. A male member from within their own community functions as the priest. They live under their kiln roof and in Bharathppuzha banks they are settled in Shornur, Parali, Thrithala, Alathur, Vadakancheri, Painkulam and Tirumitakode.

Embrantiris

Apart from the above communities that live in the middle part of the banks of the Bharathappuzha there are certain other communities who are migrated from

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[62] Mariamman is the goddess of small pox.

[63] Veerabhadra created by Shiva. Sati, the consort of Shiva self immolated in the *Yagna* (sacrifice) fire of Daksha. Shiva became furious after hearing the death of Sati; he tore a lock of his hair and from that the Lord Veerabhadra born as a son. Shiva asked him to kill Daksha. Sister Niveditha and Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, *Myth and legends of the Hindus and Budhists*, Kolkata: Kessinger Publishing, USA, 2001 reprint 2011.

Karnataka and Northern Malabar are also found in this region. The foremost who deserve mention is Embrantiris who are the Brahmins migrated from the South Canara to Kerala. These Tulu Brahmins settled in Malabar are known as Embrantiris or Embrans.[64] They are settled mostly in the ending part of Bharathappuzha especially the Cochin states and follow *Sama Veda*. The Embrans acting as priests in temples and sometimes they assist Nambuthiries in ritual. They perform pujas in the style of Nambuthiries.

The above description of communities in the middle part on the banks of Bharathappuzha shows the distribution of communities based on occupation and engagement. They are:

- ➢ Temple servants include Brahmin and other groups.
- ➢ Occupational classes such as Kammalans, Kumbarans, etc.
- ➢ Settlement of agricultural labourers.

The demography of Bharathappuzha banks is peculiar. In middle part, settlements are intermingled and each community has their own identity in relation to the other community, which is a kind of 'participatory identity'. There were some instances of the break of the relation of community in central bank which led to the feudal rebellion in the central part. The legend of *parayipetta panthiru kulam* is the prime example of the participatory identity of the community. The identity of each community has been controlled by the collective consciousness. This collective consciousness is reflected in the ritual performances of this landscape.

The villages on the middle banks of Bharathappuzha have been centred by paddy fields which help the flood plain from the river. Most of the fields get water from the river through canal about two kilometres. Pady fields are fertile and farmers are seeking to increase the product. Paddy is the predominant crop in most of the cultivated area of the middle part. Coconut is the dry land crop planted next to the paddy. They even cultivate tapioca, areca and banana. Rubber plantings have widespread. They displaced some of these crops and also cleared the forest for vast land for rubber cultivation. In short, middle banks are a paddy growing area from the Bharathappuzha water.

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[64] Data collected from Narayanan Embranthiri, 48, Rayamangalam; Chandrasekhar Virutanam.

Land holding of this area was dominated by the Nambuthiri Brahmins. The agrarian structure has been changed because of the land tenure act of 1950 and 1960. The lower castes and sub tenants such as Pulaya, Paraya, and Mannan have got their own agricultural land. The large tenants such as Nayar have now holding few acres of land. Even though, very few Nambuthiri have moved away from this locality. The migration outside of India including the gulf countries was very low in the middle part. People of this area find new opportunities in the growing commercial area surrounding them than in migration out of the locality and country.

It is very clear that, the investment direction have been changed from agriculture. The transportation network and population density leads to different marketing outlets and schools on these localities. Various socio-economic and political elements create social mobility among the communities. They are capable to construct their houses instead of living in a house on the landlords. This upward mobility creates the structural changes of the relationship of the communities and leads to the rise of new land owners and the marketing of land. Breaking the feudal and patriarchal past through education helped the emancipation of lower caste/communities.

The newly educated unemployed generation are not ready to work in the agricultural sector. This caused the higher labour demand. Farmers are using land for other purposes than paddy cultivation. The large farmers who are able to get two crops a year have interest in paddy cultivation. Even though, they are not ready to buy additional land for paddy cultivation.

In another sense, they are replacing rubber and coconut in the place of paddy. Farmers get good prices for rubber and coconut. The labour days are few once the rubber and coconut plant are established.

The above reason will provide the rise of a new middle class life style in the new generation. This new generation is the rural area and their numbers are increasing every year. The new shift of earning income and change of life style creates consequences in the social environment. The decline of common interest in farming sector, the bond among the various local communities has weakened. People start to move in new social settings with the generality of roles and relation. The emergence of new class in villages creates social change in the communities of middle banks.

(c) End part: Major Communities

Izhuvan (illavan) is a wide spread caste in Kerala.[65] They are called as Tiyans in Malabar and as Izhuvan in central and south Kerala. The etymology of the word, Tiyan is from *dweepan* which means islander, while Izhuvan denote one who belongs to *izham* or people of izham which is an old name of Ceylon (Sri Lanka).[66] It is believed that, Izhuvans or tiyans are migrated from Ceylon to Malabar and they have brought the coconut and palmyra palms to Kerala. The occupation of this community is climbing the coconut tree and toddy taping.

According to the story, the King Illa of Ceylon went to Chidhambaram which was ruled by the Chola kings to attend the religious discussion between the Buddhists priests and the Saivaite devotees known as Manickiavachakar. After the discussion, the King Illa converted to Saivaite faith. His descendants are known as the illavans.[67]

The Izhuvans are divided into *illams* and *kiriyams* (family groups). They have settled inhabitation and lived in small huts with mud walls and the richer Izhuvans have their big houses. Marriage between members of the same locality is permissible and marriage is exogamous. When the girl attains puberty or other pollution, Izhuvan women wears the *mattu* clothes brought by Mannan community. Without the clothes one cannot be freed from pollution. In Central (south Malabar), they follow *makkathayam* law of inheritance where as in South and North Malabar they follow *marumakathayam*.[68]

In the past, they had a council of thirty two elder men of their caste in the village and settle all disputes connected with the caste and their decisions were final. In south Malabar, they used to meet under a *pandali illipa*, a shed under the *ilippa* tree (Bassia Latifolia). The head of this council is *thandan*, who compelled to obey the orders of Nayar and Nambuthiri Brahmin. Within the council, six members are

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[65] Data collected from Dinesh Kumar, Age 47, Athaniparambu; Subheesh 31, Kodungaloor; Krishnankutty, 70, Ponnani, Sunilkumar 24, Ponnani; Shivanandhan, 53 Thrikkavu; Ramchandran 75 Ponnani; Kadungan Krishnan, 51,Purathoor; Balan, 59 Pulooni; Raman (Apootan), 73, Pathamkulathi; Balan, 71, Thavanoor; Pradeepan, 35, Thavanoor; Velayudhan, 66, Ponnani; Padmanabhan, 58, Ponnani; Mohanan, 41, Pallivalappu.

[66] William Logan, *Malabar*, New Delhi: Asian Educational Services, 1989.

[67] L.Anantha Krishna Iyer, *Tribes and castes of Cochin*, Vol 1, New Delhi: Cosmo Publications 1981.

[68] M.V Vishnu Namboothiri, *Theyyam*, Thiruvananthapuram: State institute of Languages, 1998.

elected as *kaikkars* (managers) and they conduct preliminary enquiries about social disputes.[69]

Izhuvans profess Hinduism and are worshippers of Shiva than of Vishnu, who is the deity. Some of the minor deities whom the Izhuvans worship are Chathan, Parakutty, Karimkutty and Kandakarnan. Ancestor worship is another form of belief among the Izhuvans. It is also considered that if they are unable to provide proper funeral rites to the departed soul after the burial, the spirits of the men or women (the dead body) cause vengeance on the living and creates misfortunes (*pretha bhadha*) to the respective families. The poor among the Izhuvan bury their dead, while the rich men cremate them. The priest is the member of their own community and plays an important part in all the ceremonies of the caste and well rewarded for their services.

The hereditary occupation of the community from the beginning is cultivating of the coconut and palmyra palms, toddy drawing and arrack distilling. They also manufacture jaggery from toddy. The Izhuvan organised under a registered association called Sree Narayanan Paripalana Yogam for the religious and social advancement of the members of the community.

Their status in society was very low in former years. They treated with contempt by the members of the higher caste such as Nayar and Nambuthiri. The Izhuvans abstain from taking food of the Kammalans and other low castes. They have their own barbers. They also worked as agricultural labourers under the Nambuthiri and Nayars. Most of them lived besides the house of high caste. They worked as military in the North Malabar and well trained in the weapon. As population increases, Izhuvans and other castes of Kerala engaged into various occupations to which they easily gain access.

Mappilas

Muslims in Kerala are densely populated in the Malabar area and are known as Mappilas. The Mappilas are found all over the banks of Bharathappuzha and they are densely populated on the ending part of Bharathappuzha, i.e Ponnani and Tirur. The non-Hindu migrants in Kerala are generally known as *Mappila*. Kerala Muslims are recognized as '*Jonaka Mappila',* Kerala Christians are called '*Nasrani Mappila',* and Kerala Jews are termed as '*Juta Mappila'*. The word mappila is a compound

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[69] Sajeevan Azhikkode, *Theyyathile Jaathivazhakkam* (Mal), Kottayam: Current Books, 2007.

word *maha* (great) + *pillai* (child or son-in law) which denote honoured status.[70] As time progressed the ethnic composition of Kerala Jewish and Christian communities diversified and '*Mappila*' came to be used only to refer to the Muslims. During the period of European, Muslims lost their profession i.e., trade and commerce; and many were forced to migrate to the interior parts of Kerala and acquired rural cultural traits in due course. Basically, Kerala Muslims are born out of hybridization of two traditions. On the maternal side, they absorb Hindu customs and on the paternal side, they incorporate aspects of the Muslim faith which are largely local variants of it. The reason is that, the early Arab traders married local women in the coastal region. Large number of converts is from the Tiyans (izhuvans) and also from the Pulaya community.

At the linguistic level, the everyday language of Kerala Muslims is *Malayalam* but they follow Arabic language for their religious studies. Unlike the North Indian Muslims and Deccani Muslims (Hyderabad Muslims), the Mappilas do not use Urdu language in everyday life. Mappila Muslims are scattered in different parts of Kerala and intermingle with people of other faiths. This has influenced their food habits, dress, customs and manners. At the political level, on 10th March 1948, the Mappilas formed a party known as 'Muslim league' and it took a moderate stand in the political issues of the State.

The Malabar Muslims or Mappilas construct and maintain the shrines over the graves of holy men (saints and martyrs) with a belief that the sites are blessed due to the mystical presence of the spirits of the saints. Muslim saints are also referred as *wali* (*awliya*), *peer* and *shaikh* and are believed to have the ability to perform miracles. The devotees make *nercha* (votive offering) in the form of cash, kind or even as worship. Worship as votive offering includes recitation of the *Quran*, ritual performance at holy sites like Mosques, *dargas* (graves of the saints), in the believers' houses or in public places.[71] Besides the general festival, special festival called *nercha* are connected with particular localities and mosques. The major places for *darga nerchas* (offering to the grave of the saints) on the banks of Bharathappuzha are Valiyangadi and Ponnani.

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[70] R.E Miller, *Mappila Muslims of Kerala: A Study in Islamic Trends*, Bombay: Orient Longman, 1976.

[71] V. Kunhali, *Sufism in Kerala*, Calicut: Publication Division, University of Calicut, 2004.

The Arab traders were settled on the west part (Ponnani and Tirur) area in the seventh century. The *Mappilas* created a trade relationship with Zamorins of Calicut and later they became the heads of naval force of Zamorins. The arrivals of the Europeans led the end of Arab trade carried by the *Mappilas*.

The *Mappilas* generally live in towns near the sea-coast and very few of them live in interior parts of Kerala. They are engaged in trade which induces them to settle in small towns than village. Agriculture is another occupation and each family resides in detached from their agricultural land. The houses of the wealthy *Mappilas* are like those of the Nayars and Nambuthiries but the poorer classes live in small houses.

Polygamy was very much prevalent among the *Mappilas*. In South Kerala *Mappilas* follow inheritance in the male line while in the North Malabar; their inheritance is through the female line. But in some places, i.e Ponnani, Parapannagadi and Tirur (south Malabar), a man's family property goes to his nephews and his self-acquisitions to his sons and daughters.

The *Mappilas* belong to the Shafi School of the Sunni sect. Magic is condemned by the *Quran*. The Mappilas are very superstitious and follow witch craft. Many priests cure diseases with the aid of charms and amulets. The Mappila *jins* (spirits) and *shaitans* (demons) correspond to the Hindu demons and are propitiated in the same way.

The *Mappilas* are engaging in all grades of work. The most on the coast are traders. Those in the interiors are both traders and agriculturalists. A large numbers of them are engaged in coolly work. The *Mappilas* were a class of illiterate. Those who are educated can only recite portions from the *Quran*. Nowadays, *Mappilas* are engaged with all streams of Modern education.

The *Mappilas* have a wide spread distribution on the banks of Bharathappuzha. In the past, males used to wear *topi* (cap) with *dhothi* (lower garments) and *baniyan*. At present there is no distinctive dress specific to the community. The dead body of the Mappilas are buried. A council known as *Mahal -jamat* functions as a socio-religious body. The executive committee of *Mahal-jamat* is elected by the people of the *Mahal* and the executive committee appoints *kazi*. He is the head of the *jamat* and all disputes are settled by him.

From the above discussion, it is evident that the banks of Bharathappuzha being fertile attracted all communities even from historical times to the present. However, the settlement pattern reveals that the tribals and indiginious communities who are the inhabitants of the banks and hilly terrains of Bharathappuzha replaced or subdued by the process of 'Aryanisation' wherein the '*jatis*' (occupational ranking i.e. castes) of upper '*varna*' (ritual ranking) encouraged to immigrate into the Kerala soils and expand the settled agrarian economy. The 'Parasurama myth' and the 'Vararuchi legend' as explained above attest to this fact. The Bharathappuzha banks are much used for acculturation of native communities into the 'Hindu fold' by attributing mythical origin and relationship between the 'Aryan *Varna* system and the native *jati* matrix'. As a result the social hierarchy emerged on one hand negating the 'Aryan *varna* system' and on the other incorporating it with the native hierarchical system. This paradox is quite visible in the ethno centric overtones of the lower starta of the society and often reflected as anti-barhminical attitude especially, against Nambuthiri-Nayar alliance.

Th following table and daigram shows the social hierarchy based on ritual ranking on the banks of Bharathappuzha.

Table No 4.5: Major Communities on the banks of Bharathappuzha

Origin Part	Middle Part	End Part
Nambuthiri Brahmin	Nambuthiri Brahmin	Nambuthiri Brahmin
		Embranthiri Brahmin
	Ambalavasi (Kurupu, Menon, Nambiyar)	
Palakkad Pattar Brahmin		
Nayar	Nayar	Nayar
Pulavar		
Anduran		
Vishwakarma	Vishwakarma	
	Mannan	
		Tiyan (Izhuvan)
Panan		
Pulaya	Pulaya	
Paraya	Paraya	
		Muslims (Mappilas)
	Christians	
	Tribes	
Others	Others	Others

Diagram No 4.1: Social Hierarchy Based on Ritual Ranking
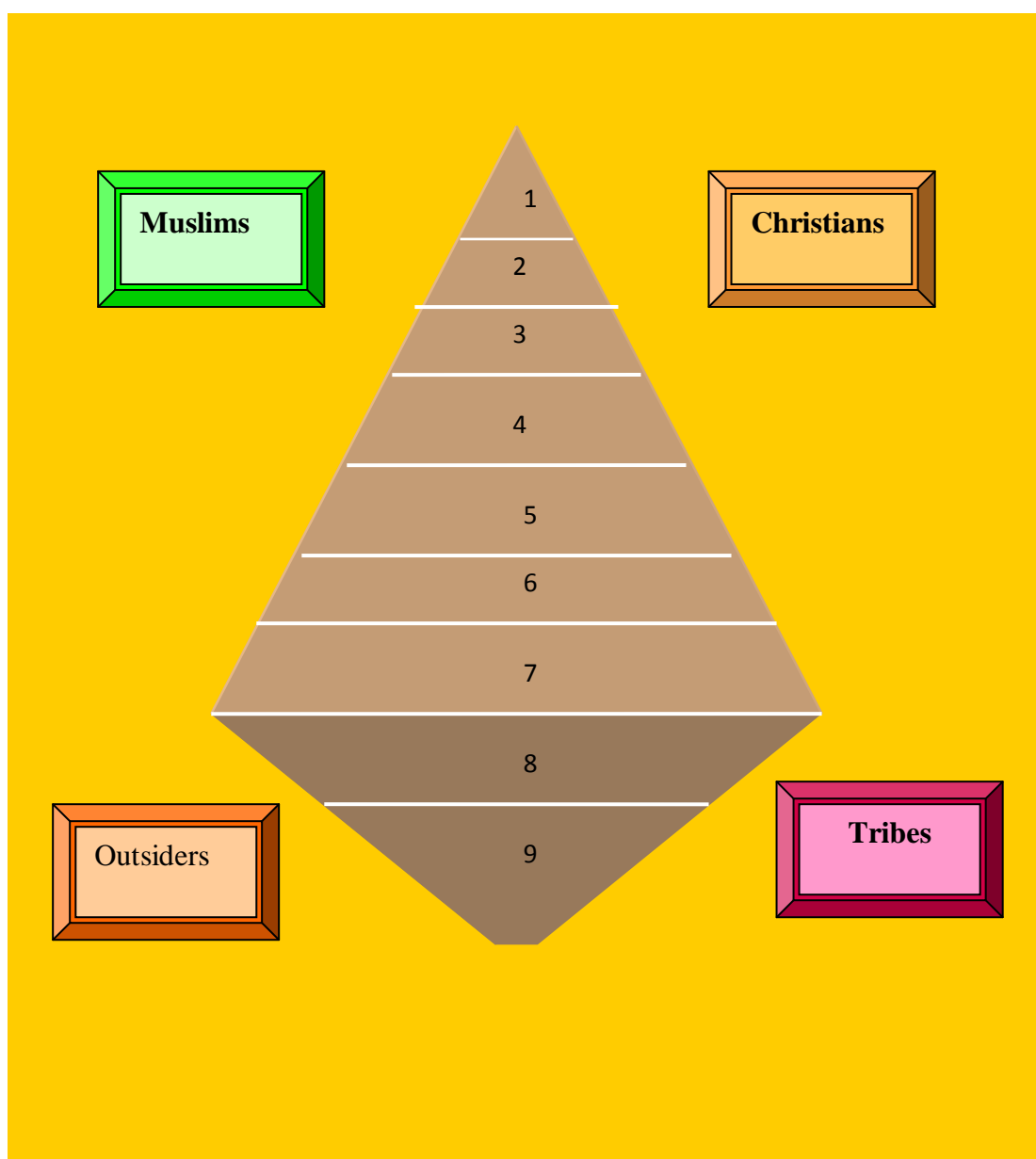
1. Brahmins (Nambuthiris/Pattars); 2.Ambalavasis (Kurupu, Menon, Nambiar); 3.Nayars (Pulavar & Anthuran); 4.Vishwakarma; 5.Mannan; 6.Tiyya (Izhuva); 7. Panan; 8. Pulaya; 9.Paraya. Muslims, Christians, tribals and outsiders are also residing on the banks but they are outside the ritul ranking of Kerala society.

The major groups such as Nambuthiri-Nayar from the 'Hindu fold' and Muslims and Christians have influenced the life and lore of the folk on the banks of Bharathappuzha and interestingly they themselves are affected by migrations. In other words the religious ideology of these major communities is not native to Kerala soils but immigated into Kerala with their immigration and settlement. This feature is note worthy because the history of Kerala is the 'history of migrations and immigrations'.

As the major land owning and ritual management communities which exercise control over the land and people are from immigaretd castes, their mythologies and ritual practices connected with sacred complexes also show the immigratory nature wherein ritual and belief is constructed with the ideologies of non-native communities. For instance, the myth and ritual of Bhagavathi on the banks of Bharathappuzha is borrowed from the northern India (Kali version) and Tamil Nadu (Kannaki version). The following chapter will focus on the myth and narrative connected with the worship of Bhagavathi.

Chapter- V
Bhagavathi: Myth and Worship

Pilgrimage to sacred places has a central place in the Hindu religious tradition. The actions on these places have symbolic meaning. There are many sacred centres situated on the banks of Indian rivers. The rivers and the holy places on the banks are powerful in their own ritual and visiting them can achieve benefits. The rivers are placed in between the fane and profane worlds. The ultimate goal of human being is to free from the bondage of *karma* and attain infinite liberation. *Moksa* means liberation and it refers to the deliverance of the soul from recurring births. When the soul (*jivatma*) leaves its woes it gets *moksa* (liberation) which means *jivatma* (soul) merge with *paramatma* (supreme soul). Once the merging is over, it need not be enshrine in any body. Finally the *jivatma* gets real knowledge that *jivatma* and *paramatma* are one and the same, then the *jivatma* attain final emancipation from recurring births and it merges with Brahman. This is *moksa* (liberation).[1]

The rivers are the place to attain liberation. Rivers are the place where ritual actions such as bathing in the river, giving alms (*dana*) and performing the life cycle ceremonies of the dead person carry greater religious merit. In a sense the rivers and the various holy places and temples on its banks are the places where the liberation is more easily attained. The banks of the rivers are considered holy and Hindus prefer to take a dip in the various spots in the course of river. It is believed that a dip in this sacred river washes away the sins. The seven sacred rivers in India, i.e., Ganga, Yamuna, Godavari, Sarasvati, Narmada, Sindhu and Kaveri, occupy a special place. All these rivers are holy throughout their length and the sanctity intensifies in the

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[1] Vettam Mani, *Puranic Encyclopaedia*, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1975:505.

auspicious times. Certain places such as river sources[2], river ghats[3] and river junctions[4] have merits.[5]

The banks of the sacred rivers are considered as the abode of god and goddess. Pilgrims have some motives such as transformation, obligation, purification and peace to visit these sacred rivers. Pilgrim places is the spot one can develop spiritual merit through austerities. Pilgrims control their senses and affirm moral values. They focus on simple life to attain salvation. The major obligation in the contemporary times is life cycle rites, especially rites connected with the dead. Pilgrims come to the holy river such as Haridwar in Ganga, Gaya in Bihar, Rameswaram in Tamil Nadu, and Kuruksetra in Haryana with ashes from cremation pyres to perform the final rites by immersing them in the river and for performing the *pindadana* rite for the ancestors. These acts affirm as a way to final liberation (*moksa*) of the departed souls. People bathe in the holy spot of the rivers in the festival days such as *kartika purnima* in the Haridwar and Garhmuktesvar and also the festival days connected with particular deities. It is consider that one's sins would be washed away by bathing in the river and people get religious merit (*punya*) by visiting pilgrimage places. Believers seeking *moksa* from both the living and departed souls by performing certain rites reveal the existence of belief on life after death and mostly these rituals are performed in the temples/shrines located on the riverside. In the shrines on the banks of Bharathappuzha, contrary to the belief of attaining *moksha*, i.e., for the benefit of the other world, rituals and worship is performed for the merit of this world and to bring prosperity to the life that is in existence. Instead of practising ritual for liberation and other world merits, various communities on the banks of Bharathappuzha seek blessings of Bhagavathi for the protection and welfare of their life in this world. For

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[2] Kailash, Mansarovar in Tibet is the source of the Brahmaputra, Gangotri is the source of the Ganga, Saptrishi Kund in the Garhwal Himalayas is the source of the Yamuna, Amarkantak is the source of the Narmada; Godavari originate from Triambak near Nashik, Krishna from Mahabaleshwar in Maharashtra; Talakaveri is the source of the Kaveri.

[3] Har Ki Pauri is the famous bathing ghat in Haridwar, Manikarnika ghat and Dasaswamedh ghat are the other ghats in Varanasi and Allahabad, Vashisthkund, Baitalkund, Suryakund, Brahmkund, the Indradyumna tirtha, Pushyamal tirtha, Varah tirtha in Deva Prayag; Triveni ghat in Rishikesh; Triambakeshwar in Nasik, Kushavarta in Godavari.

[4] The confluence of Bhagirathi and Alaknanda at Devprayag; confluence of the Ganga, Yamuna and the Saraswati at Alahabad; Omkareshwar is the confluence of the Narmada and Kaveri.

[5] Surinder M. Bhardwaj and James G. Lochtefeld, *Tirtha in The Hindu World*, Sushil Mittal and Gene thurs, New York: Routledge, 2004.

the protection of this life, human beings create goddesses/gods and start ritual worship. They need agricultural prosperity, protection of life from all calamites like diseases, earthquake and so on. This is the main core of worship in the *kavu* (sacred grove). This is the differentiating elements of the concept of Bharathappuzha and other rivers in India.

Table No 5.1: Temples of God and Goddess on Indian River Banks

S No	River	God	Goddess	Total
1	Brahmaputra	22 (61%)	14 (39%)	36 (100%)
2	Ganga	45 (61)	29 (39%)	74 (100%)
3	Indus	28 (68%)	13 (31%)	41 (100%)
4	Yamuna	9 (69%)	4 (31%)	13 (100%)
5	Godavari	28 (76%)	9 (24%)	37 (100%)
6	Narmada	12 (80%)	3 (20%)	15 (100%)
7	Krishna	23 (85%)	4 (15%)	27 (100%)
8	Kaveri	36 (84%)	7 (16%)	43 (100%)
	Grand Total	203 (71%)	83 (29%)	286 (100%)

From the above table it is apparent that more number of temples for male deities (71%) is found on the banks of the major rivers in India. Only 29% of temples are dedicated to goddesses. Except Brahmaputra River, all the other shown in the table above are considered as feminine and host temples for male deities. This appears to be a pan-Indian phenomenon. However, in the state of Kerala more temples for goddesses are consecrated than to male deities on the banks of the rivers. For instance,

on the banks of Bharathappuzha there exist 223[6] Bhagavathi shrine from its origin to ending part and 11 shrines are dedicated to male deities[7]. Most of the temples on the banks of other Indian rivers are the seats of gods, whereas, the banks of Bharathappuzha are the land of goddess shrines. The goddess is worshipped as Kali and as local Bhagavathies.

Bhadrakali concept in India - a premise

The communities of Kerala attribute different characteristics and conceptualise the presiding deity as Bhadrakali. The Bhadrakali is one of the forms of supreme deity mentioned in the *Devi Mahatmyam*. In the *Purana*, Kali appears to fight against wild beasts and ferocious creatures. She is able to protect from all kinds of dangers and provide people with wealth and prosperity, as well as victory. In general, the Kali myth of India is based on the *Devi Bhagavatham*. The myth of the origin of Kali is following:

Rambha and Karambha were the two sons of Danu. They went to the sacred banks of the Indus and there performed severe asceticism for long years. Karambha got himself submerged in water and thus began his severe tapasya; while the other, Rambha, there began to worship Fire. Knowing this, Indra was pained and very anxious. Indra went to the Indus River and assumed the form of a crocodile and caught hold of the legs of the wicked Karambha and killed him.

Hearing of the death of his brother, Rambha got enraged and, wishing to offer his own head as an oblation to the fire, held the hairs of his head by his left hand, and, catching hold of a good axe by his right hand, was on the point of cutting it, when the Fire gave him knowledge, desisted him from this act and spoke - "You are stupid; why have you desired to cut off your own head; killing one's own self is a great sin; and there is no means of deliverance from this sin. Why are you then ready to execute it? Rather ask boons from me; thus you will get your welfare".

Hearing thus the words of fire, Rambha let go of the hold of his hairs and said - "O Lord of the Devas, grant my desired boon that a son be born to me, who will destroy the forces of my enemy and who will conquer the three worlds. And that son is invincible in every way by the Devas, Danavas and men". The Fire said: "You will get your son, as you desire; therefore stop now from attempting your suicide. With

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[6] S.Jayashanker, *Temples of Palakkad District*, Directorate of Census Operations, Trivandrum: Government of India, 2004; S.Jayashanker, *Temples of Malappuram District*, Directorate of Census Operations, Trivandrum: Government of India, 2003.

[7] The temples of Gods on the banks of Bharathappuzha are Kalpathi Shiva Temple, Someshvaram Shiva Temple, Ivormadam Krishna Temple, Thiruvilwamala Viladrinathan Temple, Kilikurushi Shiva Temple, Thirumitakode Anchumoorthi Temple, Thrithala Shiva Temple, Panniyoor Varahamoorthy Temple, Shukapuram Dakshinamoorthy Temple, Thirunavaya Navamukundha Temple and Chamravatto Ayyappan Temple.

any female of whichever species, you will co-habit, you will get a son, more powerful than you; there is no doubt in this".

Hearing thus Rambha went to a beautiful place, when one lovely buffalo, who was maddened with passion, fell to the sight of Rambha. He desired to have sexual intercourse with her, in preference to other women. Rambha had sexual intercourse with her, and the buffalo became pregnant. Rambha carried the buffalo, his dear wife, to Patala for her protection. On one occasion, another buffalo got excited and wanted to fall upon the buffalo. The Danava was also ready to kill him. The Danava came hurriedly and struck the buffalo for the safety of his wife; where the excited buffalo attacked him with his horns. The buffalo struck him so violently with his sharp horns that Rambha fell down senseless all of a sudden and finally, died. Seeing her husband dead, she quickly went to the peepal tree and took refuge under the tree. But that buffalo, excited much and maddened with vigour, ran in pursuit of her, desiring intercourse with her.

On seeing the miserable plight of the weeping buffalo, the Yaksas assembled to protect her. A terrible fight ensued between the buffalo and the Yaksas, when the buffalo, shot with arrows by them, fell down and died. The buffalo (wife of Rambha), seeing her husband lay in the funeral pyre, quickly entered into the burning fire of her husband.

When the buffalo died, the powerful Mahisa rose from his mother's womb from the midst of the funeral pyre; Rambha, too, emerged from the fire in another form out of his affection towards his son. Rambha was known as Raktavija after he had changed his form. His son was thus born as a very powerful Danava and became famous by the name of Mahisa. The chief Danavas installed Mahisa on the throne.

Mahisasura went to the mountain of Sumeru and performed severe tapas and Brahma arrived on his vehicle, the swan and asked about his desire. Mahisa replied that he wanted to become immortal, therefore he had no fear of death. Brahma replied that death is inevitable to all things in the universe and asked him to express another desire. Then Mahisa said, Grant me that no Deva, Danava, nor human being of the male sex can cause my death. Only women can kill me. Brahma approved this. After this boon, Brahma left and Mahisa returned to his place.

Mahisa became invincible of the Devas, Danavas and human beings. The very powerful Asura, Mahisa, happy with getting the boon, obtained sovereignty and brought the whole world under his control. Then Mahisa, desirous to send an envoy to Indra and asked Indra quit the Heavens. Hearing the messenger's words, Indra became very angry and challenged him to fight. The messenger quickly returned to his haughty master Mahisa.

Hearing the messenger's words Mahisa got very angry and he called the Danavas before him and asked them to prepare for war. Indra, the lord of the Devas, called Yama, Vayu, Varuna, and Kuvera and other Devas, called an assembly and asked to get ready for war. Indra sent expert spies to ascertain the true state of affairs. Hearing these words of Indra, Brihaspati advised him to go to Brahma and ask for help. Brahma said to Indra that they all would go to the Mount Kailasa. From

there, Shiva was advised to go to Vaikuntha. They all reached Vaikuntha and informed the issue to Vishnu.

Vishnu asked them to prepare for a war. Thus settling the question, Brahma, Vishnu, and Hari and Indra and the other Devas riding on their Vahanas respectively dispersed. While Brahma on his vehicle Swan, Vishnu on his Garuda, Sankara on his Bull, Indra on his elephant Airavata, Kartika on his peacock, and Yama, the god of death on his Vahana, the buffalo, were on the point of going with the other Deva forces, the army of the Danava Mahisa met them on their way, all fully equipped with arms and weapons. A dreadful fight then ensued between the Devas and the Danavas.

Hearing the victory to the Devas, Mahisa became very angry and raising his Gada (club) came up before the Devas. Mahisa took up his shiny sword and came to Indra to attack him with this weapon. A fight then occurred between the two, terrible to all the Lokas and wonderful to the Munis, where various weapons were showered from both the sides.

The Demon Mahisa fought against Visnu and Shiva. Thus fighting continued for one hundred years and Mahisa acquired the seat of Indra. He banished the Devas from the Heavens; the Devas, thus tormented began to wander in the caves of hills for many years. The terrified Devas then met Brahma and Shiva. With their advice, they all met Vishnu.

Vishnu on hearing their words, spoke smiling that they fought before; but this Asura could not at that time be killed. Hence if some beautiful female Deity would now be created out of the collective energy and form of the Saktis of each of the Devas, then that Lady would easily be able to destroy the Demon by her force.

Saying thus the brilliant fiery energy came out from Brahma. Next came out of the body of Shiva, a fiery spirit and a dazzling light of blue colour emanated from the body of Vishnu. The light that came out of the body of Indra was hardly bearable. Thus masses of lights came out respectively from Yama, Agni and Varuna. The other Devas, too, gave their shares of fiery lights. Then these all united into a great mass of fire and light. While the Devas were thus looking steadfastly on that Fire, an exquisitely handsome Lady was born out of it, causing excitement and wonder to all. This Lady was composed of the three qualities, beautiful, and fascinating to the universe. Her face was whitish; eyes were black, her lips red and the palms of her hands copper red. She was adorned with divine ornaments. The goddess had eighteen hands; her grand beautiful white lotus like face was created out of the fiery energy. Her glossy black beautiful hairs of the head, overhanging to the knees, were formed out of the light of Yama. Her three eyes came out of the energy of fire. Her two ears were beautiful like the swinging seat of the God of Love. Her nose was fashioned out of the fire of Kubera, the Lord of wealth. Her brilliant teeth, looking like gems, came out of the energy of Daksa; they looked like the Kunda flowers. Her lower lip was deep red and it came out of the fire of Aruna (the charioteer of the sun); her beautiful upper lip came out of the energy of Kartika. Her eighteen hands came out of the Tejas of Vishnu and her red fingers came out of the Tejas of the Vasus. Her breasts came out of the energy of soma. Her thighs and legs were from Varuna. Thus from the various Tejas, contributed by the Devas, that Heavenly lady came out.

On hearing Vishnu's words, the Devas presented their own weapons, ornaments and clothing. The Ksirada (milk) Ocean presented to her gladly, the well fitted necklace, clear as crystal, and a pair of divine cloths, of a red colour, never becoming old and very fine. Visvakarma was very much gratified in his heart and presented a divine jewel to be worn in her diadem or crest blazing like hundreds of suns; white ear rings; bracelets for her wrist, bracelets for her upper arm, and other bracelets decked with various gems and jewels and anklets brilliant like gems, of a clear Sun-like lustre, decked with jewels, and tinkling nicely. The architect of the gods, the ocean of intellect, Visvakarma gave her as offerings beautiful ornaments also for the neck, all very beautiful, as well as for the fingers decked with gems and jewels, all shining splendidly. Varuna gave for her head garland of lotuses, never fading away, of such a sweet fragrance as bees constantly hover round them and the Vaijayanti garland for her breast. The mountain Himalaya gladly offered her various gems and a beautiful lion, of a golden colour for her conveyance. Then that beautiful Lady, having all the auspicious signs, wishing welfare to all, and decorated with the divine ornaments began to look grand and splendid, mounted on her conveyance, the Lion. Vishnu then created another thousand discus (chakram) from his own Chakra, capable to take off the head of any Asura, and offered it to her. Sankara created another excellent Trissula from his own Trident, terrible and demon-killing, and offered it to the Devi. Varuna created another bright conch from his own conch and offered it gladly to the Devi. Maruta (wind), the chief of the gods, offered her a wonderful bow and arrow case filled with arrows. The bow could be drawn with great difficulty and emitted a very harsh sound. Brahma gave her a divine Kamandalu, filled with the Ganges water; and Varuna offered her a weapon called Pasa. Kubera, gave her a golden drinking cup, filled with wine and Varuna offered her a divine beautiful lotus. Visvakarma gave her the Kaumodaki gada, capable to kill the enemy of the gods. The Sun gave his rays to the Divine Mother. The Devas, seeing her adorned with ornaments and weapons began to praise and chant hymns to the Goddess, Kali and the Devas informed about the cruelty of Mahisa to Kali. After hearing their problem, Kali said in the following auspicious term – "Today in the battle ground I will overpower that wicked Mahisa, of cruel disposition and take away his life".

Then Devi laughed very hoarsely; it seemed that a roar of laughter then arose. The Asuras (demons) were struck with terror at that very dreadful sound. The earth trembled at that extraordinary sound; the mountains began to move and the vast oceans that remained calm began to be agitated with billows. The uproar filled all the quarters and the mountain Meru trembled. Then the Danavas, hearing the tumultuous uproar, were all filled with tremendous fear. The Devas became very glad. Mahisa, struck with terror at those words, asked about the sound.

The messengers heard these words of Mahisa, and then they at once went to the Devi. By seeing her form, they were afraid and fled at once to the Mahisa and informed him the cause of that sound. Mahisa sent his forces to bring the woman and upon hearing the King's words, Tamra marched away with his army. Hearing the sound of Devi, Tamara was terrified and fled to Mahisa. After that Vasakala,

Durmukha, Chiksura, Tamra, Vidalaksa and Asiloma went to fight one by one. Hearing the death news of the above commander in chiefs, Mahisasura became blind with anger.

The King Mahisa in anger addressed the charioteer Daruka to bring his chariot. Taking, then, all the arrows and weapons, he mounted on the chariot, and attended by his army, went to the Devi. The Devi blew her conch shell when she saw Mahisasura. Hearing the marriage request of Mahisa, the Devi replied very harshly. The Danava took up his bow and came to the battle, fully stretching the string of his bow up to his ears, and began to shoot sharpened arrows with great force at the Devi. The Devi, too, hurled with anger, arrows tipped with iron, and cut off the Asura's arrows to pieces. The fight between them rose to such a terrible pitch that it caused terror to both the Devas and the Danavas, trying hard to be victorious over each other.

The wrathful and eager Devi, to kill Mahisasura, took up the golden cup filled with wine and drank again and again. When the Devi finished her drink she pursued him with the trident in her hands, to the great joy of gladdening all the Devas. The Devas began to rain showers of flowers on the Devi and praised her and shouted victories to Her. The Devi then, infuriated and with eyes reddened, pierced violently the breast of that vicious Mahisa with her sharp trident. The Demon, then, struck by this trident, fell senseless on the ground; but got up in the next moment and kicked the Devi forcibly. Then the Devi used the Chakra. Instantly that weapon severed the head from his body. The blood gushed out from his neck as violent streams of water get out from mountains, coloured red with red sandstones. The headless body of that Asura moved, for a moment and then dropped on the ground. The wicked Mahisasura thus slain, the Demons that remained alive were terrified and fled away, very much frightened, to Patala.

The myth of Kali as narrated in the *Devi Bhagavatham*, the divine power of Kali is created by a combined effort of the gods.

Table No 5.2: Jewels and Armoury of Devi

S.No	God	Divine Gift
1	The Ksirada (milk) Ocean	Necklace and pair of red colour cloths
2	Visvakarma	Jewel to worn in crown; white ear rings; bracelets for wrist and upper arm; ornaments for neck; finger ring; Kaumodaki gada and parasu(axe)
3	Varuna	A weapon called Pasa; head garland of lotuses and Vaijayanti garland for her breast
4	Vishnu	Chakra (disk)
5	Sankara	Trissula (Trident)
6	Varuna	Bright conch
7	Maruta (wind)	Bow and arrow case filled with arrows
8	Brahma	Kamandalu, filled with the Ganges water
9	Kubera	A golden drinking cup, filled with wine

10	Sun	Rays
11	Himalaya	Lion of golden colour
12	Indra	Bell

The jewel and armoury of the Devi as tabled above is given by twelve divine powers and each one is bestowed with them by either their own penance or by the supreme deity and how these divine powers acquired by them is narrated in different myths enumerated in *Puranas* and Bhagavatha stories**.** The following attire and physical feature of Devi are also due to the combined creation of the gods.

Table No 5.3: Attire of Devi

S.No	Body Part	Appearance
1	Face	Whitish
2	Eyes and eyebrow	Black
3	Lips	Red
4	Palms	Copper red
5	Hands	Eighteen
6	Hairs	Black
7	Ears	Swinging seat of the God of Love
8	Teeth	Kunda flowers
9	Lower lip	Deep red
10	Fingers	Red

Table No 5.4: Physical Features of Devi

SN	Body part	Divine Element
1	Face	Out of the energy of Sankara
2	Hair	Yama
3	Eyes	Fire
4	Ears	Vayu
5	Nose	Kubera, the Lord of wealth
6	Teeth	Daksa
7	Lower lip	Aruna (the charioteer of the Sun)
8	Upper lip	Kartika
9	Eighteen hands	Vishnu
10	Red fingers	Vasus
11	Breasts	Soma
12	Navel	Indra
13	Thighs and legs	Varuna
14	Loins	Earth

With all the above gifts of gods, the female *Shakti* in the form of Kali makes a fierce battle with the demon Mahisasura and kills him thereby restores peace for which act she is venerated and worshiped in *bhooloka*.

The myth of that appear in the *Devi Bhagavatham* is made up of two myths; one, the myth of Mahisasura, the other the myth of Kali. Both the myths are sequentially narrated in a linear fashion and therefore logically constructed as a complete story.

Table No 5.5: Textual analysis of Kali Myth

S.No	Function
1	Rambha and Karambha, the two sons of Danu went to the banks of the Indus and practiced asceticism
2	Indra killed Karambha and Karambha tried to kill himself
3	Fire informed the foolishness of suicide to Rambha
4	Rambha got boon from fire that a son be born to him and who will conquer the three worlds
5	Rambha got a son with the intercourse of a buffalo and Rambha killed
6	The buffalo (wife of Rambha) jumped to the funeral pyre of her husband
7	Mahisasura rose from the womb of buffalo from funeral pyre
8	Rambha also emerged from the fire because of his affection towards his son
9	Mahisasura became the king
10	Mahisasura got boon from Brahma that no Deva, Danava, nor human being of the male sex can cause his death. Only women can kill him
11	Mahisasura started to attack devas and gods
12	He fought against Indra and defeated
13	Devas known about the boon of Mahisasura
14	Devi created from the collective energy of gods and devas
15	They provide all weapon to the goddess
16	Devi start to fight against Vasakala, Durmukha, Chiksura, Tamra, Vidalaksa, the military commander of the army of Mahisasura and defeated them

17	Fight between Devi and Mahisasura
18	Devi drank wine and cut off the head of Mahisasura by chakra and his body fell on ground
19	Devas praised Devi and Demons went to Patala

In the above analysis 1-13 functions refer to the myth of Mahisasura wherein the plot structure is created from lack to liquidation. The absence of Mahisasura in the form of a son is 'lack' and being born conquering the worlds is liquidation of the first part of the myth. The second part that is from 14-19 is 'liquidation of liquidation' wherein the Kali is created to liquidate Mahisasura who himself is the source of 'liquidation'.

Table No 5.6: Plot Structure of Kali Myth

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Plot Structure of Kali Myth

Lack: Liquidation

Liquidation: Liquidation

Liquidation > Lack

Liquidation is the source of divinity to Kali and Kali is being worshipped perpetually for being liquidator of evil

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Kali Concept in Kerala

The Kali concept in Kerala is the expansion of the *puranic* one and there are many indications of the above concepts in the rituals, myths of Kali in Kerala. This Kali concept gains much space in Kerala and is attached to the local environment of the land. The general Kali myth narrated in the *Devi Mahatmyam*, the last part of *Sristikhanda* of *Markandeya Purana*. In Kerala, the Kali myth is explained in a narrative form and each community has their own version of this myth.[8]

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[8] Mahishasura born in the family of asuras attained heroism through his penance. Like the fire at the end of Yuga he killed devas as well as Brahmins. Devas were extremely afflicted and hurt by Mahishasura. They sought refuge in Brahma, Vishnu, yama and Indra. Knowing that the asura could be killed only by a woman, he was confronted in a battle by Indra and others in fine guises of women. Still they were overwhelmed by him. They approached Brahma and acquainted him with everything.

Kali is the main goddess concept inherent among the Kerala people. There may not have been any *kavu* or village without Kali. Most of the goddess idols are constructed in wood or *kadusarkara*. She carries a trident, head of Dharika, sword, *vattala* and *vethalam* is her vehicle. She has three eyes, four or eight hands. The appearance of Kali in Kerala is in sitting position. Kali originates from vision, which means eyes. People believe that there is a presence of Kali in the *kavu* and each house lights lamp in the *kavu* of their house. This light is *badra deepam* (*Bhadra* means Bhagavathi Kali).

The word Kali originates from the word *kaalakoota*. She got her name because she originates from the *kaalakoota* of Shiva's neck. The other version is that, the Malayalam word *kaluka* means horror and one who created horror was known as Kali. Kali is the goddess of protection and destruction. There are many versions where one can see in the worship of Kali *puja* and ritual performances for pacifying the wrath of Kali. It is the blend of *sattva* and *thamo guna*. One can identify the differences of communities through their ritual enactment of the Kali worship. It has many socio-historic reasons. The worship of Kali start from Vedic chants to obscene chants.

Mother goddess worship is prominent among the non-Vedic people and the goddess known as Bhagavathi, Kali, and Devi. The people consider her as their mother. Most of the Bhagavathis of Kerala are either attached to the concept of Kali or her lineage. But the procedure of *puja* and rituals are varying among them.

The Bhagavathi/Kali visits the houses of her children in the annual ritual performances of the *kavu* and it is believed that Kali visits the houses of the people. In north India, Durga killed Mahisasura where as in Kerala Dharika (Dharuka) is killed

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Accompanied by Brahma they approached the lord of Uma. With Brahma at the forefront, they eulogised him. Approaching the lord of devas and bowing to him they informed about the deeds of Mahishasura. On hearing the words of Brahma, Siva requested Uma to slay Mahishasura for the welfare of the world. On hearing his words, the goddess entered the body of the lord, she being desirous of taking birth from the lords of devas. Having entered the body of the lord of devas, Parvati made on her body out of poison in the neck of the lord. Kali born resembled fire and black neck was embellished with poison, an eye in the forehead, the exalted contour of the crescent moon on the head, the terrible poison in the neck, the sharp and the terrible trident in the arm and ornaments in their respective places. She killed the Mahishasura and became very furious. On seeing the arrival of Kali, Siva assumed the form of a boy due to his power and stationed himself in the cremation ground full of corpses and ghosts. On seeing the boy, she took him kissed him on his head and suckled him at her breasts. Then she became calm. In order to propitiate her, the delighted Siva performed the *tandava* dance. Later Kali joins the dance happily. This myth is popular in Bengal and it mentioned in the *Lingapurana* (Vol.6, Part 2).

by Kali. Darika is a typical character in the Kali myth of Kerala and the subject of most of the Kerala ritual such as *theyyam, thira, mudiyettu, padayani* etc enacts the fight between Kali and Dharika.

Bhadrakali is a popular form of Bhagavathi worship in Kerala. The origin myth of Bhadrakali is published in Malayalam and Sanskrit as *Bhadrakali Mahatmyam, Bhadrolpatti* and *Dharikavadham/Dharukavadham* (Death of Dharuka/Dharika). The myth is also alive and narrates well in oral tradition. The entire myth of Dharikavadham of Kerala does not appear in any of the Purana but appears to have its origin in oral tradition such as *thottampattu* (ritual song) in various versions.

In general, the myth narrates the birth, deeds and death of death of the demon Dharika at the hands of Bhadrakali. The Kali myth of Kerala is known as Dharikavadham. Three versions of Kali myth (Dharikavadham) are collected from the field which are otherwise quite popular in the origin and middle part of the banks of Bharathappuzha. These three versions are given below:

The Myth of Dharikavadham

Version (1)

The demon Dharika, after intense ascetic practice, secured boons of invincibility, a special weapon and a secret mantra from the Brahma. A drop of his blood would generate thousands of Dharika and no man could kill him. Thus armed, Dharika began to commit numerous depredations. When Shiva came to know of Dharika's misdeeds, he opened his fiery third eye and an enormous flaming form of Bhdrakali emerged to destroy Dharika. Shiva gave trident, sword, mace, axe in her hand and sent her to kill Dharika. Unsuccessful in battle, Bhadrakali disguised her as an old Brahmin woman and went to Dharika's wife Mandodhari, who was repeating the secret mantra. After tricking her into telling the mantra, Bhadrakali went through the forest and sought the help of bloodthirsty Vetalam, leader of the forest ghosts and spirit. Kali returned to war. Vetalam spread her enormous tongue over the battlefield, drinking Dharika's blood as Bhadrakali cut off his head.
Mandodhari, discovering the goddess's trickery (in another version, after the death of her husband Mandodhari got angry and began to do penance). Shiva appeared and gave her a few drops of sweat from his body saying that the person on whom she sprinkled the sweat drops would suffer from small pox. On her way back to earth with the sweat-drops she met Bhadrakali at whom she threw the sweat drops to take revenge for her husband's death. Mandodhari threw the sweat to Bhadrakali's body. Immediately Bhadrakali fell down on the floor and she got small pox on her body. Bhadrakali cried for help. Hearing Kali's cries for help, Shiva created Ghantakarnan from his ear wax. Ghantakarnan licked his sister's body to remove the small pox but out of modesty could not touch her face which remained scarred.

The furious Bhadrakali returned to Kalilasam, holding Dharika's head in her left hand. On seeing the fearful goddess, Shiva attempted to calm her saying, 'daughter dance up on my naked body and release your temper. Doing this, she was satisfied and henceforth began to receive offerings from devotees as a boon from Shiva.

Version (2)

Asuras got hold of the heavenly nectar of immortality (amrthu) after churning the ocean. As a result, frightened devas start war against asuras for the amrthu. Asuras are defeated in the war and their kula is destroyed. Danavathi and Daanavathi, two asura virgins escaped from the attack and they stayed in the patala for a period of twelve years. Later they went to kailasa, made severe penance to Shiva, and asked him to allow puthramoksha. Shiva replied that he is not able to give puthramoksha and asked them to make penance to Brahama and he is the authority to give puthramoksha. They made penance and Brahma gave two bowls of meals (rice) and asked them to eat the rice and meet an asura Pannivakthan and get pregnancy. They follow Brahmas instruction and conceived. At the time of Dharika's birth, the sea became black, mountains shaked, the tress has lost leaf, creatures frightened and the Nambuthiri Brahmins lost the flow of reading in Vedas and their routine. Danavathi gave birth to Dharika. Dharika has defeated devas in wars. Later he makes penance to Shiva and gest two manthrams such as Viswapathi and Sadhapathi and become more arrogant. As per the boon he is assured that no men can kill him. Devas came to know about the boons of Dharika from Shiva and they started fearing about him.

Dharika become more arrogant and started attacking the Devas. In oreder to solve this, Vishnu got transformed in the form of Narada to crunch the ego of Dharika. Narada planted a brinjal sapling in an upward down position and started watering it with a broken pot. On his way, Dharika saw this act and ridiculed Narada/Vishnu. Narada asked what made him to laugh and from where he is coming. Dharika boastingly explained about the boon he attained from Shiva. After hearing this Narada started ridiculing Dharika saying that he has not attained complete boon that is, he may be killed by a woman. But Dharika was not ready to accept that because he believed that a womam is lesser in strength than a man. Both of them got into an argument and irritated Dharika got angry and went to Kaillasa again. There he informed all the incidents to Shiva and started quarrelling with him. Shiva understood that it was not Narada but Vishnu who played the trick and made this situation. Shiva got angry and cursed Dharika that, all the boons which Shiva has given to him will go futile and Dharika will die with the trident (shoola) of women.

After the quarrel, Dharika left Kailasa and he started severe penance to appease Brahma and got new boons. While on his return journey, Dharika met Vethalam. Vethalam is the pishachu (evil spirit) who lived in Mahakala forest.Vethalam asked Dharika to receive one boon from it. Dharika ridiculed Vethalam. They quarrled and Vethalam sworn that it will break the thighs of Dharika and will drink blood from his thighs. Dharika came back to his palace and he asked his mother about their friends and enemies. He got that Devas are their enemies and started to prepare war against Devas. They fought each other for many years and Devas failed. Later Shiva, Vishnu and Brahma also created Karthyanai, Vishnukali and Brahmanikali respectively to destroy Dharika. These three powers also got defeated in the war.

Narada on his way to Kailasa crosses the gate of Dharikas fort and get news about the ego of Dharika. Narada informes this to Shiva and Shiva asked Narada to fetch two basket flowers from the garden of Dharika. Narada was captured by the security of Dharika's garden while collecting flowers. The security hit the eyes of Narada and put a black colour mark (kaakka varachu) on the forehead of Narada. Narada escaped from the garden of Dharika and reached Kailasa. He explained all the incidents happened in the garden of Dharika.

He became furious of this incidents and Shiva created Kali from his power. She wore gold anklet in her right leg and silver anklet in left leg, a sword in her right hand, trident in her left hand and gave the name Bhadrakali. He asked Kali to kill Dharika. Kali requested to Shiva for a military to help her in the war. She got Vethalam as her vehicle and Bhadrakali started war against Dharika. In the initial stage Bhadrakali lost the war and she understood the reason behind Dharika's success. That is until and unless some one possess the manthrams (chants) attained by Dharika from Shiva none can kill him. Karthyayani Devi changed her form, went to Dharikas palace, and gets the chants from his wife Mandodhari. Karthyayani informs the chants to Bhadrakali and once Bhadrakali got the chants she got more power. Dharika start to lose the war and he forgot the chants suddenly. Then he asked the asuras to continue the war, went to his palace, and got all the news from his wife. Dharika became very angry and he comes back to battlefield. They start fight again and Dharika hides in a cave (guha). Kali covered the sun and close the door of the cave. Dharika thought the time is at night and cames out from the cave (guha). Suddenly Bhadrakali cleared the sky and try to kill Dharika. He begs her forgiveness but Bhadrakali pluck the head of Dharika and throw the kudalmala (intestines) to pishachu (ghost) and flesh to bhoothapada. Vethalam cut the thighs of Dharika and drank the bllod. Bhadrakali returned to Kailasa with a furious mood. Shiva and his assistants start many activities to appease Bhadrakali after the war. She offered the head of Dharika to Shiva. Shiva gives blood from his little finger of right hand and appeases her. Shiva asked her to go to earth and becomes kuladaiva (goddess of clan) of Kerala people.

Version (3)

Devas and asuras had a big fight in dwapara yuga and at the time of the war Lord Mahavishnu killed all of the asuras except two woman Dinapathi and Danapathi who escaped and managed to hide in the underworld (pathala). The two women, Dinapathi and Danapathi want to establish asura vamsha and start penance to appease Lord Brahma. Brahma appears infront of them and asked about their wishes. They ask for sons and claims that Brahma does not have any partiality like Vishnu. Vishnu helps Devas to fight against Asuras. Brahma replied that, Danapathi's penance was not in full honest and that's why she will give birth to a foolish son and he will be the king of Karakapuri and known as Karakan. Dinapathi had penance in full swing and she will get a strong son. His name would be Pilladanavan and he will become the king of Dharikapuri. Then Brahma gave little rice and water. These two women left and Danapathi married Bhadran and Dinapathi married Bhikara king. After both women conceived and gave birth to two boys. Karakan grow and one day he tried to eat Sun as his food. Sun (adhityan) got angry, threw an arrow on Karakan, and killed.

Dinapathi gave birth to Pilladanavan and during his birth time, sea became dirty, animals' runs. When he grows, he asked about his relatives and enemies. When he grew up he came to know that their clan had been destroyed by Mahavishnu and

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took an oath to take revenge upon him. His mother said that Devas were their enemies. Vishnu gave help to Devas to deafeat their ancestors. She asks him to go and make penance to Brahma and get his wishes fulfilled. To fulfil this purpose he went to Gokarna and observed austerities. The penance continued for a very long time and Brhama did not appear. Pilladanavan starts his penance in standing position, stands in water, and stands around fire. In desperation, he began to cut off his head with a sword. No sooner had the first drop of blood fallen on the ground then Lord Brahma appeared before him and promised to give whatever boon he wanted.

HIs first demand was: every drop of my blood should give birth to a thousand asuras. He also wanted Brahma to give him the power to overcome death and conquer the entire universe. Brahma readily agreed. He asked that he needs the power of ten thousand elephants, Brahmadhandu as weapon, no men and weapon can kill him both inside and outside, day and night, both sky and earth. He asks for a name and Brahman said you will know as Dharika, King of Dharikapuri. Brhama gave two manthrams such as viswapathi and sahapathi and till a third person know about the manthram, you will not get death. While he leaves from the place, Brahma asks Dharika why he has not asked to be assured that he would not be killed by a woman. Dharika replies that such a thing is ridiculous and unthinkable. This insulted Brhama and enraged, he cursed Dharika, 'a divine lady will kill you and at that time the boons won't come to your rescue'.

Dharika did not mind this and while his return he met Karthayyani Devi. She asked him to get some boon from her. He dishonors her that he will not ask any boon from women. His sarcastic answer enrages her and she curses him. She will be one of the reson of his death. Later Dharika meet Vethala on his way and Vethalam asked him to get boon from him. Dharika replied that he will not ask any boon from demons. Vethalam said that it will eat the flesh of Darika's thighs. He did not mind that and reached his country. Then he called Mayan and Viswakarma and asked them to build good palace.

Later he married Manodhari, the daughter of Kalakeyan. Dharika start to fight against Adhithyan, Moon, Yama, Vayu, Soma, Satron, Budhan, Sages, Brahmins and attacked deva women. Devas went to Vishnu and informed the activities of Dharika. He said that we have to meet Lord Shiva in Kailasa.

Dharika did not care for Brahma's warning and began to conquer the three worlds (heaven, earth and the underworld), one by one. Unable to bear Dharika's cruelty, the goddess approached Vishnu, Brahma and finally Shiva and appraised them for their discontent. On hearing this, Brahma Vishnu, Shiva, Subrahmanya, Indra, and Yama created Brahmani, Vaishnavi, Maheswari, Kaumari, Indrani, and Varahi respectively to destroy Dharika. They fought together six continous days and later each one fought each day. While Maheswari hit Dharika with her trident and suddenly ten thousand Dharika arouse from the blood. They also lost in the war. But all these six were defeated and sought asylum in the forest.

After the war, sage Narada was on his way from Vishnu's place to Kailasa, Dharika saw Narada and asked where he is going. He explained his journey. Then Dharika questioned 'thrimurthy' and asked Narada to be his servant or inform the wives of thrimurthis to become the servants of his wife Manodari. Narada became frightened and ran away to Kailasa. Sage Narada understood the plan of Dharika and straightaway went to Kailasam, the abode of Shiva and described the incidents to Shiva, adding that Dharika intended to invade Kailasam.

He informed everything to Shiva. Vishnu, Brahma, and other devas reached to Kailasa by that time. Shiva became enraged and opened his third eye which is full of

fire. Out of that blazing fire Bhadrakali was born on a Tuesday with three eyes and sixteen hands with the power of Brahma and Vishnu. At the time of her incarnation Kali wore a ferocious look with innumerable heads, hands and legs. Even the creator became frightened. It was because of Shiva's request that Kali later reduced the size of her body. Bhadrakali asked Shiva for what purpose he had created her. Shiva replied that the whole universe was suffereing from the atrocities of Dharika and all the inhabitants should be saved by her.

*Then shiva asked her to go and fight against Dharika. Shiva gave weapons such as kuntham (lance), murichopu (*Red colour silk), *kazhukada (*a rod with handle*), ishtivaal* (a kind of sword), *chandibhandi(shield), irumbolakka* (Iron round shaped rod), *ambittachotta, paathravattaka(*Small sword*), pettanattahasam(*Small axe*), pallivaal* (A sword with curved edge), *thrishoolam* (trident),*manihani (*Bunch of bell *), parashu* (axe), *vajram* (hard metal), *navachandrakala(*Half moon*), dharikas head and gave Vethalam as her vehicle. Shiva beat his thigh and many demons (pishachu) originated from it as military for Bhadrakali. She swears that she will come to Kailasa with the head of Dharika. Then she made pradakshina (circumambulation) around kailasa and start for war on Tuesday with huge sound. Nandikeshan became her senadhipathi. When shiva requested Bhadrakali to destroy Dharika, she went through the forest and sought the help of the bloodthirsty ghosts and spirits who lived there. To kill Dharika, Kali needs the help of a Ghost called Vethalam. Since one drop of Dharika's blood will make thousands of Dharikas, Kali offers Vethalam lots of blood to fill her big belly. So Vethalam accompanied Kali to the war. Vethalam spread it enormous tongue over the entire battleground. So that Dharika's blood would spill on it.*

Even after the birth of Kali, Dharika remains unconquerable. When Dharika saw Bhadrakali and her largely female army coming, he laughed and dismissed her. He was forgetting that his boon of invincibility did not prevent his being killed by a woman. After a fierce battle Bhadrakali and her assistants could not finish him off. Kali can kill him only if she knows the mantra given to Dharika by Brahma. But Dharika has revealed the mantra (sacred chant) only to his wife Manodhari. That is the only possibility from where Kali could acquire the chant. The gods think aloud and Karthyayni Devi went to Darika's house and informed his wife Manodhari that her husband is seriously ill and they must do something to rescue him. Then Manodhari gives Karthayayni the mantra which Dharika got from Brahma. Karthyayni informed this manthra (sacred chant) to Kali. After received the sacred chant Kali returned to fight against Dharika. She fought against Dharika and finally defeats him. After killing Dharika, Kali returned to Shiva's abode with Darika's head in her left hand with full of wrath and excitement. Along the way, all the people in heaven got frightened on seeing Kali's anger. Even Shiva was afraid of Kali. She submits the head of Dharika in front of Shiva and he asked her to keep Dharika's head in her left hand as weapon as there was no place in Kailasa to keep his head. Shiva asked her to sit in some place and she is ready to sit in one corner of Kailasa. Shiva informs her that if she stays in Kailasa Shiva loses his recognition. So it would better for her to go to earth and become the goddess of human. She refused to go to earth because she thinks people consider her as demon (pishachu). Shiva said that people will draw her image with colour and worship her with pujas. If people are not ready to draw your image, you can punish them with diseases and calamities. Then she reached the earth.

Table No 5.7: Attire of Bhadrakali/Bhagavathi

Body part	Appearance
Finger	Red gold
Hand	*Thaliru* (soft stem of plant)
Thighs	Elephant hand
Body	Silk
Stomach	Peepal leaf
Navel	Whirlpool
Breast	Hill
Neck	Necklace
Neck	Snake
Eyes	Fire
Hair	Cloud
Lip	Flowing Honey
Ankle	Stem of *Thazham* flower

Table No 5.8: Jewels and Armoury of Bhadrakali

Native Names	English EqualentMeaning
Kuntham	Lance
Murichopu	Red colour silk
Kazhukada	A Rod with handle
Ishtivaal	Sword
Chandibhandi	Shield
Irumbolakka	Iron round shaped rod
Thala	Head of Dharika
Paathravattak	Small sword
Pettanattahasam	Small axe
Pallivaal	A sword with curved edge
Thrishoolam	Trident
Manihani	Bunch of bell
Parashu	Axe
Vajram	Hard metal
Navachandrakala	Half moon
Mani	Bell

With all the above gifts of Shiva, the female *Shakti* in the form of Bhadrakalikali/Bhagavathi makes a fierce battle with the demon Dharika and kills him thereby restores peace for which act she is venerated and worshiped.

Table No 5.9: Textual analysis Kerala Kali Myth

S No	Function
1	War between Devas and Ausras for nectar of immortality (*amrthu*)
2	Asuras got defeated by Devas
3	The Asura women Danavathi and Darumathi made penance to Brahma and got the boon to attain sons
4	Dharika got the news from his mother that Devas are his enemies
5	Dharika went for penance to get weapons
6	He got the boons of invincibility, a special weapon and a secret mantra from the Brahma. A drop of his blood would generate thousands of Dharikas and no man could kill him.
7	Dharika started to attack Devas and humans in the world
8	Shiva created Bhadrakali from his third eye
9	Shiva provide weapons and military group to Bhadrakali
10	War started between Bhadrakali and Dharika
11	Bhadarakali failed to kill Dharika due to secret *manthra* (chants) of Mandodhari
12	Bhadrakali disguised herself as an old Brahmin woman and got secret chants from Dharika's wife Mandodhari
13	War started again and Bhadrakali killed Dharika and beheaded him
14	Vethalam drank the blood of Dharika
15	Bhadrakali returned to Kalilasam, holding Dharika's head in her left hand with anger
16	Shiva asked her to dance on his naked body to release her anger and go to earth and become the goddess of people
17	Bhadrakali return to earth
18	On way back Mandodhari met Bhadrakali and threw the sweat on Bhadrakali which resulted in small pox
19	Bhadarakali cried for help
20	Shiva created Gandakarnan from his ear wax and send to earth
21	Gandakarnan licked the body except the face of Bhadrakali and cured small pox
22	Bhadakali retained the face with scarce striven by small pox
23	Bhadrakali is worshipped as goddess, Bhagavathi

Dharikavadham is sung/enacted in many ritual contexts of worship offered to the Bhahgavathi in Kerala in general and on the banks of Bharathappuzha in particular. Each community has their variations of the myth and manifests it in different ritual performances.

In the analysis of the three versions of the myth is found that the myth is not appearing as a single entity but dispersed into atleast three myths. From the above table it is evident that 1-7 is the myth of Dharika; 8-15 is the myth of Bhadrakali and Dharika vadhanam (killing) and 16-23 is Bhadarakalis return to earth and being worshiped as Bhagavathi. The third myth wherein Bhadrakali with the face of small pox is enacted in the Northern and Southern part of Bharathappuzha (in the form of Theeyam and Mudiyettu) respectively.

If one makes a comparative study of Kali myth in *Devi Bhagavatham* and *Dharikavadham* of Kerala versions, one can find out that the Kerala versions reflect the process of 'nativisation' and 'oico-typification'[9] of the myth of Kali. In *Devi Bhagavatham*, the very Kali is created and bestowed with powers by gods. In the Kerala versions Kali is created by Shiva from his third eye and known as Bhadrakali, the daughter of Shiva. All the attaire and weoponary of Bhadrakali is also described in the ethnic categories. In Kerala, trickery is used by Bhadrakali to kill Dharika by disguising herself as Brahmin old lady to learn the sacred and secret *manthra* (chant) from the wife of Dharika, Mandodhari. The Dharika's wife is depicted as pious and noble lady whereas in the northern version there is no mention of wife and her role in the killing episode of Mahisasura. In the third version of the myth, Bhadrakali is

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[9] 'Oikos' in Greek has the meaning, 'house'. It is through semantic extension that it assumes the meaning 'environment'. This tern has entered into folklore from Botany. If a traditional plant of a specific area retains only some of its traditional features, and exhibits the singular feature of the area, it is an eco-type/oico-type. Though it comes under the species of a particular variety of plant, it exhibits the unique quality of the region which becomes its genetic quality. The ecotype/oico-type in folklore is also almost similar. It was Karl Wilhelm Von Sydow who introduces the idea of eco-type/oico-type in Folklore Studeis. Eco-Type is a native folk narrative form, which has in it the peculiar characteristics of a region. According to Von Sydow, eco-type are formed in six types of environments which are time, depth, isolation, boundaries, migrating nature of materials, group disposition and geographical experience. See for further details see, Karl Wilhelm Von Sydow, *Geography and Folktale Eco-Type*, *Bealoide-as* 4,1934:344-355; Timothy Cochrane, "The Concept of the Eco-Types in American Folklore", *Journal of Folklore Research*, Vol.24, No.1 (Jan.- Apr.,), 1987:33-55; Alan Dundes, *Life is Like a Chicken Coop Ladder, A Portrait of German Culture Through Folklore*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1984.

picturised as having faced with scarce due to small pox which was quiete a common disease in the soils of Kerala. Therefore she is also worshipped for warding of small pox especially in the Northern and Sothern parts of Kerala. However, on the banks of Bharathappuzha she is worshipped for prosperity and wellbeing by the folk.

Two significant interpretations can be drawn from the analysis of the myth of Dharikavadham:

Firstly, Bhadrakali disguising as a Brahmin lady and learning *manthra* from Mandodhari suggests the migration of Brahmins into the Kerala soils (even Parasurama myth attests to this) and killing Dharika with the knowledge (*manthra*) acquired from Mandodhari (insiders) implies the Brahmin superiority over the locals.

Secondly, there is a gender perspective in the myth. The society of Kerala formerly is matriarchical and therefore the role of women is kept in a higher pedestal. Bhadrakali is shown in the myth as all powerful and invincible on one hand, and on the other, Mandodhari as the protector of Dharika (through her *manthra*) signifies the role of female in the Kerala society. After the war Bhadrakali is depicted as amorous and to quench her fury, Shiva lies down on the ground and Bhadrakali dances up on his naked body. This also suggests the dominant role of females in Kerala society.

Bhadrakali worship on the banks of Bharathappuzha is carried out on specific sacral spaces known as *kavus* (sacred groves).

Sacred Grove: Place of Worship

Worshipping form of primitive societies is varied in different parts of the world. Among all worship forms, the form of nature worship is a common tradition. The human race's worship of natural wonders was seen as a means of survival. Different ways of this nature worship are deeply rooted in the cultural activities of different folk communities. Worshipping of trees as part of nature worship is embedded in the customs of ancient pre-agrarian societies and they believed that trees were the abode of sacred spirits. Most of the communities attribute sacred character to the trees and establish beliefs and customs to ensure the protection of the sacred space of the trees.

Sacred groves (*kavukal*) consist of natural vegetation of the locality and are attributed with supernatural power. The size of these groves starts from a few trees to kilometres of forest. Sacred groves are found in different religious beliefs in Africa,

Asia, Europe, Australia, New Zealand, Polynesia and the Americas. Nature worship is an Indian tradition existing since time immemorial. Sacred grove is a form of nature worship and is a component of the village landscape in India. Many groves have shrines within them. It is believed that the power of god/goddess exist in the trees. In India, sacred groves are known under different names in different regions such as, *Dev* in Madhya Pradesh, *Saranas* in Bihar, *derais/devrahati* in Maharastra, *Sarna/dev* in Jharkhand and Chatisgarh, *Orans* in Rajasthan, *Devrakadu* or *Sidharvana* in Karnataka, *Kovilkadu/Thirunandavana* in Tamil Nadu and *Kavu* in Kerala.[10] These sacred groves are dedicated to different gods/goddesses, animals and spirits etc. They are said to be under the control and protection of the presiding deity and harming the vegetation/animals in the grove would subject to the wrath of deity.

In the case of Kerala, there are no authentic survey accounts available about the number of sacred groves. In the local survey, the banks of Bharathappuzha was said to have nine hundred and seventy sacred groves. These sacred groves are the key to understand the cultural treasures of a region. The settlement pattern of the communities on the river banks and the intercommunity relations are based on the sacred grove. This would help to understand the human habitation and its relationship to nature.

The Malayalam word *kavu* means a garden/the multitude of trees/consortium of trees[11] and *kavu* is the sacred place where the Goddess resides. No structures were erected around the stone which is erected under the shade of a tree and it is considered as the image of goddess. Generally a platform is constructed around the goddess. Most of the *kavus* face to the north. There are three stages in the evolution of *kavu* in Kerala, they are: (1) A stone under a tree, (2) small building constructed around the tree and there were no roof in that kind of building. It has a *srikovil* (sanctum sanctorum) (3) construction of separate building near to the tree and shifted the stone of Bhagavathi inside the building with *srikovil* and the pyramid roof of the building

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[10] Murugan K, Ramachandran V.S, Swarupanandan K and Ramesh M. "Socio-Cultural Perspective to the Sacred Groves and Serpentine Worship in Palakkad District", *Indian Journal of Traditional Knowledge*, Vol. 7(3), July 2008:455-462.

[11] Unnikrishnan E, *Sacred Groves of North Kerala: Eco-Folklore Study* (Malayalam), Kannur: Sanskriti, 1995.

has small holes.[12] The edge of the roof is in pyramid shape and the bottom is in square shape. In the past, thick forests persisted in the *kavus* but now the entire vegetation of the *kavus* has been destroyed and only the shrines exist. In the above explanation about *kavu*, now days it is consider as a shrine and hereafter would use shrine to denote *kavu*. The banks of Bharathappuzha are known as the land of many *kavus*. Shrines are constructed in association with the sacred groves of deity. In some areas, they have a small place in the form of a stone, idol, platform or a single tree for worship. In serpent *kavu*, generally there is no shrine but instead they worship small idols of stones representing serpent god. The *kavus* of Northern Kerala exceeds in hectares where as the *kavus* on the banks of Bharathappuzha are relatively small in size. This is the present condition of the evolution of *kavu* in Kerala.

The *kavus* place an important role in the socio-economic life of the villagers. These provide a place for village gatherings during the festive occasion. The *thattakam* (jurisdiction) is a territory under a goddess and each community of the *thattakam* is supposed to contribute money and paddy to the *kavu* during the festival period. Sacred groves are a nodal point of a divine area and the surrounding area of the shrine is a unit call *thattakam*. This place is a holy land of shrine. This concept is emerged based on the settlement pattern of different communities in Kerala. Each *thattakam* has a nucleus in the form of *kavu* where the Bhagavathi reside, a centre which reflects the worship of Bhagavathi. This is a geographical area of the shrine where the Bhagavathi visit the people of *thattakam* during the annual festival. During the annual festival of the *kavu*, the *thattakam* will be in a festive mood. Most of the houses will be decorated. Bhagavathi will travel along the streets on the elephant. The concept is that the presiding deity of the *thattakam* is personally verifying the well being of the devotees. The members of the *thattakam* would not visit other *thattakam* and prohibit conducting marriage and other ceremonies at the time of annual festival in the *thattakam*.[13]

The *kavus* are numerous in Kerala and there are many myths, legends and beliefs associated with them. The beliefs and rituals performed in the *kavus* vary with the region, caste and patron deity of the *kavu*. The *kavus* are found in almost all

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[12] Chelanatu Achutha Menon, *Kali Worship in Kerala*, Madras: University of Madras, 1943; Sanjivan Azhikode, *Theyyathile Jaathivazhakkam*, Thrishur: Current Books, 2007.

[13] N.M Nambuthiri, *Malabar Padanangal- Zamuthirinadu*(Malayalam), Trivandrum: Kerala State Institute of Languages, 2008.

regions of Kerala and more or less reduced in size, even though many of them keep the trees around it. Broadly, the *kavus* of Kerala are classified into three types (1 *Mrigadaivakavu* where Zoomorphic gods are worshipped (Pambadi pambum kavu Thiruvilwamala and Chanthera Pulikavu Kasarkode) (2) *Daiva kavu* where a male god is worshipped (Ayyappankunu kavu Thrissur, Nilamboor Vettekkorumakan) (3) *Bhagavathikavu* where a female deity is worshipped (Amakavu Bhagavthi Palakkad, Azhakodikavu Bhadrakali Calicut).

Table No 5.10: Sacred groves of Kerala Based on deity

Zoomorphic Gods	Male Gods	Female Goddess
Snake and Tiger	Ayyapan, Vettaikorumakan	Kali/Bhagavathi

It is believed that the snake especially serpent and tiger are residing in the snake *kavu* and *pulikavu* (tiger *kavu*) respectively. Kerala is unique in respect of serpent worship and most of the ancestral houses (tharawad) of Nayar family had a serpent grove (*sarpakavu*). These are the miniature reserve forests where the trees left unhampered. It is almost circular in form and it is often surrounded by a low wall to prevent cattle or children from trespassing into it. In middle of the grove, a stone basement called *chithrakoodam* is built, on which are placed the image of serpent cut in granite stone. Great care is taken that the grove is not desecrated by the touch or even the approach of non-pious persons.[14] No orthodox person would dare to kill or even hurt a serpent. It is a common belief that those who kill serpent will be punished in this life and suffers from leprosy or opthalmia. The general pattern of the idol is that the idol represents a coiled serpent with raised hood. Though the serpent has a single hood the idols are carved having multiple hoods (*phanams*). The snake in the *kavu* consider as the ornament of Shiva, i.e., Vasuki and as the Anantha serpent of Vishnu. In the snake *kavu*, the conduct serpent puja by offering *noorum paalum* (Calcium carbonate and milk) in the *Aayilam nakshathram* (star) in front of the snake idol under the tree. In addition, the Pulluva community (SC community) perform *pulluvan paatu* (pulluva songs).[15] Most of the snake *kavus* are adjacent to the

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[14] K.P Padmanabha Menon. *History of Kerala*, New Delhi: Asian Educational services, Vol.4 (1924), Reprint 1996

[15] M.G Shahibhooshan, *Keraliyarude Devathasankalppam* (Malayalam), Kottayam: DC Books, 2005.

ancestral houses of Nayars and Nambuthiries. The people worship snake to protect from the attack or bite of snake. It could cause death and this fear leads to the worship of snake in *kavu*.[16] The snake *kavu* situate in the south west part of houses and they live happily in the *kavu* without disturbing the people. For this reason the people lit lamp in every day in the *kavu* and do not cut the tree from the vicinity of the snake *kavu*.

The tiger *kavu* can be seen in the northern Kerala and the tigers in this *kavu* are the off springs of Shiva and Parvathi when they made love in the form of tiger.[17] This tigers could eat the domestic animals while grazing in the field and for the protection of the attack of tigers the people worship tiger in the *kavu*. In a year, most of the days the *kavu's* were closed and the major ritual in the *kavu* celebrated annually.

The deity of male *kavus* is Ayyapa and is also known as Shasthavu. The Ayyapan's origin is not clear.[18] He is considering the *kula deva* (clan god) of hunters. The worship Ayyapa include *ayappan koothu*, *shastha* songs are narrates the hunting of Ayyapa, whereas in the pilgrims of Shabarimala narrates the life of Ayyapa in a song form in front of a Ayyapan *kavu* named as *ayyapan vilakku*. By worshipping

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[16] William Crooke, *The Popular Religion and Folklore of Northern India*, New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, , 1978(reprint), Pp.126-127.

[17] Sanjivan Azhikode, *Theyyathile Jaathivazhakkam*(Malayalam), Thrissur: Current Books, 2007.

[18] One of the beliefs about the origin of Ayyapa is that he is the offspring of Shiva and Vishnu (Mohini, in his female form). The asura princess Mahishi was burning up with anger at the trick the gods had pulled on her brother, the asura king Mahishasura. Thus, Mahishi began performing austerities, and pleased god Brahma. She asked for the boon of invulnerability, but Brahma said it was not possible so Mahishi planned and asked invulnerability to all men except by the son of Shiva and Vishnu. He granted her the boon of ruling the universe and being invulnerable except by the son of Shiva and Vishnu. She accaepted the boon and since such a son of Shiva and Vishnu not exist, she thought she was safe and began conquering and plundering the world. Vishnu took the form of Mohini a female form and a boy born out of the relation between Shiva and Mohin. This new baby is the male Shiva could have the divine child who would combine their powers and beat Mahishi. From this union, Lord Sree Dharma Sastha was born. Lord Ayyappan is an incarnation of Lord Sree Dharma Sastha. Another version is that, the Mohini originate to kill the asura Bhasmasura. Shiva and Vishnu need to save the world from the attack of Bhasmasura. Later Bhasmasura killed himself by the act of Mohini. Vishnu explained all the stories to Shiva and Shiva asked if he too could see Vishnu in this female form. When Vishnu appeared thus, Shiva was overcome with passion, and united with her. Lord Sree Dharma Sastha born from the union of Shiva and Vishnu. Lord Ayyappan is an incarnation of Lord Sree Dharma Sastha. See for further details, M.V Vishnu Nambuthiri, *Theeyattum Ayyappan Koothum* (Malayalam), Thrissur: Current Books, 2000.

Ayyapa, one who is facing troubles of visible and invisible will ward away. People believe that Ayyapa has control over Saturn (Sani Bhagavan). The main ritual performed by those suffering from *Shani* (Saturn) to Ayyapa is *Niranjanam*. As Ayyapa represents both Vishnu and Shiva in one Divinity, He is worshipped both as Protector and Deliverer.

Another male deity worshipped in the *kavu* is Vettakkorumakan. He was born from the union of Lord Shiva and goddess Parvathi when they took the form of hunters to test Arjuna. The myth says that, *Arjuna was doing a penance to please Lord Siva in order to get a boon which would help him during the war of Kurukshetra. Since Arjuna become too proud of his archery abilities, Lord Shiva and goddess Parvathi wanted to teach him a lesson. Shiva appeared before Arjuna, assuming in the form of Kiratha (hunter), with Parvathi also beside him, dressed as Kirathi (huntress). Shiva fought with Arjuna and finally Arjuna realizes the hunter's identity, and falls at hunter's feet. The huntress vanished and they appeared in their true forms of Shiva and Parvathi. Shiva gave him the Pashupata Astra. After giving Arjuna the Pashupata the divine couple wandered in the forest in the same form for some time. During this period they had a son born of extraordinary effulgence and that is Vettakkorumakan.*

The *Vettakkorumakan pattu* (song for Vettakkorumakan) is a special ritual performed to please Vettakkorumaka. The *Pantheerayiram thengayeru* (breaking of thousand coconuts continuously in a rhythmic motion) is a unique ceremony performed by Theeyadi Nambiyar (a temple servant community) community for Vettekkorumakan. Vettakkorumakan has a fierce form of carrying bow, arrows, swords etc and people worship for the victory in war and attack the enemy. Most of the Vettakkorumakan *kavus* are situated in the Malabar region (North Kerala) whereas most of the Ayyapa *kavu* are situated in Travncore-Cochin area (Southern Kerala) area of Kerala.

The deities of the Bhagavathi *kavu* is Bhadrakali or the Bhagavathi originated from the local incidence of the place. The people believe that Bhagavathi become angry if they do not worship her in proper way. The wrath of Bhagavathi may come in the form of diseases, famine. In addition people seek blessings from the Bhagavathi for good pregnancy, children, life achievements, protection from accidents, business

prosperity and to solve family quarrel.[19] The ritual for Bhagavathi performed in Kerala in different forms such as *Theyyam* in Kasarkode and Kannur area; *Thira* in Kozhikode, *Vela, Pooram* and *Thalapoli* in Palakkad, Thrishur and Malappuram areas respectively; Mudiyettu in Ernakulam area; Padayani in Pathanamthitta.

The god and goddess in the *kavu* is the son or daughter or creation of Shiva. They are created for the protection of people on the earth. For the welfare of the life they are worshipped in different rituals. Ayyapan and Vettakoruman (Vettakorumakan) are the symbol of *roudra* (fears) form. In addition, to worship the god and goddess in the *kavu* for material benefit (*abhishta sidhi*), they are also worshipped to win in the war.[20]

Further, these *kavus* are known under different names based on the deity to whom the grove is dedicated to. They are considered as holy places for worship and many of them have small shrines attached to them.

Table No 5.11: Major *Kavus* of Kerala

Mother Goddess	Male Gods		Zoomorphic Gods		
Bhagavathi/Kali	Ayyapan	Vettakorumakan	Snake	Tiger	Total
559 (75 %)	143 (19 %)	17 (2 %)	27 (4 %)	2 (0)	748 (100%)

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[19] M.V Vishnunambuthiri, *Theyyam,* (Malayalam). Trivandrum, Kerala State Institute of Languages, 1998.

[20] M.G Shahibhooshan, *Keraliyarude Devathasankalppam*(Malayalam), Kottayam: DC Books, 2005:181.

Graph No 5.1: Major Kavus of Kerala
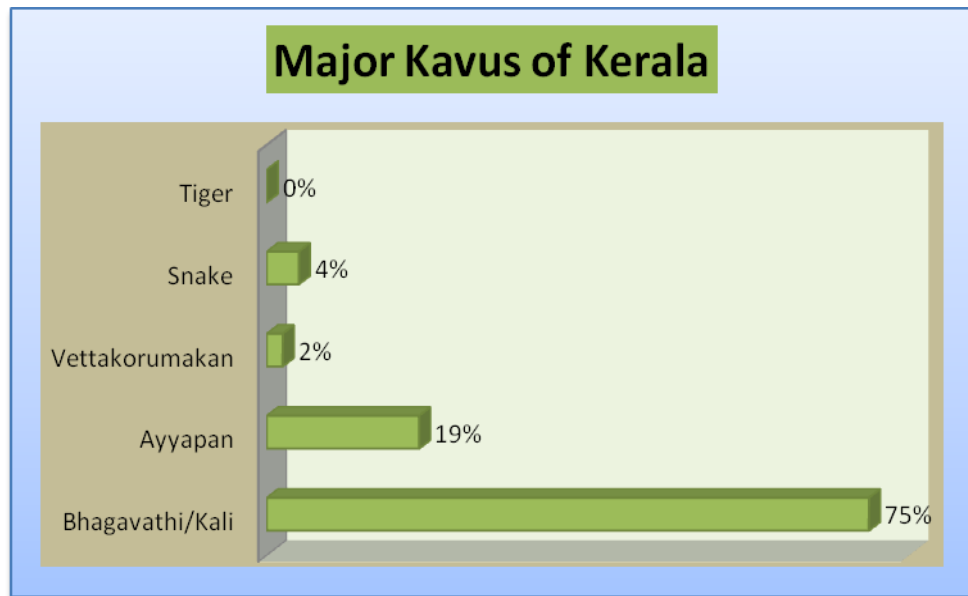
It is evident from the above table that more number of *kavus* is dedicated to local goddesses than to gods of anthropomorphic and zoomorphic. One interesting thing to observe is that the male gods and zoomorphic gods prevalent on the banks of Bharathappuzha are sustained due to mythological base whereas the Bhagavathi *kavus* are constructed based on local legends. Within the verbal genres of folklore myth has wider geographical sphere of influence than the legend. This phenomenon attests to the fact that myth has the inbuilt potential to migrate from elsewhere. The legend contrary to this acquires local character and remains as the belief of the locals. This is crucial to understand that the Bhagavathi/Kali legends manifest the local aspirations, idioms and ideologies thereby forming worldview of the locals. For this reason the myth of Kali though prevalent as pan Indian phenomenon, when it is coming to the soils of Kerala it acquires a distinct and variant occurrence.

In the *kavu* associated with the God/Goddess/ancestors in North Kerala, a ritual dance is performed known as *theyyam*, in central Kerala the performance is *vela*/*pooram*/*thalapoli* and in South Kerala, the ritual is known as *mudiyettu* and *padayani*.
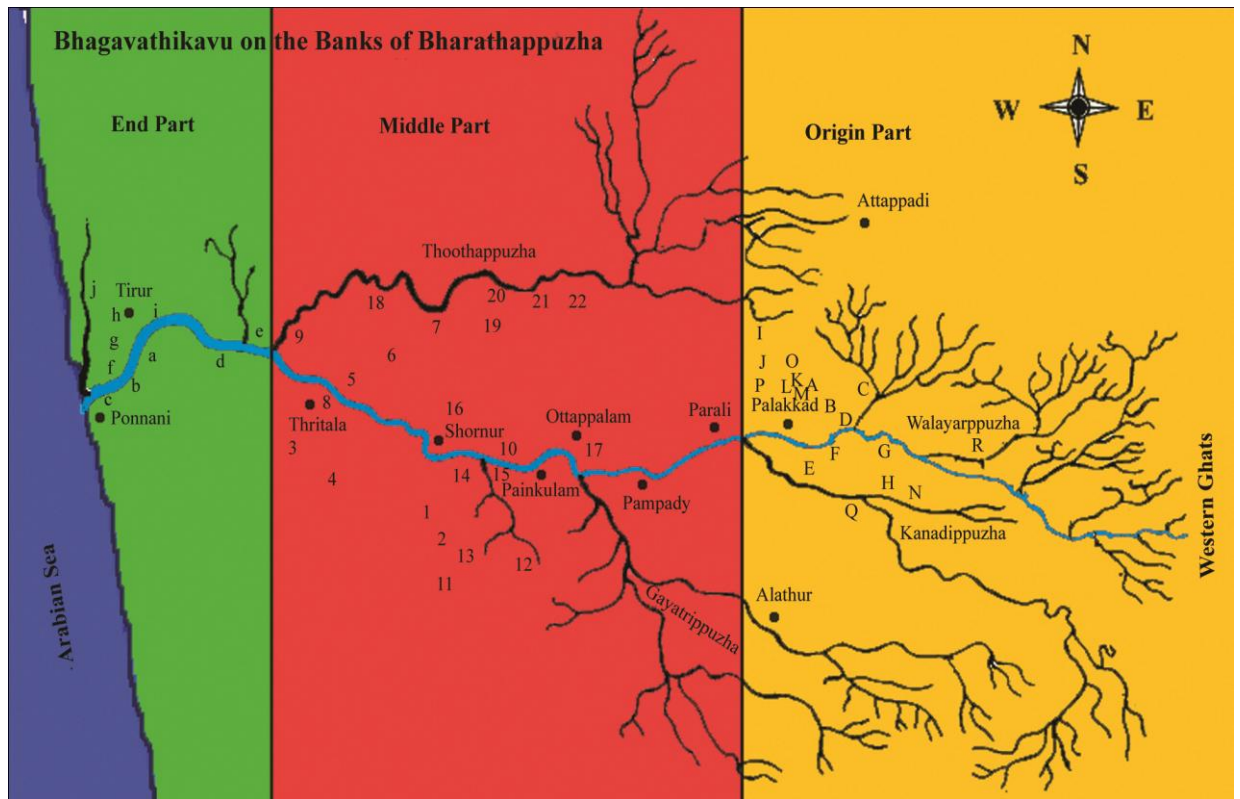
<u>Bhagavathi on the banks of Bharathappuzha</u>

In North India, the goddess is either the consort or under the domination of the male God, whereas in South India, the Goddess has an independent existence. It

means that, the concept of goddess in the north India is the *shakthi* or wife of god and in South India, the goddess as the daughter of Shiva. In Kerala, goddess named as Bhagavathi. She is the power behind this physical world and worshipped in a variety of names by different regions. Bhagavathi consider as the protector of the people and got her form in the *kalamezhuthu* (writing kalam or pictorial drawing) and it is believed that almost all communities such as Mannan, Thiya, Nayar, and Pulaya on the banks of Bharathappuzha worship Bhagavathi in their own way.

The concept of Bhagavathi among the communities of Kerala shows the cultural diversity of the land. The word icon originates from the Greek which means 'a thing for the worship'. Generally, the idol is made by the stone, wood, *kumayakoootu* (mix of lime and sand) or metal. Once they have made the idol and install the idol based on the *nethrolmaleenam* (winking the eyes), the idol represents the Bhagavathi. There are two kinds of idols- a) movable and b) immovable. The movable idols are used in the ritual procession where as the immovable idols are installed inside the *srikovil*. The number of hands in an idol shows the features of idols and the increase of hands shows the *rajo* and *tamo gunas* (quality) of the goddess.[21] The attacking weapons carried on the right hand and the weapons for defend purpose carried on left hand. Devi generally carries *thrissul*, arrow, and axe.

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[21] There are three gunas that serve as the basic operating principles of prakrti (universal nature) such as rajo, sattva, and tamo guna. This gunas are attributes with activity or passion (rajo), purity (sattva) and darkness or destruction (tamo).

Map No 5.1: Bhagavathikavu on the Banks of Bharathappuzha

The *kavu* or the shrine got its name due to the local legends or the local origin myths of goddesses. Most of the *kavus* in the origin part of Bharathappuzha are under the control of the Nayars. They are the patron *ooraalar* (hereditary trustees) and the *kavus* are the basic element of Nayar domination. There are some *kavus* where the priests are Nayars. They conduct forty one days Nambuthiri *puja* in a year. In the Palakkad area mostly Nayars act as priests to the *kavus*. Later they have appointed Nambuthiri priests in the *kavu* and make decision on the matters of the *kavu*. The Nayars were the landlords of the village and the base of all their activities was Bhagavathi. They conduct weekly rituals on Tuesday and Friday and offer *payasam* and *guruthi* (sacrifice) to Bhagavathi. At present, the *kavus* under Nayar are following these rituals. The *kavu* acts as an administrative centre of Nayars. Now days, they form committee and the patron of the *kavu* would be the secretary of the shrine. The members of the village are also the part of the committee for the administration of the shrine. All festivals of the *kavu* are celebrated under the control of this committee.

In middle part, *kavu* is the place where the village deity resides who is trusted to be protecting the village and its property from natural calamities and diseases. The villagers would regularly conduct annual ritual performances in the *kavu*. No one can change the rituals in the *kavu* because most of the *kavus* are under the control of *kavu* committee which include the members of different communities reside around the *kavu*.

The *kavus* on the end part of Bharathappuzha are under the control of individual family. They consider the Bhagavathi as their familial deity. The members of the family are the executive committee members of the shrine and they have the right to decide all matters related to the shrine. They constitute a committee for conducting annual celebration in the shrine. The executive committee seeks the help of the villagers and constitute a separate committee for the festival. This committee do not have any right to decide the matters related to the shrine. The committee for the conduct of festival disperse after the annual festival of the shrine.

The goddesses directly express the future incidents. These mother goddesses offer agricultural fertility and the protection of family life. However, she cannot offer other world's happiness/paradise. When she protects the agricultural land she becomes a good mother and when she destroyed the land through rains and deluge she is considered as a terrible mother. That means the mother becomes both the birth and death. But in the banks of Bharathappuzha people considered the goddesses as a good mother because she does not create any kind of destruction in the land.

The social background of mother goddesses is agriculture. There is no concept about another world than this material world for the mother goddesses. The benefit to get from the worship of mother goddesses is the protection of the family/community, fertility and the paddy product. The worship of the mother has been extended from the Naduvazhi to the lower caste people.

The banks of Bharathappuzha are the land of many goddesses and the forms of these goddesses are countless and her manifestations are infinite. Generally she is known under many local names. In another way, she is attached to the place where she is staying, object related to the migration such as *rayamangalam thonikadanu bhagavathi, palakkal amma, muthasshiyar* and so on.

In the image of Bhagavathi, she has only a face that is in 'black colour' and the rest of the bodies are hidden. The idol is constructed either in stone or in the form of *Vaalkannadi* (oval shape metal mirror with a handle). The devotees believe that the presence of the *Bhagavathi* can be seen in this idol.

As part of fieldwork, legends on Bhagavathi are collected from the three parts of the banks of Bharathappuzha starting from Palakkad area (origin part) to Ponnani area (end part). The total number of legends collected from the three parts is fifty. The dispersal of these legends is not uniform but infact increases in the first and second part and decreases in the end part as shown in the diagram below:

Daigram No 5.2: Progression of Legends
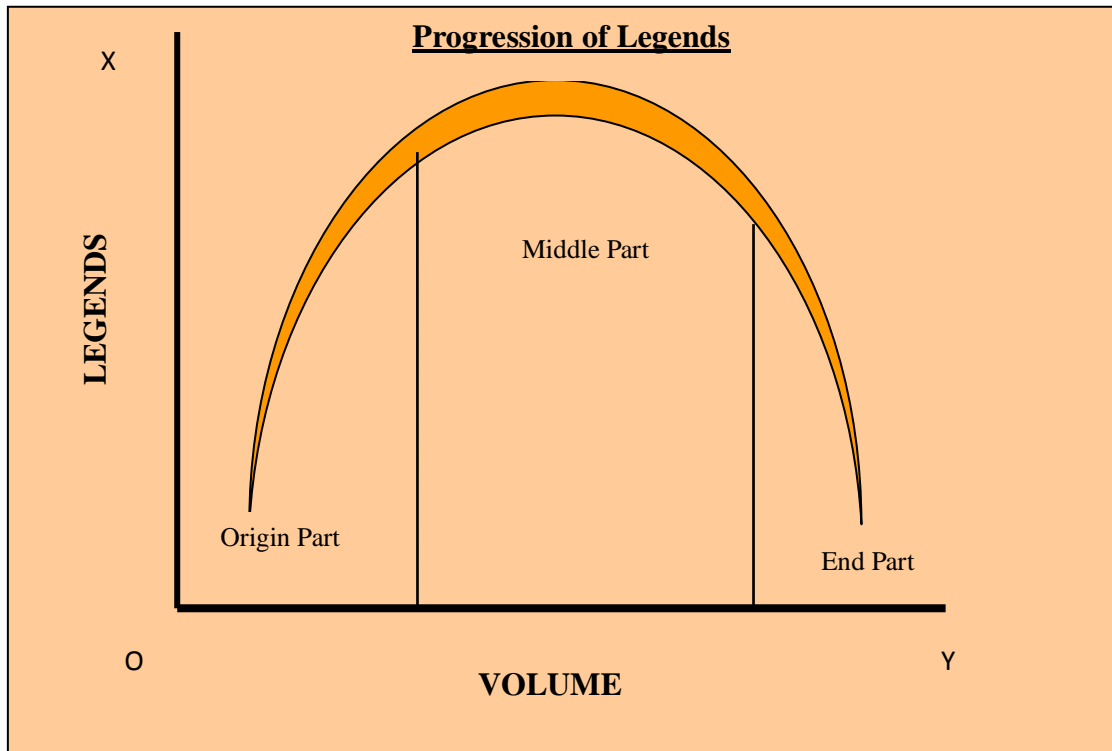
The above graph shows the legends on the 'X' axis and their size (volume) in the 'Y' axis. The legends in the beginning part reflect migratory nature and increased in the middle part as Kali concept and decreases at the end part once it attains a form.

The origin legends of Bhagavathi on the banks of Bharathappuzha are follows:

Local Legends of Bhagavathi

Origin part

1. Chandhana Bhagavathi

   Centuries back, this place was a huge forest and once a sage made penance in this region. He felt the presence of the goddesses and he installed a stone and smeared chandanam (sandal) on it. Thus chandhbhishekam (smear sandal) becomes the main offering to the goddesses and the kavu known as Chandhanakavu.

2. Chathankulangara Bhagavathi

   The believers of the Chandhana Bhagavathi kavu were of many communities. The Nayar community of this area did not like this sharing and they invoked the goddesses of Chandhana kavu on the branch of pala tree (Alsto-nia Scholaris) and installed in the middle of the Nayar communities houses and started worship. This is the Chathankulangara kavu.

3. Malampuzha Hemambika

   It is believed that the sage Parasurama used to live and perform penances on the mountain situated on the eastern frontiers of present day Kerala. The people of the region suffered a lot, because of the atrocities of a demon chief called Nilasura. Parasurama went to the Himalayas to pray for the grace of the lord Kailasa. As a result of this, the mother of the universe appeared before him as Bhagavathi Hemambika and enquired about the purpose of his visit. On his request, the Devi reached mount Sahyadri. She killed Nilasura and took permanent abode there. It is said that the Bhagavathi chose her permanent abode in Karimala.
   A Nambuthiri priest used to climb up to Karimalai to do daily puja for the Devi. Later, he found it difficult because of his old age. Therefore one day he pleaded the Bhagavathi to find a solution. In a dream the Bhagavathi instructed him to do puja for her on a foot hill (lower part of Karimala) called muthiramkunnu. Then the Nambuthiri installed her idol there and continued the daily puja. This is the Hemambika Kavu of Malampuzha (near the dam).

4. Hemambika Kaipathi

   As time passed the Nambuthiri became old and he was unable to reach the Muthirikunnu. He prayed to the Bhagavathi again. She appeared in another dream and promised him to appear at a pond near Nambuthirie's place. At the appointed time, the Devi began to appear in the middle of the pond and her hands appeared first above the pond. The Nambuthiri became crazy and jumped to the pond and grabbed the emerging hand of the Devi before she appeared in full. The hands then turned into stone. Nambuthiri took them and decided to install them in the same place. After this incident the place got the name known as Kallaikulangara (Kalai means 'became stone' and kulam stands for pond).

5. Vadakanthara Thirupuraikal

Many asuras were killed by the arrow of lord Vishnu in the war between devas and asuras. At the end of the war, only four asura girls remained. The last one, known as dhanavathi gave birth to a child called Dharika. Dharuka offered penance to lord Brahma and got the grace that, except women, nobody could kill him. Then he became arrogant and started to attack devas and even the combined attempt of the thrimurthies failed to tackle Dharika. Once, Dharika met sage Naradha where he made a bad comment against lord Parameshwara. Naradha opposed it and the Dharika attacked Naradha. Naradha informed this incident to Paramashiva and with the request of Vishnu and Brahma, Paramashiva created a Devi from his third eye (thrikannu). She was known as kannaki because she originated from his eye (eye means kannu). Kannaki asked about her duty and Parameshwara told her that her duty was to kill Dharika and present his head on the foot of the Parameshwara. He gave weapons and two assistants as kannukettu and kannadathu. She reached the Dhanavapuri where the Dharika was living. In the war, Dharika lost his army and Devi followed him. Dharika ran away and reached the pathala. She killed him in the pathala with her sword and took his head; she reached in front of Parameshwara with the blooded sword and the head. Parameshwara blessed her.

After the death of Dharika, she asked Parameshwara about her next duty. He informed that her duty now was to live on the earth as a lady in the name of kannaki. In due course, her husband Kovalan was killed by the Pandya king during the sale of her ankle and she became furious and destroyed the Madhura city. Then she left Madhura and reached the Parashurama land (Kerala). Then she became the Bhagavathi of the palakkattu sherry. During the attack of Tippu, this temple was destroyed and one believer got the idol of the Kannaki and installed it under a banyan tree.

6. Kottam Kulathi (vaidhyanathapuram)

An old Nambuthiri in the Kottal Kulathi area was the ardent devotee of kottu kulathi Bhagavathi in the Kannadi region. The Nambuthiri became old and unable to reach the kavu for worship. He got Bhagavathie's blessing in the dream and she allowed him to worship her near to his house. This old man was also the assistant of the Palakkad king and king helped him to install a Devi in the kottukulathi of vaidhyanathapuram. This is the kottukulathi goddesses.

7. Kaarakaattu parambu

The Vaidhyanadhpuram is the place of Brahmins (Palakkad) and the local people of the region came to the kavu through the banks of Kalpathippuzha. Once a devotee was unable to walk and reach the kottukulathi kavu of Vaidhyanathapuram and he prayed for a solution. Then the goddesses appeared in the dream of this believer and the main priest of the Kottukulathi kavu. She ordered him to take her part from the main kavu and install it in the present place where the kavu is now situated, for the worship of the other people.

8. Puthoor Thirupuraikal Bhagavathi

After the destruction of Madhura city, kannaki moved to the western part and she reached Sahyadri. Then, she sat under a pala tree. A small stone appeared under the tree and it is believed to be a representation of Kannaki.

There is another legend about the origin of the Bhagavathi. Once, three sisters were walking at night and one of the sisters became so tired, she told her sisters that she wanted to sit in a particular place. She found out a place under a pala

tree. She became the goddess of puthur, while the other two left and continued their walk.

9. Thirumandhakunnu Angadippuram

Yuvanaashwan, a childless king in the Ikshavaku dynasty reached the ashrama of sage Brughu. The sage had kept a pot full of water in his house for the pregnancy of the wife of the king. The king did not know about this and he drank the water in the pot. The sage did not know about this act and the king gave birth to a boy. There was no way to give milk to the child and he prayed for help. Then god Indra appeared and gave his finger and asked the boy to drink milk from his finger. This child was known as Mandhathavu.

Mandhathavu grew up and he made penance to lord Shiva. Shiva appeared and the king asked a solution for mukthi. Then Shiva gave an idol and the Mandhathavu installed it in the thirumandhakunnu and started to worship.

The idol that the Shiva gave to Mandhathavu was the Shiva linga which was worshipped by Parvathi and she became furious at this act. She called Bhadrakali and enquired about the Shiva linga. She knew that Shiva has given it to Mandhathavu and Parvathi wish to get back the idol. The army of Bhadrakali and Mandhathavu fought each other. Bhadrakali tried to get the idol of Shiva from Mandhathavu and the idol became broken into two parts. Then suddenly Shiva and Parvathi appeared and blessed them. Then he got the Shiva linga and also Shiva asked him to worship Bhadrakali in the kavu. This is the Bhadrakali of this temple.

10. Kongad Thirumandhakunnu

Once, two sisters of Vellatiti kovilakam (residence of a king) went for sightseeing on a palanquin. On the way, they felt thirsty. For satisfying their thirst, the palanquin bearers gave them water from tender coconuts. The elder sister took it sitting inside the palanquin, while the younger sister drank it after stepping down from the palanquin. In those days royal women were not allowed to make public appearances. Therefore the elder sister, who took offence in the action of the younger sister, reported the matter to the elders of the royal family. As per the custom, though unwillingly, the Raja excommunicated his younger daughter. However, he ensured her safety by arranging to marry her off to a Nambuthiri of Mutappilappilli mana. He also made the newly married couple settle down at Kongat. Moreover for their use, a shrine dedicated to the goddess Tirumandhamkunnu Bhagavathi was built.

11. Ezhakadu thirukunnapally

There were three sisters in a place and once they were walking at night. Meanwhile they saw a light near the hill of Kalladikod. It was a house known as kunnappully and they requested them to stay in their house for a night. The ladies asked for dishes to prepare food and the house member gave dishes of steel, clay and bronze. Then the old man of the house got a dream that informed him to worship her under a kavu. Then the kavu also got its name as kunnappully. The other two ladies became the goddesses of sathram kavu and panchery kavu.

12. Mundoor Palakeez kavu

A long time ago, this place was a dense forest and one sage arrived to this place because he was attracted to the beauty of this land. He chose the serene place for his meditation. Pleased with him, Bhagavathi appeared as a swayamboo idol in the area. This stone was considered as the Bhagavathi of this kavu. Later the place

became populated and one magician in the Mannan community reached this place and challenged the goddess. Envied with the powers of Bhagavathi, the Mannan decided to lessen the powers of the deity and resorted to bad sorcery practices. Enraged by these activities Bhagavathi decided to punish the magician. Seeing the fierce nature of Bhagavathi, Mannan ran around the whole tattakam (jurisdiction) of the Bhagavathi. When he was taking rest for a while, drinking water from a small stream, goddess killed him and threw away his head. Thereafter goddess sat at southeast of the kavu.

13. Vallikodu Valayapulli kavu

There was a Brahmin who reached this place and he wanted the *prosperity of this region. This Brahmin invoked the goddesses of Kodungaloor into a stone and installed that under a pala tree (Alsto-nia Scholaris). This is the goddesses of valayappulli kavu.*

14. Manappullikavu

Dakshan, the father of Uma decided to conduct a yaga (holy sacrifice) and invite all the sages and goddesses except his daughter Uma and her husband Shiva. Uma thought that it was her duty to attend the yaga even if her father has not invited her. Shiva refused her to attend the yaga and finally based on a condition that if Yaksha insults her in the yaga time Uma should not come back. She agreed to it. Uma attended the yaga and her father insulted her. She became tensed as she knew about the incidents. Shiva became angry and threw his hair on the floor and created Bhadrakali and Veerabhadra. They killed Dhaksha. After the request of Lord Brahma and Vishnu, he brought back Dhaksha and continued to complete the yaga. This Bhadrakali is the Devi of Manappulli kavu and Veerabhdran is the sub idol of the respective kavu.

15. Yakki Kavu

One day an agricultural labourer by the name Yakki was digging the ground *and her spade touched a granite stone from which blood oozed out. She immediately collected leaves of some herbs and kept them on the cut-wound of the granite stone and then reported the matter to the owners of the land. A prasna (astrological calculation) was conducted and revealed that the presence of Bhagavathi is on the stone and they have to keep the stone in a proper respect. Later they installed the stone under a pala tree (Alsto-nia Scholaris) and started to worship. The shrine came to be known as Yakki kavu after the name of the agricultural woman.*

16. Kaymukunnat Kavu

Once, two Muslim textile traders went to Tiruvilwamala Pazhayannoor and neighbouring areas for selling the clothes. When they were returning by dusk they saw that Bharathappuzha was in floods and it was impossible for them to cross the river. They got frightened and stood on its bank. They saw an old woman who was about to cross the river. She told them to accompany with her. Though they hesitated at first, they followed her later and could cross the river without much difficulty. When they reached Mannoor the old lady disappeared. Next morning the Muslim traders reported this incident to the Naduvazhi (landlord) who arranged a deva

prasna. It was revealed therein that the old lady was none other than Bhagavathi. Immediately arrangements were made for installing an idol of the Bhagavathi.

17. Oottukulangara Bhagavthy Kavu

On a pournami (full moon) day a Panan (person belonging to a caste of musicians) happened to pass through the place at midnight. He heard a beautiful lyric from the air at that odd hour and he was at a loss to find out the origin of the beautiful voice. He stood there for a while wonderstruck. At that time he heard an incorporeal voice saying 'if you want to see me close one eye and look'. As directed he closed one eye and looked. Then he saw a beautiful woman swinging on an oonjaal (swing) tied to an Asoka tree (Saraca Indica) on the side of a tank. The moment he saw the figure of the Goddess, he lost sight of that eye. Next morning he reported the matter to karanavar (old man) of the Mannatt Natuvaat Nayar family. A prasna (astrological calculation) was followed which revealed that the Goddess was seated beneath the Asoka tree (Saraca Indica). When they went there they saw a swayamboo idol and made arrangements for initial rites to be done to that idol. Since the shrine was located near a kulam (tank), the kavu got the name Sree Oottukulangara kavu.

18. Puthusseri Bhagavathi Kavu

The karanavar of Ullatiri taravat (house) was a great devotee of Kodungaloor Bhagavathi. One day, when he was returning after worshipping the Goddess, it is said, she followed him on his Palmyra umbrella. As soon as he reached Putusseri, he started dancing, jumping and running as though he was insane all the while proclaiming that he possessed the powers of the Goddess. Initially people considered him mad. But later they decided to test his claim and asked him to stand in the midst of a large fire-pit prepared at the place where he was standing. As directed by them and without any hesitation he stood coolly on it and came out without any burns. He then directed all those present there to build a shrine for Bhagavathi.

Table No 5.12: Motifs in the Legends of Bhagavathi:- Origin part

S.No	Name of Bhagavathi	Motif	Remarks
1	Chandhana Bhagavathi	Sages penance	Installed a stone and start puja
2	Chathankulangara Bhagavathi	Pala tree	
3	Malampuzha Hemambika	Dream of the Nambuthiri	Nambuthiti installed the idol of Bhagavthi for worship
4	Hemambika Kaipathi	Dream of the Nambuthiri	The hands of Bhagavathi turned stone
5	Vadakanthara	Kannaki	reached the place after

			the destroying of Madhura city
6	Kottam Kulathi	Bhagavathi appeared in dream	Install the idol of Bhagavathi
7	Kaarakaattu parambu	Bhagavathi appeared in dream	Install the idol in the present *kavu*
8	Puthoor Thirupuraikal Bhagavathi	(a)Kannaki (b) seat	In this two legend Bhagavathi Sat under a pala tree
9	Thirumandhakunnu Angadippuram	Shiva appeared in dream of sage	Querral lead to the solution
10	Kongad Thirumandhakunnu	Excommunication	
11	Ezhakadu thirukunnapally	Dream of the Nambuthiri	
12	Mundoor Palakeez	Sage penance	
13	Vallikodu Valayapulli	Brahmin invoked the goddesses through penance	installed that under a pala tree
14	Manappullikavu	Bhadrakali	Shiva created Bhadrakali from his hair to kill Dhaksha
15	Yakki Kavu	Swayambhoo idol	blood oozed out from the granite after the toching of spade
16	Kaymukunnat Kavu	old lady	installed an idol of the Bhagavathi
17	Oottukulangara Bhagavthi Kavu	Bhagavathi appeared in dream	Swayamboo idol under a *Ashoka* tree (Panan lost his eye sight when he saw the figure of Bhagavathi)

| 18 | Puthusseri Bhagavathi | Palmyra umbrella | built a shrine for Bhagavathi |

From the legends that are found in the origin part the motif table above is arrived at. Motif is an important element in folklore to understand the 'type' and the type is an ethnic category for both motif and type originate due to tradition and remain as constant feature. Therefore in the study of motifs reveal the ways that the folk appropriate the narrative (for example: legend/myth/tale). Based on the above table a typology of motifs can be enumerated:

Table No 5.13: Typology of Motifs

S.No	Motif Type	Number	Percentage
1	Dream	7	36
2	Human Action	5	26
3	Natural Object	3	16
4	Woman	3	16
5	Cultural Object	1	6

The motifs, dream and human action (penance and consecration) form the foremost in perpetuating the Bhagavathi/Kali *kavus*. These two magic elements are very significant in not only consolidating but also perpetuating any religious belief. The Bhagavathi *kavus* are no exception to this. Both these motifs form 62 % which attest to the fact that in the process of appropriation of a myth such as Kali, the dream and penance form an integral part of religious beliefs to construct the ritual of Bhagavathi. It is also interesting to note that religion has capacity to transform natural objects such as stone, tree etc., into cultural objects. For this reason 16 % of the motifs in the legends of Bhagavathi are associated with natural objects and thereby worshipped as religious objects. In the case of motif of 16 % associated with woman (Kannaki/old lady etc.) one can find that appropriation of one

myth/legend into another myth/legend is visible. In any religious history the migratory myths are localised and consumed as part of the religious behaviour of that local. Therefore in the origin part from the study of motifs one can notice that the Kali myth is migrated to Kerala soils from elsewhere. That is one of the reasons why Kannaki and old lady as Kali is found in the motifs of the Bhagavathi legends.

Middle Part

1. Thonikadavu

There was an uncle in the puliyathu family and he was very disillusioned because he didn't have children. He went to the northern part (Mookambika) and prayed for children. On his return journey in a small boat, the goddesses of that temple accompanied him and sat in a rock (idayankara hill). Then she saw the tharra of the paraya community and she sat there. Again she continued her journey and sat in a kalari (place of Nayar community). But the goddesses felt some uneasiness because one Shiva temple (thirumittakodu) was situated near to her. Then, she again continued on her journey and saw a place near a paddy field and she sat on that place under an ong tree. The goddess reached the place through a boat and the place was known as thonikadavu.

2. Ponnuniyar

There were five children (unni) who lived in a house. One day as they were playing near their house, one child went missing and they could not find the child. After some days, the karanavar of the family had a dream that the missing child was the incarnation of Bhagavathi and there would a stone emerged from the eastern side of their house. The very next day, they saw the stone under a pala tree and started to worship it as Bhagavathi.

3. Aamakavu

The karanavar of kizhakkekkara taravat (house) was an ardent devotee of Goddess Mookambika at kolloor. He was a regular worshipper of the temple. When he became old he was forced to stop visiting the temple. In his last visit to the temple he took leave with grief. When he returned home he had a dream that the Goddess had accompanied him in his umbrella. He had kept his umbrella on the maachu (inner roof of house) of his house. Next day, he tried to take the umbrella but he failed. Then he understood that the presence of the goddesses was in the maachu. A prasna which followed substantiated his vision. He continued to worship the Goddess at his residence. Later he built the present kavu for the Goddess.

4. Koyamkavu

After the killing of Dharuka, Kali became angry and she was searching for blood to quench her revenge. Her father Shiva knew this things and he appointed two children in front of Kailasa and instructed them to drink Kali's milk if Kali comes to Kailasa. The children did this act and the Kali became calm. Later Kali searched for her father and she met him in the poyilathu Shiva temple. She tried to sit there but

Shiva asked her to sit in another place. Then she went under a tree and made it her permanent place.

5. Paruthoor

   A priest known as Agnihotri got three spears in the Kaveri river during his travel. The iron spear was installed under a konna tree, the gold spear in his house and the silver one on a rock in the Bharathappuzha. The iron spear was considered as the Devi and later it was taken and installed in the srikovil shrine. The spear was considered as Sankalpa of Bhagavathi.

6. Muthashiyaar

   Perumbara Nayar in vattakavu is a prominent family in this region and they had a fight with neighbouring Nayar family. They started the war and while the war was progressing, some mysterious power came in the battlefield and asked them to stop the war. Then the two groups stopped the war as they understood it was devi who intercepted and constructed a kavu for the Bhagavathi.
   Another version is that, there were three sisters who went for a walk and one of them got tired midway. The elder sister went to a Nayar house (anthookara Nayar) and drank milk from there. The younger sister ridiculed the elder sister about the milk. Then the elder sister got angry and kicked the younger sister and her leg got fracture. The elder sister refused to continue on the walk and she sat under a tree. This is the muthahsiyaar kavu.

7. Mulayankavu

   The place was a forest and one day a Mulaya (lower caste) lady came to cut the grass around the place. Her sickle touched a stone and blood oozed from it. Then she informed others also and they started worshipping the goddesses in that place.

8. Thrithala Mudappakadu Maruningal

   A long time ago, a sage made penance in this area and the goddess appeared in front him. He got the power to treat diseases from her and the sage installed the presence of the goddesses under a banyan tree. He started his treatment and the place where the medicine (marunnu) was provided was known as maruningal.

9. Irimbiliyam Kanakkaru kavu

   Many Bhagavathis was bathing in the Bharathappuzha river and while bathing they heard the song of Kanakka (SC community) community and one Devi forgot the time. She enjoyed the song for a long time and she accompanied the kanaka community along with their singing. The community made a small temple for the goddesses and installed her in that place.

10. Pathamkulathi

   Two sisters were going to their father's house (panamanna) via a paddy field and one of the Devi got thirst for water. The place was located around the area of the Paraya community and she got water from their well. Then she asked to other Devi to stay for some time while they rested. But the others refused to wait and the elder sister told her to get her own thing in this place and the others left. Then the paraya

community understood the presence of the goddesses and they started to worship a stone. This is the origin legend of the goddesses.

11. Virutaanam

After the killing of Dharuka, Kali asked her father about her next duty. He instructed to go to the earth. She is the Bhadrakali of this kavu.

12. Palakkal

Once, a sage reached this area and the land was a dense forest. He made penance to the parashakthi and the Devi appeared in this place. He requested the Devi to stay on in this place. Bhagavathi replied that her presence would always be in this place. Then the sage installed a stone and start worship as Bhagavathi.

Another version is that, thiruvanjikulam (southern part) was the place of this Devi and she had a quarrel with her mother. Then she left that place and reached minaloor and kodungaloor. She could not stay in that place and continued her journey to the north. Then she saw a pala tree near Shiva's temple at palakkal. She also appeared in the dream of the head of the Nambuthiri illam (house). Then he understood that the presence of the goddess was in that place and started to worship the tree and the stone. The place where the Devi sits is in the pala tree and the stone is known as palakkal (pala + kall).

13. Mullakkal Bhagavathi

An old Nayar karanavar had the practise to visit the Mulayan kavu for worship. In course of time, the old man got ill health and prayed to the goddesses for a solution. Then she came on the umbrella of this old man and sat in the roof of his house. Later after years, the members of the family installed the idol of the Devi under an ung tree.

14. Kudapparra

Two old Nayar men from the pandara tharavatu and padinjarumury tharavatu went to Vaniyamkulam market. Vaniyamkulam is situated on the other side of Bharathappuzha. They used the umbrella which was made by the Paraya community during their travel. After their return journey, they crossed the river and reached in a rock near to the river. They needed to take rest and refresh. For this purpose one old man kept his umbrella on the rock. As they wanted to proceed, he tried to pick up the umbrella but he couldn't do so. This rock was considered as being bestowed with the presence of the Devi. Later, one old man kept his umbrella in the roof of his house. Years later, the Nayar family installed the goddess under a banyan tree near the river.

15. Vazhalikavu

There are two Bhagavathies in this kavu. The legend of the origin of the first Bhagavathi (vazhalikavu amma) is that a Paraya old man went to southern part of the present kavu, Kilimangalam. He kept his umbrella under a banyan tree on the banks of Bharathppuzha and went for bathing. On his return, he felt some peculiarity in his Palmyra umbrella. He tried to pick up the umbrella but failed. Later he informed the incidents to the Nambuthiri mana (house). After the prasna, they reached the conclusion that the Bhagavathi was on the umbrella and she had to be

worshipped in a proper way. Then they started to worship her as a stone under the banyan tree. Later this idol replaced to a shrine.

The story about the second Bhagavathi and her acquiring the status of daughter of the main deity is that, in one of the devastating floods in Bharathappuzha, Vazhalikkavil amma, the main deity heard a pathetic cry of a female asking for help for rescue. Amma immediately came out of the sreekovil and saw a divine lady flowing down fast in the midstream. Amma jumped to the river, swam through the flood, caught and brought her ashore. The rescued divine lady was Kurumba and amma made her sit on her right side and treated her as her own daughter. Amma did not want her daughter scared even by seeing the once devastating Bharathappuzha that she asked the newly found daughter to sit facing the west facing the panoramic paddy fields, plantations and beyond. This new Kurumba was later on called Kurumba amma. But both deities were worshipped in the form of Kali.

16. Aaryankavu

Kali killed Dharuka in a big fight. After the war, Kali met her father and asked about her next duty. He told her to go to Aryankavu and take care of the people of the Aryan kavu. This is the origin legend of Aryankavu Devi.

17. Chinakathoor

After the war between Rama and Ravana, Rama and Lakshmana came to Tiruvilwamala for performing the pitr-tarpana. Goddess Bhagavathi and Lord Ayyappa also accompanied them. On reaching the place, Rama entrusted the Bhagavathi and Ayyappa with the task of finding out suitable places for them near Tiruvilwamala. Instead of gathering the data as directed by the Lord, the two took the directions lightly and spent their time in leisure. Since they were not seen for some time Rama and Lakshmana went in search of them. Lakshmana saw them whiling away their time in the forest. He got angry and kicked down from the place, which as a result fell into a ditch. Seeing Rama approaching Bhagavathi, she feared the wrath of the Rama and fled from the place crying aloud. She crossed the Bharathappuzha and took refuge at Palappuram. The Goddesses thereafter appeared as the swaymabhoo idol.

Another legend is that, Hanuman reached Lanka as a messenger of Rama and when entering to the Lanka, Lanka Lakshmi blocked him and refused to allow Hanuman to enter the city. Then they made a war and the Lanka Lakshmi was defeated and ran away and reached Palappuram. She is the present Bhagavathi of Palappuram.

18. Vilangott Bhagavthi kavu

Once, a devotee of Tirumandamkunnu Bhagavathi had to leave her mana (house) as she got married to a person of chumaramkanthatt mana (house) of Vilayoor. She was very disappointed as she could not worship the Goddess and she ardently prayed to the Goddess for pardoning her for breaking her routine worship. One night she heard the Goddess telling her in a dream that there was a swayamboo idol in the site where the kavu was presently situated. Next morning as told by her, the members of the mana visited the site and to their great surprise, they found a small sila (stone) idol emerged out of the ground. Immediately a shrine was built at the site.

19. Pulakkat Bhagavathi

This place had thick forests during the ancient period. For some years a sage spent his days here. One day some persons went to this area for collecting forest products. They saw a beautiful lady sitting on a rock in the midst of the forest. When they approached the spot the lady disappeared. They narrated this incident to the nearby Nambuthiri. When they inspected the site they saw a small swaymboo idol there. The idol was related to Goddess and later a shrine was built for her.

20. Puttanalukkal Bhagavathi

A member of the Mozhikunnath mana used to visit Sree Thirumandamkunnu Bhagavathi temple regularly. When he became old he found it difficult to continue this visit and prayed to the Goddess there to pardon him for discontinuing his visit to that temple. On his return from the temple he kept his Palmyra umbrella close to the tank of a place for taking bath. After bath, when he tried to lift the umbrella he could not lift it. Being a pious Brahmin he could not immediately understand the presence of the Goddess on the umbrella. After they understood the presence of Bhagavathi, a shrine was built for her at the place.

21. Toota Bhagavathi kavu

One day, two ladies, a Nayar lady belonging to Kannabra taravat (house) and an antharjanam (Nambuthiri lady) went to Toothapuzha to take a bath. When they were taking bath, they saw a clay pot flowing down the current of the river. When the pot came near, the Nayar lady took it and kept it underneath the peepal tree with the intention of taking it after bath. But when she came to take the pot she could not lift it. She was frightened and reported the matter to the elder members of her family. A prasna was then held, which revealed that the chaitanya of Bhadrakali was present in that small earthen pot and that it was necessary to build a shrine for her at that place. The clay of the small earthen pot was also used for marking the idol in sitting pose.

22. Utrattil Bhagavathi

Once, an old pious member of kizhiyettat mana (house) went to Kodungalloor for Bhajanam (adoration). For months he continued the Bhajanam with great devotion. A messenger came with the report that his presence was urgently needed in his mana and hence he had to go back. Feeling very disappointed in terminating the Bhajanam all of a sudden, reluctantly he decided to leave for his home. On the night of his return, he heard an incorporeal voice of the goddess asking him to proceed to his mana and that she would be accompanying him. Next day he left for his mana and on reaching there he kept his uttareeyam (upper garment) on the beam of the mana. As and when he reached the mana, all antharjanams (nambuthiri women) felt some uneasiness in their mind and some among them, who were very devout, could see a beautiful maiden standing on the bank of a tank close by. After some time, the maiden disappeared. As the Goddess came on an uttareeyam the kavu got the name uttareeyam kavu and later shortened it as Utrattil kavu. A shrine was later built there.

Table No 5.14: Motifs in the Legends of Bhagavathi: - Middle part

S.No	Name of Bhagavathi	Motif	Remarks

1	Thonikadavu Bhagavathi	Small boat	Came from Mookambika with Nayar
2	Ponnuniyar Bhagavathi	Child	stone emerged under a *pala* tree
3	Aamakavu Bhagavathi	Umbrella	Goddess Mookambika accompanied with Nambuthiri
4	Koyam Bhagavathi	Kali	Shiva asked Kali to sit in another place
5	Paruthoor Bhagavathi	Iron spear	installed under a *konna* tree by Brahmin
6	Muthashiyaar Bhagavathi	Presence of Bhagavathi in battlefield/refused to continue on the walk	sat under a Pala tree
7	Mulayankavu Bhagavathi	Sickle touched a stone and blood oozed	From the sickle of low caste woman
8	ThrithalaMudappakadu Maruningal Bhagavathi	Sage made penance	installed the presence of the goddesses under a banyan tree
9	Irimbiliyam Kanakkaru kavu Bhagavathi	Bath	Bhagavathi accompanied the kanaka community from bharathappuzha
10	Pathamkulathi Bhagavathi	Thirst for water	Stayed in th place
11	Virutaanam Bhagavathi	Kali after the war	
12	Palakkal Bhagavathi	Sage penance/quarrel with mother	installed a stone by sage nambuthiris dream
13	Mullakkal Bhagavathi	Umbrella of Nayar	under an *ung* tree
14	Kudapparra Bhagavathi	Umbrella of Nayar	Under a banyan tree
15	Vazhalikavu Bhagavathi	Umbrella of Paraya/ help for rescue	under the banyan tree
16	Aaryankavu Bhagavathi	Kali after the war	
17	Chinakathoor Bhagavathi	Rama kicked the Bhagavathi (departure)/Lanka lakshmi (departure)	Ramayana
18	Vilangott Bhagavathi	Bhagavathi appeared in the dream of a woman	Swayamboo idol
19	Pulakkat Bhagavathi	beautiful lady sitting on a rock	Swayamboo idol
20	Puttanalukkal Bhagavathi	Palmyra umbrella	Came with Brahmin
21	Toota Bhagavathi kavu	Pot	Kept under a peepal tree by Nayar lady

22	Utrattil Bhagavathi	*Uttareeyam* (upper garment)	Goddess came on an *uttareeyam* (upper garment) of nambuthiri

In the middle part as seen from the above table the numbers of legends are increased to twenty two from the origin part of eighteen. This reflects that once the myth is migrated and internalised, gets crystallized and appears as if it is native to the culture. Therefore, the versions of motifs also increase resulting in the increase of variations. However, it need not necessarily result in the increase of 'types'. Infact it may also show a decreasing trend.

Table No 5.15: Motif in the Legend

S. No	Motif Type	Number	Percentage
1	Cultural Object	9	40
2	Human Action	7	33
3	Human	5	23
4	Dream	1	4

In the middle part one can find four types of motifs. Out of which 40% are associated with cultural objects such as umbrella, iron spear, pot etc. in the middle part of the banks of Bharathappuzha as stated earlier, the myth of Kali got crystallized and therefore, the cultural objects are attributed with divine power and personified as Bhagavathi. In other words the presence of goddess Bhagavathi is seen in the cultural objects and therefore, attributed with the sacrality and worship through ritual performances. The next type of motif that is dominant (33%) in the middle part is connected with human actions such as bath, thirst, battle etc., reflects typically the 'oico-typification'of motif with localised environmental and cultural behaviours. For instance in the middle part of Bharathappuzha banks, the place Pambadi and Tirunavaya is known for ritual bathing as part of death ritual ceremony. Therefore bath as a motif appears in the very construction of the legend of Bhagavathi. Likewise, in the middle part the Bharathappuzha is found in most of the year in dry form with huge sand deposits. The motif of thirst is therefore constructed reflecting the natural environments in the legends of Bhagavathi. The motif of battle/battlefield present in the middle part in the legends of Bhagavathi reflects the historicity of the

region wherein the whole territory was transformed into battlefield during the internecine warfare between the *swaroopams* especially the *swaroopam* of Zamorins for the supremacy over the other *swaroopams*. It is interesting to note that Kali/Bhagavathi appearing in the human form (23%) is found in two different motifs: one as child and the other as young lady and it is also found that Kali and Kali after battle are being worshipped as Bhagavathi. During the battle she is depicted as with full of vigour and youth and after the battle she is portrayed as child like and goes to Shiva as daughter and reports the matter and pleads for the next assignment. Interestingly in the middle part, the myth is performed and enacted as a ritual obligation[22] and therefore the motifs of Kali are directly connected with the ritual manifestations.

End Part

1. Kandakurumba *kavu*

   From early times the inhabitants of the place belonged to Paraya community. They used to visit the Kodungaloor temple very often. One day a pious old lady by name Kurumba of this community after visiting Kodungalooor kavu kept her Palmyra umbrella on the ground at the place. When she tried to take it back she found it fixed to the ground. She reported this incidence to her elders who in turn informed the Naduvazhi (landlord) of thirumalasseri illam (house). Thereafter the Naduvazhi (landlord) called the astrologers and conducted a prasna. It was revealed therein that the presence of Bhagavathi was there. It was essential to protect the place. Accordingly a shrine was built for her and puja was introduced. The family of the lady who first experienced the presence of the Goddess even now enjoy special privileges in this kavu.

2. Bhadram Kulangara

   Years ago, two sisters were coming from the northern part of the present kavu and after their long journey, one of the women felt thirsty and she sat in the sand bed on the banks of Bharathappuzha. She drank water from Bharathppuzha and quenched her thirst. She told her sister that she would sit on this bank. Her sister continued her journey. Later there were some bad omen signs in this area and the people felt the presence of Bhagavathi in the sand bed. The place was near to the Thiyya house and they were the workers under the keppattu Nayar family and they constructed a shrine for Bhagavathi. The place where the Devi came (vanu) and sat (iruna) is known as vannirunaam kulangara and the kavu got its name as well.

3. Kuttikkad Bhagavathi

   The karanavars of the present kuttikad used to go in the northern side of Bharahtappuzha to watch the festival of the kavu. Once, they visited the kavu and while watching the performance, one of the members of this group started to dance.

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[22] This phenomenon will be explained in the forthcoming chapter

One lady of that family danced and said that she was residing in the body of another person and if he comes there, they must respect him. But the members of that family did not agree. The people of the area opposed and they had a quarrel. The members came back to their home. The very next year also they visited the kavu to watch the performance. In the same year one who danced where they dance in the previous year the oracle of that kavu did not dance. Instead of the oracle of the kavu, the man who danced the previous year gave kalpana (order) of Bhagavathi to the people.

In the following year, the members of the kuttikad area did not accompany the one who danced in the previous year and locked him in his house. Then the old lady said that if they locked him also, he would reach the place. The very moment, the man reached the place by swimming through Bharathppuzha. He started to dance and said that thereafter he would not reside there and that he was going away with this oracle. He reached the opposite side of river. Then they conducted prasna (astrological calculation) and felt the presence of Bhagavathi in their place. Based on the astrological calculation they invoked the presence of Bhagavathi from the man and transferred to a stone. They keep the idol in the machu (upper surface of a ceiling) of the house. Otherwise disease may spread the village. After that, the family lost their houses due to the flood in Bharathappuzha and they migrated to the present place. The family forgot to worship Bhagavathi in the machu. Diseases rose in the village. Again they start prasna and found out that, it is because of the wrath of Bhagavathi and they had to construct a small shrine for her to worship her. Then the kuttikaat family constructed a small shrine and this kavu is known as kuttikad Bhagavathi.

4. Pappinikavu Bhagavathi

There was one antharjanam (Namboothiri woman), namely Paappi kutty in Vellayil mana. She was not married. After she died, diseases such as chicken pox and other contagious diseases spread throughout the village. They started a prasna and found out the presence of Bhagavathi in the family and found a place to worship her. They installed a stone as Bhagavathi in the present kavu.

5. Nottanalukal

There was a great devotee of a Goddess, by name Nottan. Once, during monsoon period, he swam across the flooded Bharathappuzha, when he saw a small peepal plant floating on the water. Feeling some divinity in the plant he took it from the waters and reached home. He told the members of his family that the Goddess had accompanied him and she should be given a seat and be worshipped. Further he planted the aal (peepal) plant which possessed divine power in the present kavu site. His advice to worship the Goddess at home was neglected and this led to great misfortunes to the family. A prasna was followed, and it was revealed that the power of the Goddess had to be invoked and transferred to a new idol that should be installed beneath the peepal plant. Accordingly a sila (stone) idol with powers of Goddess was installed there.

6. Bhayamkavu

The Naduvazhi (landlord) of this area was an ardent devotee of Kodungaloor Bhagavathi. He used to visit her every year. One day while visiting the kavu, he informed Bhagavathi that he could not visit her in the coming years because of his ill health and found out a solution to worship her. He was coming back with his lower caste assistant accompanied with a Palmyra umbrella. They started their journey and reached the house (illam). Then the Naduvazhi felt the presence of Bahgavathi in his illam. He started a prasna and the Bhagavathi asked him to give her an appropriate

place. Then, he installed Bhagavathi in the present kavu. The place was thick forest and became furious. It created fear (Bhayam) among the people and the kavu was hence known as Bhayamkavu (kavu of fear).

7. Pulloonikavu

A devotee by the name Unniri of padanna valappil family in pullooni village went for theerthayathra (deshadanam). He was walking among the thick forests of Nilamboor. He saw a hen in the forest and felt a peculiarity in the hen. The hen sat on the umbrella of the devotee and reached his village with him. The hen requested him to find a place of refuge and went on the maachu of his house, dancing in a beautiful way. Unniri became angry and tried to throw the hen from his machu. He informed this incident to the Naduvazhi (landlord), Vallathol konthi menon. He said that if the hen had that kind of divinity it would have come to his house also. The very moment when he uttered that word, the hen appeared in front of his house and danced. He made a prasna and found out that, the Bhagavathi appeared in the form of hen. She was walking in the thick Nilamboor forest with full jewels. Some people had attacked her and she lost all her ornaments and became impure because of the touching of other people. Then she changed her form as a hen. She said that she needed one shrine and the Naduvazhi construct one shrine and installed the idol of Bhagavathi. The members of the padanna valappil family started puja in the kavu.

8. Vallyarkal

There were many Pulaya community members who migrated from the muuttor desham (village) to present valyarakal. They worked under the karuthedathy illam (house) as agricultural labourers and assistants. One day, one of the elder members of the pulaya community was walking on the banks of Bharathappuzha. He saw one head of a chicken and a little red flower flowing on a banana leaf. He took it and the head of the chicken howled. He did not care much about this incident. But some diseases started increasing in the village. Then he conducted a prasna with Desha Panikar (astrologer). They found out that it was the presence of Bhagavathi and she needs to be honoured in a proper place. Then they installed Bhagavathi in a place and started puja in it.

9. Vairamkodu Bhagavathi

The legend of this origin is that, once a karanavar of pullayathiri royal family, an ardent devotee of Sree Bhagavathi at Kodungaloor, went to the kavu accompanied by his companion Maatambathth Nayar. The Goddess was pleased with his devotion and decided to accompany him on his return journey. She accompanied him on a Palmyra umbrella. The karanavar had an unusual experience of the divine presence around him. When he reached his kovilakam the presence of Goddess was all the more experienced. When he kept the umbrella at the varandha (sit out of the house), the umbrella started trembling and Maatambi Nayar behaved like an oracle and told that the goddess had accompanied him and a proper place had to be given for her. A prasna was then held at kovilakam (palace) and was decided therein to build a seat for the Goddess, which was specially provided in the machu of the kovilakam (palace). After some month Matambi Nayar again ordered all to present there, as if he was an oracle that a shrine had to be built for the goddess at the placed shown by him. Palliyathiri readily agreed to oblige and followed him. He showed the present site. An astrologer conducted and informed that it was the wish of the goddess to be there so that everyone got an opportunity to worship her. Thus the present shrine came up and regular puja were introduced.

10. Budhkulangara

This place was under the control of Vettathu king. He went to the Mookkambika temple and offered his penance. Bhagavathi appeared in front of him and asked him his wishes. He informed her to be his wife. Bhagavathi agreed with one condition that she will come with him and follow him. But he should not turn and look back while walking. Based on this promise, both of them walked on and before they entered the boundary of Vettathunadu, her ankles rang a sound and the king turned back. Bhagavathi said that with this he had broken his promise and she would not stay with him. The king however, requests her to stay with him. Finally, she said that, she was pleased with his devotion and blessed him with her presence. But, suddenly she disappeared.

After this, the king's left hand started to shiver. He wanted to stop this shivering so he sent his assistants to search for anyone who could solve this problem. The assistants went to the house of a Mannan and only a mother and son was staying there. The mother sent her son by giving one manthra (chants) to the king. When he reached in front of the king, he showed that the Bhagavathi was sitting on the shoulder of the king. He invoked the Bhagavathi from his shoulder and asked the king to provide a proper place to install her. The king allocated the land of the present kavu and gave sanction to Mannan to conduct puja in the kavu. In this way, the King's hand was freed from the shivering.

Table No 5.16: Motifs in the Legends of Bhagavathi: - End part

S.No	Name of Bhagavathi	Motif	Remarks
1	Kandakurumba Bhagavathi	Palmyra umbrella	Carried by Paraya community old lady
2	Bhadram Kulangara	Women felt thirsty	Came with sisters
3	Kuttikkad Bhagavathi	Presence of Bhagavathi in one man's body	Diseases in the area
4	Pappinikavu Bhagavathi	Nambuthiri woman	Diseases in the area
5	Nottanalukal Bhagavathi	small peepal plant floating on the water	By a law caste man
6	Bhayamkavu Bhagavathi	Palmyra umbrella	By a nambuthiri
7	Pulloonikavu Bhagavathi	hen sat on the umbrella	Bhagavathi in the form of hen
8	Vallyarkal Bhagavathi	head of a chicken and red flower f	Seen by elder members of the pulaya community
9	Vairamkodu Bhagavathi	Palmyra umbrella	By the nambuthiri
10	Budhkulangara Bhagavathi	Presence of Bhagavathi on the left hand	Came with king from Mookkambika temple

In the end part, the legends of Bhagavathi are decreased to ten from twenty-two of the middle part. It is not only the decrease in the legends but also the decrease in the types of motifs.

Table No 5.17: Typology of Motifs

S.No	Motif Type	Number	Percentage
1	Transfiguration	5	50
2	Cultural Object	4	40
3	Natural Object	1	10

It is interesting to note that *kavus* in the end part are built for Bhagavathis based on the belief of transfiguration from umbrella, plant, hen, spirit etc., to the goddess. From the above table it is evident that 50% of *kavus* emerged out of the belief of transfiguration. In any religion, the belief of transfiguration signifies the growth and dispersal of religious ideology.

As observed, in the beginning part it is natural objects that are transformed into goddesses; in the middle part it is the cultural object which got transformed to goddesses and in the end part it is from transformation to transfiguration that makes the presence of goddesses possible. In other words, the concept of Kali is migrated from elsewhere into Kerala through Palakkad area (origin part of Bharathappuzha); crystallized as a cultural object in the middle part and in the end part it has acquired to form. So the process of natural objects via cultural objects to transfiguration can be seen from the legends of Bahgavathi on the banks of Bharathappuzha. If analysis is done on the legends, one can find at the deep structural level the underlying formula of the construction of the legend of Bhagavathi. The following table is made based on the analysis of deep structure of the narratives of the Bhagavathi:

Table No 5.18: Deep Structure of Narratives of Bhagavathi

Origin Part		Middle Part		End Part	
Absence	*Presence*	*Presence form*	*Presence of Bhagavathi*	*Transformation*	*Transfiguration*

Sages penance (absence of peace)	Chandhana Bhagavathi	Presence of Bhahgavathi in a small boat	Thonikadavu Bhagavathi	From Palmyra umbrella	To Kandakurumba Bhagavathi
Absence of Bhagavathi	Chathankulangara Bhagavathi	Child as Bhagavathi	Ponnuniyar Bhagavathi	From sister	To Bhadram Kulangara Bhagavthi
Absence of energy	Malampuzha Hemambika	Presence of Bhagavathi on the *maachu* (inner roof of house)	Aamakavu Bhagavathi	Presence of Bhagavathi in one man's body	To Kuttikkad Bhagavathi
Absence of energy/absence of Bagavathis form	Hemambika Kaipathi	Kali after the war	Koyam Bhagavathi	Nambuthiri woman	To Pappinikavu Bhagavathi
Absence of Kannaki's anklet	Vadakanthara Thirupuraikal	Presence of iron spear	Paruthoor Bhagavathi	From small *peepal* plant floating on the water	To Nottanalukal Bhagavathi
Absence of energy	Kottam Kulathi	Presence of Bhagavathi in battlefield/ Presence of Bhagavathi under the tree	Muthashiyaar Bhagavathi	From Palmyra umbrella	To Bhayamkavu Bhagavathi
Absence of energy	Kaarakaattu parambu	Presence of Bhagavathi in stone	Mulayankavu Bhagavathi	From hen	As Pulloonikavu Bhagavathi
Absence of a seat	Puthoor Thirupuraikal Bhagavathi	Presence of Bhagavathi in the place	ThrithalaMudappakadu Maruningal Bhagavathi	From head of a chicken and red flower	As Vallyarkal Bhagavathi
Absence of Bhagavathi's idol or presence	Thirumandhakunnu Angadippuram	Bahagavathi came with Kanakka (SC community)	Irimbiliyam Kanakkaru kavu Bhagavathi	From Palmyra umbrella	As Vairamkodu Bhagavathi
Absence of Bhagavathi	Kongad Thirumandhakunnu	Presence of water lead to presence of Bhagavathi	Pathamkulathi Bhagavathi	From the left hand shoulder	To Budhkulangara Bhagavathi
Absence of Bhagavathi	Ezhakadu thirukunnapally	Kali after the war	Virutaanam Bhagavathi		
Absence of peace	Mundoor Palakeez	Presence of Bhagavthi in the stone/ quarrel with mother and sat in a place	Palakkal Bhagavathi		
Absence of prosperity	Vallikodu Valayapulli	Presence of Bhagavathi on the *maachu* (inner roof of house)	Mullakkal Bhagavathi		
Absence of Bhagavathi	Manappullikavu	Presence of Bhagavathi on the *maachu* (inner roof of house)	Kudapparra Bhagavathi		
Absence of Bhagavathi	Yakki Kavu	Bhagavathis presence on Umbrella/presenc	Vazhalikavu Bhagavathi		

		e of Bhagavathi in the water			
Unable to cross the river (absence of courage)	Kaymukunnat Kavu	Kali after the war	Aaryankavu Bhagavathi		
Absence of eye sight	Oottukulangara Bhagavthi Kavu	Bhagavathi appeared as swaymabhoo /reached the place	Chinakathoor Bhagavathi		
Absence of Bhagavathi	Puthusseri Bhagavathi	Presence of Bhagavathi in the stone	Vilangott Bhagavathi		
		Presence of Bhagavathi in the stone	Pulakkat Bhagavathi		
		Presence of Bhagavathi on Palmyra umbrella	Puttanalukkal Bhagavathi		
		Presence of Bhagavathi in the pot	Toota Bhagavathi kavu		
		Presence of Bhagavathi in *uttareeyam* (upper garment)	Utrattil Bhagavathi		

From the above table at the deep structural level the underlying formula for the construction of legends is as follows:

Table No 5.19: Formula of Legend Construction

<u>**Underlying Formula of Legend Construction**</u>

Origin Part: **-** + $+$ $=$ $+$

Middle Part: $+$ + $+$ $=$ $+$

End Part: $+$ + $+_a$ $=$ $+_a$

This formula which is inbuilt within the construction of the legends of Bhagavathi facilitated the growth, dispersal and solidification of the Bhagavathi belief and ritual in Kerala. It also helped in incorporating communities despite being high and low in social ranking into one for expression of solidarity through ritual practices.

Diagram No 5.3: Community Incorporation

Community Incorporation

Origin Part

Middle Part

End Part

From the legends reported one can observe that in the origin part of Bharathappuzha legends connected with Nayar (landlords/agrarian) community is dominant (i.e., 12 numbers; 66%). In the middle part the Nambuthiri (priestly) community (i.e., 14 numbers; 63%) and in the end part the backward/lower community such Thiyya and Paraya are dominantly (i.e., total 6 numbers; 60%)

associated with the legends of Bhagavathi. It is interesting to note that along with Nambuthiri, the lower (Pulaya/Paraya) communities and the landlord community are also associated with the legends of Bhagavathi. This shows that the Nambuthiries acted as pacemakers in the incorporative process of Bhagavathi *kavu* and this is also reflected in the ritual performances of Bhagavthi *kavu*. The above diagram shows the incorporation of different communities through the myth and worship of Bhagavathi on the banks of Bharathappuzha.

To sum up, the myth of Kali seems to have migrated from the Northern and Southern parts of India into the land of Kerala and formed as Bhadrakali myth/Dharikavadham and worshipped as Bhagavathi in sacered groves. In the process of incorporation of the myth several ethnic categories in the form of legends are deployed in 'oico-typification' of the entire worship Bhagavathi. The native cultural landscape has even affected the 'mythification' process of Bhadrakali. As a result, it is not only the incorporation of narratives but also the communities were brought under one umbrella through the worship of Bhagavathi. Ritual spaces are created to engage each and every community in the worship of Bhagavathi. The following chapter elaborates the ritual process of Bhagavathi worship.

Chapter- VI
Ritual Performances on the Banks -Towards Identity Formation

Ritual is a specific mode of behaviour exhibited by almost all communities in the world. Through a ritual performance people defines and establishes one's own identity in a society. The term usually refers to actions that are stylized, excluding those actions that are arbitrarily chosen by the performers. A ritual may be performed on specific occasions and according to the discretion of individuals or communities. It may be performed by a single individual, a group, or by an entire community and they are performed in explicit places, places especially reserved for it (public and private) or before specific people.

The purposes of rituals are varied. They might be due to religious obligations or ideals, satisfaction of spiritual or emotional needs of the practitioners, strengthening of social bonds, social and moral education, demonstration of respect or submission, stating one's affiliation, obtaining social acceptance or approval for some event or, sometimes, just for the pleasure of the ritual itself. Rituals of various kinds are a feature of almost all known human societies both in the past and present. They include religious rituals, rituals of everyday life, rituals of life roles, rituals of each profession, and rituals of politics, business and judicial system.

Alongside the personal dimensions of worship and reverence, rituals can have a more elementary social function in expressing, fixing and reinforcing the shared values and beliefs of a society. Rituals can aid in creating a firm sense of group identity. Humans have used rituals to create social bonds and even to nourish interpersonal relationships.

Rituals are repetitive and reinforce the values and beliefs of the group that perform them. Generally, communities are defined by the rituals they share. In a way ritual itself is a performance. Affiliation with a socio-cultural context is instrumental in shaping individual and group identity. It means performance reinforces identification with a socio-cultural context. Considering social identities of communities outside the context of festivals in their everyday lives may reveal important links in determining how identities change and to what degree identities within both contexts are related. To a certain extent the social roles and ritual roles are connected. The social identities are autonomous facets for the construction of performed religious experience. The term 'identity' is understood as a term that

represents or signifies group and individual perceptions and experiences as members of the community. In another way identity is considered to be differentiated, constructed, displayed and made explicit through performed behaviours.

Identity is performed on both the individual and collective levels of a culture. It indicates that identity is constructed through a series of ritual acts and symbolic behaviours and that identity formation occurs through performance. The belief in Bhagavathi and participation in the festivals play a significant role in the emergence of identities. The festival on the banks of Bharathappuzha shows how elements of separate cultures have been integrated and combined to form a new culture that is defined not by these separate parts but by its existence as an autonomous body. In particular, the rituals involving verbal and non-verbal interactions suggest that the construction of performed identities are to some degree determined by the ways in which people engage with each other.

In one way identity exists through affiliation on a collective level, where all the community congregants in the shrine hold the identity of the members. The collective notion of identity is the symbolic frame around which individual folk communities and their notions of identity get conceptualized. The individual identities are embodied in a form. These identities are constructed in a given contexts and create meanings and their meanings are expressed through ritual enactment. All activities that are done in the sacred place are connected to individual identities and it is from individual performances of these identities that the collective profiles of the annual ritual festival are constructed. In a ritual, identity exists as a temporary condition within a definite time frame and this will be explored with reference to Victor Turners' concepts of liminal conditions.[1] This will lead to the concept of 'liminal identities' which means that they manifest through ritual performance and exist only

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[1] Victor Turner, *The Forest of Symbols: Aspects of Ndembu Ritual*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1967 & Victor Turner, *From Ritual to Theatre: The Human Seriousness of Play*, New York: PAJ Publications, 1982. Van Gennep defined rites of passage as the rites which accompany every change of place, state, social position and age. According to Van Gennep, all rites of passage are marked by three phases: separation (preliminal), transition (liminal) and incorporation (post-liminal). The first phase or separation signifies the detachment of the individual or group from an earlier fixed social structure or a cultural condition. In the liminal period, the ritual subject passes through a cultural realm. Liminality comes from the word 'limen' which means 'on the threshold' where one experiences a luminal state or space, one is the edge of something new, a transitional place. In the incorporation phase, the subject is consummated. In the luminal phase the subject are between the positions assigned and arranged by custom. In reincorporation when a person who has gone through a ritual return to society with a new status. See Arnold Van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage*, London: Routledge, (1960) 2004.

during this activity. Identity formation is identified to occur through the performance elements of the annual rituals.

Ritual performances are the platforms for expression of identity. It means identity as an expression through belief and enactment in the annual festival. The larger frame of the annual festival creates a space for contact between communities who share the same performance space. In the view of Erving Goffman, a performance may be defined as the activity of a given participant on a given occasion which serves to influence any of the other participants.[2] In addition to it, Schechner says that 'performances exist only as actions, interactions and relationships'.[3] The identities originate through performances and are moulded through these interactions between communities as they do not exist in isolation.

In a way the experiences of one community become shared with other community through the act of witnessing and participating in the entire festivals. The creation of shared responsibility signifies a collective ethos within and outside the communities where each community is interconnected to another community in the presence of Bhagavathi. The ritual performances of each community and the combined actions of the total festival manifest the identity of the people in a collective way. This chapter focuses on identities that are constructed and enacted through ritual performances primarily within annual festival on the banks of Bharathappuzha.

Ritual Performances of Kerala- an overview

Kerala is the land of many performances. The religious ritual elements make up the basic nature of ritual performances of Kerala. The *theyyam* is a ritual dance in northern Kerala in Karivalloor, Nileswaram, Kurumathoor, Parassini, Cherukunnu, Ezhom and Kunnathoorpadi areas of North Kerala and performed annually from December to April and it incorporates the worship of Bhagavathi, heroes and the spirits of the ancestors. These are performed in front of shrines (*kavus*), by persons belonging to the men of the Vannan, Malayan, Velan communities. Though performed by men, they enact female roles by wearing colorful costumes. The Raktha Chamundi, Muchilottu Bhagavathi, Wayanatu Kulaven, Gulikan and Pottan are the main *theyyams* and are performed by different communities as ritual right.

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[2] Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, New York: Anchor Books, 1959. Pp.15.

[3] Richard Schechner, *Performance Studies: An Introduction*, New York: Routledge, 2002. Pp.24.

The *thira* is the ritual performance of Peruvannan, Anjuttaan and Munootaan community in the Kozhikode and Malappuram districts of Kerala. To satisfy the deity of the shrine they perform using the form (*kolam*) of the respective deity in the month of *Dhanu* to *Medam* (December to May). The *theyyam* is the enactment of god/goddess whereas *thira* is the form (*kolam*) to satisfy (*preethi*) of the god/goddess. This performance is confined to the form of Shiva and its different manifestations such as Bhagavathi, Kuttichathan and Veerabhadran.

The *mudiyettu* is a ritual dance performed in the Bhagavathi shrine of Ernakulam and Kottayam districts. The dance celebrates the goddess's triumph over the demon Dharika. The *mudiyettu* is performed by the Marar community who belong to the *ambalavasi* (temple servant) community of Kerala.

The *Arjuna Nritham* (the dance of Arjuna) is a ritual performance by the men of Ezhava community and is prevalent in the Bhagavathi shrine of Kollam, Alappuzha and kottayam of Southern Kerala. Arjuna, the most valiant of the five heroic brothers - the Pandavas - of the epic *Mahabharatha*, was also a renowned singer and dancer and is said to have propitiated goddess Bhadrakali by a devotional presentation.

The *theeyattu* is the ritual performance performed in front of the Bhagavathi shrine of Thiruvalla, Kottayam, Thripunithura areas. The most popular story narrated through a *theeyattu* performance is that of the war between goddess Kali and the demon *Daarikan*. The dance form is usually performed by the *theeyatunni*, an ambalavasi (temple servent community).

The *patayani* is a ritual dance of the Bhagavathi *kavu* during the Malayalam months of *Meenam* and *Medam* (March - April). The myth of this performance is that after the killing of Dharika, an asura (demon), Kali became furious and to reduce Kali from the anger, Shiva and his *bhoothaganas* (servants of god Shiva) danced in front of Kali and she became cool. In memory of this incident the Nayar community performs annually in front of the Bhagavathi *kavu*. The steps and movements of the dance vary according to each character of the *bhoothagana*. The *Madan, Marutha, Bhairavi (Bhadrakali), Yakshi, Pakshi (bird)* are the main characters. Kadammanitta, Kadalimangalam and Othara in Pathanamthitta district are famous for *patayani* performances.

Table No 6.1: Annual Ritual performances of Kerala *kavu*

S. No	Performances	District	Performing Community
1	Theyyam	Kannur, Kasarkode	Vannan/Malayan/Velan
2	Thira	Kozhikode & Malappuram	Peruvannan/Anjuttaan/ Munootaan
3	Thalapoly	Malappuram	Nayar, Ezhava,
4	Pooram	Thrishur and Palakkad	Nayar, Kuruppu, Mannan, Paraya and Pulaya
5	Vela	Palakkd	Nayar, Paraya, Pana
6	Mudiyettu	Ernakulam and Kottayam	Marar
7	Arjuna Nritham	Kollam, Alappuzha & Kottayam	Ezhava
8	Patayani	Pathanamthitta	Nayar

The above ritual performances of Kerala performed in the shrine of Bhagavathi as an offering during the annual festival of the shrine. The annual ritual performances except *thalapoli*, *pooram* and *vela* are ritual enactments by an individual community in a shrine and all other communities in and around the shrine do not perform any ritual enactment in the annual festival of the Bhagavathi shrine. These performances are oriented to individual communities and it has been performing since time immemorial. Whereas the ritual performances on the banks of Bharathappuzha are attached to the annual ritual performance of the shrine and each community around the shrine have their own ritual enactment to perform in front of the shrine. The annual festival on the banks of Bharathappuzha is a congregation of many communities. This makes the major difference between the annual festivals in the other parts of Kerala comparing to Bharathappuzha. Each community on the banks has their own identity and that is being expressed by participating through their ritual performance in the annual festival of the shrine. The individual community's performances become the annual festival of the shrine in other parts of Kerala wherein on the banks of Bharathappuzha, many communities' ritual enactment leads to the epitome of annual festival of the Bhagavathi shrine.

Ritual performances on the Banks of Bharathappuzha

The performance which is known under different names such as *thalapoli, pooram* and *vela* are ritual expressions of different communities on the banks of Bharathappuzha which are structured to articulate certain meanings. It is conducted

after the harvest and for the protection of the community and region. The ritual performances are performed all over the banks of Bharathappuzha. The structure and performing communities vary from place to place. It is elaborated in a series of ideologies, sects, forms and meanings.

The political system, economic factors, customs and manners etc., are linked to the geography of an area and this will lead to the inter relations of the communities. This inter relations are multilayered and each community in the locality assertain their relations and identity under the sacred space i.e., *kavu* (shrine). It is expressing through the annual rituals in the shrine. Even though, after the decline of joint family many families in the contemporary period continue their links with ancestral rites. The ritual performance Bharathappuzha are studied based on the tripartite division such as the ritual performances observed on the banks of the origin, middle and ending part of the river Bharathappuzha.

(A). Ritual Performances: Origin Part of Bharathappuzha

The chief festival in which the people take part in the origin part of Bharathpuzha is *vela* i.e., Walayar, Puthussery, Elappuly, Palakkad, Kuzhalmannam, Pirayiri, Parali area, held in the Bhagvathi shrine. It is mostly held in the family shrine (*kavu*) of Nayar community in the Malayalam month from *kumbham* to *medam* (February to April).[4] The word *vela* mean 'work' or 'time'. Many *kavus* can be seen in each taluk and large numbers of families are attached to the shrine. In origin place, large number of families became the owners of the shrine (*kavu)* and follow customs related to the activities of shrine. Many communities were denied entering the shrine. In origin part, shrines are based on the settlement of families. There are many family deities and each of the community settlement was a geographical unit. The *vela* festival is celebrated in the *thattaka* of the Bhagavathi shrine and this *thattaka* is confined to one *desham* (the term is known as the modern classification of village). The major *vela* in this area include Puthussery *vela*, Chandhana *kavu vela*, Thirupuraikal *vela*, Vallikode *vela*, Manappuli *kavu vela*. Generally, the *vela* are

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[4] The Nayar community includes by hereditary occupation groups such as artisans, oil mongers, and palanquin bearers. The fact that many groups and tribes migretaed to Kerala from Canara and Tamil countries and they settled down in Kerala and adopted the customs and manners. They also assumed the names of the more respectable of the community that surrounded the. Another view is that, the Nayars may be Dravidian immigrants who were amongst the first invaders on the banks of Bharathappuzha. Edgar Thurston, *Castes and Tribes of Soth India*, New Delhi: Asian Educational Services, 1987:284.

celebrated as an annual festival of the Bahgavathi shrine and the people in the *thattaka* of Bhagavathi participate in it. The origin part of Bhagavathi shrine was more or less the shrine of individual families and in due course they accommodated the other communities of the village. In a way, the sphere of influence of the *vela* festival is surrounded by the *thattaka* of Bhagavathi which is confined to a single *desham* (the term is known as the modern classification of village). Each *desham* celebrates the annual festival of Bhagavathi in their respective shrine. The members of the *thattaka* of Bhagavathi do not have any ritual right to another *thattaka* of Bahgavathi. It was considered a taboo to visit other villages during the *vela* festival of the particular village. The shrine of Bhagavathi in the village is the centre of the life of the people around it. At present, the shrines in the origin part are under the administration of a committee which is the totality of the patron of the shrine and the members of the village. This committee would conduct all the activities related to the shrine. The designation of the patron of the shrine is known as *rakshadhikari* (protector).[5]

Table No 6.2: Families and shrine in Origin part of the river

S. No	Community/Family	Deity	Nature of the Image	Village
1	Akathethara Nayar	Chandhana Bhagavathi	Stone idol	Athaniparambu
2	Palakkad raja	Chathankulangara	Stone idol	Chathankulangara
3	Palakkatusheri Nayar	Hemambika	Vaalkannadi	Malambuzha
4	Akathethara Nayar	Kaipathi Hemambika	Stone Hand idol	Akathethara
5	Tharavathu Nayar	Kannaki	Vaal Kannadi	Vadakanthara
6	Karekatu Nambuthiri	Kottamkulathi	Black stone	Chathapuram
7	Karekatu Nambuthiri	Kaarakaattu parambu	Stone idol	Kaarakaattu parambu
8	Nayar	Kannaki	Bronze idol	Puthur
9	Valluvanad Raja	Kali	Wood idol	Angadipuram
10	Vellatiri Nayar	Kali	Wood idol	Kongad
11	Olapamanna mana	Ezhakadu thirukunnapally	Stone idol	Thirukunnapalli
12	Varikancheri mana	Mundoor Palakeez	Stone idol	Mundoor
13	Vallikode Nayar	Vallikodu	Stone idol	Vallikode

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[5] The other designation of the committee is the president, vice president, secretary, joint secretary, treasurer, joint treasurer. The patron is the ultimate authority of any matter related to the shrine.

		Valayapulli		
14	Kennat Nayar	Kali	Wood idol	Yakara
15	Madathil Puthan Nayar	Yakki	Stone idol	Keralashri
16	Mannor nayar	Kaymukunnat	Stone idol	Mannoor
17	Mannat Nayar	Oottukulangara Bhagavthi	Stone idol	Peruvamba
18	Ullat Nayar	Puthusseri Bhagavathi	Wood idol	Puthusseri

From the above, it is evident that the community which is getting traditionally the chief patronship due to the claim that they installed the idol and constructed the shrine for the Bhagavathi. Even today they are the prime decision makers in the temple commities with regard to the festivals and celebration of the shrines.

Map.No 6.1. Ritual Performances on the Bank of Bharathappuzha
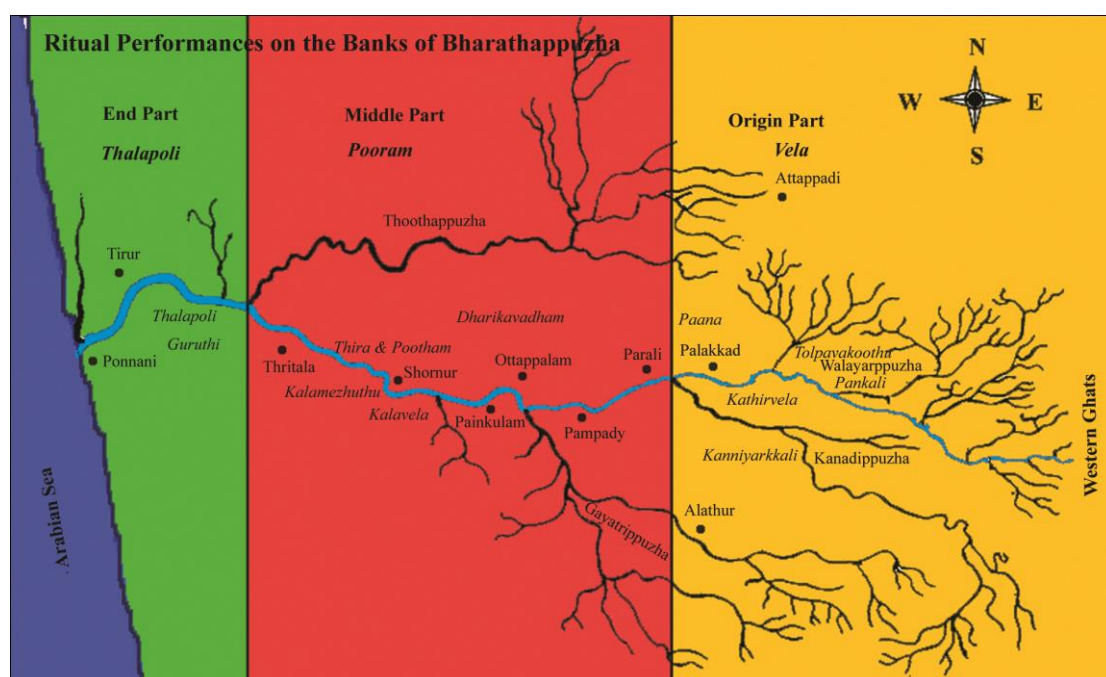
The above map denotes ritual performances observed in the three parts on the banks of Bharathappuzha. As stated already the first part have the ritual performances known as *vela,* the second part have *pooram* and the third part have *thalapoli*. The number of performances from the first part to second part increases and at the third part it decreases. The trend of *vela, pooram* and *thalapoli* seem to be of caste, community and family respectively. The *vela* is dominated and represented by certain

castes such as Nayar, Pannan and Paraya. In the middle part the pooram is incorporating several castes and appeared as a communal ritual spread over a wide geographical local. At the end part, the *thalapoli* is more confined to familial level than communal level. In a way, this is in accoradance with the flow of the river, i.e., Bharathappuzha. In the beginning part the river is in the formation stage wherein several tributaries flow into Bharathappuzha. Therefore, *velas* are predominantly connected with agrarian communities such as Nayars, Paraya etc. in the middle part the river is formed as a distinct feature and known as Bharathappuzha/Nila. The banks of the river in the middle part is clearly marked and encompases several communities and thereby, *pooram* becomes a congregational ritual having participation of wide spread social groups. At the end part, the river joins the Arabian Sea and thereby loses a clear demarcation of the banks. This feature is reflected in the *thalapoli* wherein the families engage in the worship of Bhagavatahi through ritual offering.

As has been stated above, the beginning part of the Bharathappuzha, *velas* are performed as annual ritual festivals. The following structure of *vela* ritual is taken from Puthoorkavu and Mundoor Palakizhukavu situated in the Palakkad district (origin part of Bharathappuzha).

Table No 6.3: Structure of *Vela*

S.No	Ritual Event	Role of the Community
I	*Paavakooothu* (shadow puppetry)	Nayar community
II	*Parayeduppu* (collecting paddy)	Paraya community
III	*Kathirvela* (spike of paddy corn *vela*)	Paraya
IV	*Kodiyettam* (flag hoisting)	Priest and Patron of the shrine
V	*Pankali* (as part of *velavaravu*)	Panan
VI	*Paana*	Nayar
VII	*Kanyarkali*	Nayar
VIII	*Kalpana* (order)	Oracle (*velichapadu*)
IX	*Kodiyirakkam* (flag Hoisting down)	Priest and Patron of the shrine

I. _Tolpavakoothu_ (Shadow Puppetry)

Among the ancient ritual performances, *Tolpavakoothu* occupies an important role. '*Tol*' means leather, '*pava*' means puppet and '*koothu*' means play'. Thus,

Tolpavakoothu means performance of play with puppets made of leather. *Tolpavakoothu* or *pavakoothu* is popular in the Palakkad distrct of Kerala and is ceremonially performed annually in connection with the annual ritual performance of the shrine, known as *vela* for twenty-one days to propitiate the goddess, Bhadrakali. The devotees believe that the goddess watches the performance and would be pleased by the performance. The performances are held every year in the Malayala months of *Makaram* to *Medam* (May). The theme of the *Tolpavakoothu* is the Ramayana story. Special playhouses called *koothumadams* are built in the shrine premises for this purpose. The figures of the characters of *Tolpavakoothu* are designed from leather and the play is performed by projecting the shadows of these leather puppets on a white screen.

Tolpavakoothu is used as an offering to the goddess at the Bhagavathi shrine for personal blessing and the rich and powerful Nayar family in Palakkad area performs this ritual. In the *Tolpavakoothu*, to fulfill the devotees' wish for children, success in agriculture, business, or the marriage of a daughter or a son, etc., people give *dakshina* (offering) to the puppeteers who make a special oblation. The *puppeteer* prays at an appropriate point in the performance, naming the devotee and the specific birth-star under which he/she was born. This is best done when the *devastris* goddess and angels appear to celebrate joyful events, like the marriage of Rama, the killing of Ravana, Rama's coronation, etc.

The origin myth of *Tolpavakoothu* is as follows:

(1)Long ago, the creator, Brahma, blessed asura women, Danavathi and Deenavathi and as a result of his blessing, Danavathi gave birth to a son named Dharika. When this asura boy grew up, he became strong that he turned out to be a threat and a constant source of harassment to the gods and sages. They approached Shiva for help. In order to kill Dharika, Shiva created the goddess Bhadrakali from the *kalakoota* poison lodged in his throat. A fierce fight ensued between Dharika and Bhadrakali, lasting several days. Finally Bhadrakali killed Dharika. While Bhadrakali was engaged in fighting with Dharika, Rama was fighting with Ravana. So Bhadrakali was not able to see Rama-Ravana battle. She approached her father Shiva after the war, expressed that she missed to witness the battle of Rama-Ravana, and wished to see it agian. Shiva sends her to earth and she would be seeing the Ramayana story enacted in her presence through *Tolpavakoothu* by the Nayar community.

(2).To defeat demon Dharika, the god Shiva has created the goddess Bhadrakali. The fighting took place at the same time when Rama defeated Ravana. When Bhadrakali tells how impressive her battle with Dharika was, Shiva told that Rama's battle was much more impressive than her battle. To please Bhadrakali who wants to compare

her battle with Rama's battle, Shiva performs Kamba *Ramayana* beginning from Rama's birth (*Bala kanda*) through his coronation (*Yuddha kanda*) in the form of the *Tolpavakoothu*.

The *Tolpavakoothu* is of remote origin. The *guru* of a *Tolpavakoothu* troupe is called *pulavar* (learned scholar). He has also been advisor to the villagers who brought their problems to him. The verses of this performance are called *koothu kavikal*. *Kavikal* means verses or poems.The *tolpavakoothu* is based on the *Kamba Ramayana*, the Ramayana in Tamil by the poet Kambar. But the performers have changed many of Kambar's verses and in some places have added their own to meet the purpose of ritual. Kambar's Ramayana is based on Valmiki's epic. But his presentation and style of narration are more dramatic. This epic containing twenty thousand verses is divided into twenty-one plays, beginning from the birth of Rama up to his coronation, and is presented in chronological order for twenty-one days. The sequence tolpavakoothu performance of Ramayana is given below:

Table No 6.4: Sequence of tolpavakoothu Performance of Ramayana

S.No	Native Name	English Name
1	*Ramavatara*	Birth of Rama
2	*Yagaraksha*	Protection of Yaga
3	*Seeta Kalyanam*	Seeta's Marriage
4	*Vanayatra*	Forest Journey
5	*Chitrakuta Vasam*	Stay at Chitrakoota
6	*Paduka Patabhisekam*	Rama's Sandals
7	*Surpanaka Nasika Chedanam*	Mutilation of Surpanaka
8	*Khara Vadham*	The killing of Khara
9	*Sitaapaharanam*	Abduction of Sita
10	*Jatayu Moksham*	Jatayu's Salvation
11	*Bali Moksham*	Bali's Salvation
12	*Lanka Pravesham*	Entering Lanka
13	*Lanka Dahanam*	The Burning of Lanka
14	*Vibhisana Mantram*	Vibhisana's advise
15	*Setu Bandanam*	Building Bridge
16	*Angada Dootu*	Angada's Mission
17	*Kumbakarna Vadham*	killing of Kumbakarna
18	*Atikaya Vadham*	Death of Atikaya
19	*Indrajit Vadham*	Death of Indrajit
20	*Ravana Vadham*	Killing of Ravana
21	*Rama Pathabishekam*	Rama's Coronation

After Rama's coronation in the twenty-first day, the *Pavakoothu* comes to an end. The verses and story of the Ramayana are on palm leaf manuscripts carefully preserved in the homes of the puppeteers and they have no idea about the founder of

tolpavakoothu. The Pulavar learns the verses, stories, explanations and dialogues byheart and teaches them to his disciples. The composition has been transmitted orally from generations. The explanation of the verses and interpretation give by the puppeteers are in a mix of prose and verse. The dialogues are in a mix of Tamil and Malayalam. A *pulavar* has to be well versed in the Purana and also competent enough to speak fluently on the topic. Because of this qualification, the leader of a *Tolpavakoothu* troupe is called *pulavar* which means learned scholar.

There are permanent stages for *Tolpavakoothu* in the Bhagavathi shrine and these are known as *koothumadam*, playhouse. Many of the shrines in the Palakkad region constructed such permanent stages. The *koothumadam* faces the deity at some distance on the temple grounds. It is a plain rectangular structure with walls on three sides and roofing. The length of the stage is elevan meters and fourty three centimeters and the breadth is three meters and eighty-one centimeters. The height of the roof from the floor is one meter eighty-six centimeters and the height of the floor from the ground is one meter sixty-eight centimeters. There are small ventilators on the three walls for the smoke from the lamps to escape. The roof is tiled. However, there are minor variations in the dimensions of *koothumadams*.

A thin white cotton cloth called *ayapudava* is the screen and the shadows would be clearly seen through thin cloth. The lower edge of the screen has a band of black cloth representing earth and *patalam* (the nether world) while the white area stands for heaven. Behind the curtain, at a height of about one meter and twenty centimeter, a wooden beam or a bamboo split in half is fixed, extending to the whole length of the stage. This narrow platform about twelve centimeters wide is called *vilakkumadam* foe it holds the lights for the shadow play. On the wooden beam (*vilakku madam*) behind the curtain are placed twenty-one lighted lamps at equal distance from each other. Husked coconuts cut in halve serve as lamps, by filling with coconut oil and cotton wicks. Set in a row from one end of the stage to the other, they illuminate the screen (*ayapudava*) uniformly. Coconut lamps do not generate heat as other lamps do and are therefore, used in most *koothumadams* today. In some temples, cressets (*chiratu* made of clay) have been used instead.

The *pulavar* (learned scholar) is chiefly responsible for scenic arrangements and he also arranges the puppets. The chief musical accompaniments of *Tolpavakoothu* are a drum (*ezhupara*), and *ilathalam* (cymbals). The *ezhupara* is a

cylindrical drum made of jackfruit wood with both faces covered with calfskin. It is played with stick. The cymbals, made of bell metal are about eight centimeters. Apart from these instruments, the *shankhu* (conch), the *chenda* (a cylindrical percussion instrument) and *madlam* (drums), the *chengila* (gong), and the *kurumkuzhal* (a short pipe) are also used on certain scenes. To add to the dramatic impact of special scenes, the artistes produce some special sound effects and also recite *vaitari* (rhythmic syllables).

Performance Structure of *Tolpavakoothu*

The *tolpavakoothu* is the part of the ritualistic worship of the goddess *Bhagavathi* performed every year. Till recently it is being performed in many shrines of Palakkad. The *tolpavakothu* start with the hoisting of the flag in the shrine and special *puja*. The hoisting of the flag in *vela* is a ritual and is called *koti-kayaruka* (*koti* means flag and *kayaruka* means raising or hoisting). After special *pujas* to the goddess are performed, a *thookku-vilakku* is lighted from the lamp burning in front of the goddess's image. The shrine priest then gives the *tookku-vilakku* to the puppeteer who hangs it in the puppet playhouse called *koothumadam* accompanied by *tayabaka* (drum beating). At this time *tayambaka* (drum beating) is performed in the shrine. When the *tayambaka* is over the white screen for *pavakoothu* is put at the right place in the *koothumadam*. This is called *koorayiduka* (*koora* mean screen and *yiduka* means placing or setting). The *pulavar* then asks the shrine authorities thrice for permission to set the screen and the shrine authorities grant him permission. The tying of the screen is accompanied with fireworks outside and music.

Then the shrine oracle (*velichappadu*) representing the goddess comes out after ceremonial bath, wearing a red silk scarf around his waist and a string of bells around the ankles. Holding a sword in his hand he dances in front of the altar. Then he goes around the shrine thrice, afterwards comes to the *koothumadam*, and tells the pulavar and the shrine authorities that, 'I am pleased with you. Show the Ramayana story without a fault for which act I shall protect you and bless you.' With these words as the representative of the goddess, he takes some rice in his hands and throws it at the *pavakoothu* performers, blessing them. This is followed by music backstage on the *ezhupara* and *ilathalam*.

After the performance on *ezhupara* and *ilathalam*, a ritualistic ceremony called *kalari-chintu* is performed. The *kalari-chintu* begins with hymns in praise of Ganapati, Saraswati, Vishnu and other gods. Then the *tookku-vilaku* lamp is taken behind the screen and with its flame all the twenty-one lamps behind the screen are lit by *pulavar*. This is followed by the very important ceremony called *rangapuja*. This is also performed by the pulavar using rice, paddy, coconuts, flowers and *samprani*. After the *puja*, *prasada* is distributed among all the *koothu* performers. They throw a part of this *prasada* in front and back of the stage as part of their *rangapuja* and bow before the stage. Novices among the performers, who would be performing for the first time, are ceremoniously presented with *kols* (bamboo sticks with which the puppets are manipulated). This ceremony is called *matam-kayaruka* (mounting the stage). The beginner gives betel leaves, areca nut and a silver coin as *dakshina* to his *guru* and receives from him in return *pava* and *kol*. Then he gives *dakshina* to all the senior performers. Only then he can begin performance. All this is accompanied by instrumental music behind the stage.

Keeping the lamps behind the curtain to greater brightness, the puppeteers chant the *nandi-sloka* (a hymn in praise of the elephent god, Ganapati). While this is sung, the puppet of Ganapati is shown on the screen. As they appear on the screen, the *pulavar* sings the glories of Vishnu, other gods and explain the greatness and importance of their *yagas* for the welfare of humankind. They also praise the *acharyas* and *gurus* of *tolpavakoothu* as a sign of respect and obtain blessings form them to begin the show. Then the *puppeteers* pay their homage to the temple authorities, the oracle and all the people gathered there for happy and long lives. When this is over the puppet of Ganapathi, Saraswathia, Vishnu and Shiva appear again on the screen and sing hymns in praise of them. This is followed by a ceremony called *sadya-vazhthal* (*sadya* is feast and *vazhthal* means praise). It is a praise of families which have played host to members of the puppet troupe that day and offered them hospitality. While praising these families, the performers give a description of the feast offered to them. When this ritual is over, a performer summarizes the part of the story to be shown that day. This is followed by *paraparamala*, where the performers sing hymns in praise of Subrahmanya, Ganapati, Shiva and Krishna, touching the lamps behind the screen as a sign of devotion. Then they begin the

koothu. These rituals begin from carrying lighted lamp in front of the goddess's image to hang it in the *koothumadam* continuously for days.

During the performance, the devotees offer *dakshina* (a kind of gift) in the form of money, for a prayer by the *pulavar* with the details of his /her name, birth star to attain their wish fulfillments such as to beget children, success in agriculture/business and for the marriage of daughter /son etc. After receiving the *dakshina*, the *pulavar* mentions the devotees name at suitable occassions in the progress of the performance and pray to gods and goddesses seeking blessing for the particular devotee. These occasions especially celebrate Rama's marriage, Rama's coronation and the time of Ravana's death. Some other devotees also offer the *thali*/*mangalyasoothra* and new *saries* at the time of Seeta's marriage and dresses and garlands for Rama and Laxmana to wear on the occasion of Rama's coronation ceremony during the performance.

On the last day of the *koothu* when Rama's coronation is shown, the devotees offer the *pulavars* coconuts, jaggery, plantains and camphor. The *pulavar* conduct special *puja* to Rama and assuming that he has accepted them, distribute the *prasada* among the devotees, musicians and assistants as part of blessing. When the *pavakoothu* is over, the screen is removed ceremonially. This function is called *ayapudava irakuka*. The removal of screen from the *koothumadam* and the lowering of the flag hoisted at the start of the ritual are both done. This is accompanied by fireworks on a grand scale. The pulavar removes the screen and with this ritual act, the *tolpavakoothu* comes to an end.

The *tolpavakoothu* puppets are made of deerskin. The figures are drawn on the skin, cut out and embroidered with dots, lines and holes. Puppets are painted in different colors. Puppets have to make gestures and movements in conformity with the narration. With one hand they hold the puppet and with a stick in the other hand make the puppet perform according to the dialogue. The stick is a thin strip of bamboo around fifty meters long. At the end of the stick, tied to it with a string, is a very thin strip of wood not more than three centimeters long. This thin end-piece is inserted in a hole in the puppet's hand when a hand movement is required. The movable arms and fingers are uniform in shape in almost all puppets. While manipulating the puppets the performer use a string of bells called *chilanka*. Whenever the puppets have to make movements, the puppeteer plays the *chilanka*,

producing a jingle to match the movement. The puupets are held very close to the screen to ensure that the shadows are clear.

The junior members of the troupe manipulate the puppets and the senior most member of the troupe (more experienced artist) deliver the dialogue for important characters of the play. The narator plays his role behind the screen. It needs prolonged study and training to study *tolpavakoothu* and it starts at the age of seven. The student practices recitation of Ramayana verses in the early morning. Once the recitation of verses is over, the *guru* gives annotation to the student. Only when this training has continued for nine years, the *guru* allows the student to accompany a troupe and participate in performances. The main profession of the *tolpavakoothu* artists is farming and they are middle class farmers with regular income by cultivating their own land.

At the end of puppetry performance, the pulavar lower the flag, hoisted at the begininig of the ritual. The *pulavar* handovers the flag to the priest of the shrine and the priest keeps it in the sanctum sanctorum of the shrine for *puja*. The priest of the shrine takes the flag after the *puja* from the *srikovil* (sanctum-sanctorum) and hands it over to the *ooralar* (owner) of the shrine and he hoists the flag.

II. *Parayeduppu* (collecting paddy)

The *parayeduppu* (collecting paddy) is the hereditary right of Paraya community in the origin part of Bharathappuzha. They take part in the *vela* festival connected to the shrine. A few days before the flag hoisting of the shrine (the date of the flag hoist would already be informed to the Paraya community by the organizing committee of the festival), the paraya *velichapadu* (oracle) wears a piece of red cloth round his waist, small bells (*chelamba*) are tied around his leg, and he visits the ancestral shrine and do *puja*. After he gets the blessings of ancestors, with few others in his community, one with a basket to deposit paddy, two others with drums and cymbals goes to every Nayar house and gets one or two *para* measures of paddy and continues to do so far seven days. This collection of paddy is known as *Parayeduppu*. The colecting of paddy from the houses would end up before the flag-hoisting day of the shrine.

Before the day of flag hoisting, after the collection of paddy, the next ritual in the shrine is the procession of Paraya community with small spike of paddy corn to

the shrine as an offering to Bhagavathi. Without the procession of Paraya community to the shrine with the paddy corn, the annual festival of the shrine would not commence.

III. *Kathirvaravu/Kathirvela* (procession with the spike of paddy corn)

This ritual is connected with bringing paddy seeds to the shrine of the Nayar familial goddess Bhagavathi and is celebrated on the main day of *vela*. Standing at a distance assigned to them by the village authorities, the Parayans offer prayers to Bhagavathi, they put the paddy grains, which they have brought on a bamboo mat and take it back when they return home.

A large number of dome like structures made of bamboo and plantain stems are ornamented with flowers. The small globular packets of palmyra leaves (*kathirkoodus*) conating handfuls of paddy rolled up in straw are fixed on a pair of parallel bamboo poles and carried by the pulayans who with pipe and drum start in procession from the various farms surrounding the village to reach early to the shrine. They all merge in one open space near to the shrine and people shouting and dancing and setting fireworks. Some *kathirkoodu* arranged in rows in front of the shrine and latter are thrown away among the crowds of spectators. The spectators scramble to obtain as many of the packets of corn as possible and carry them home. They are then hung in front of the houses and it is believed that their presence will help to promote the prosperity of the family until the festival comes again next year. The Paraya community bow and get blessings from outside the shrine and return to their home. The crowds then disperse.[6]

After the *Tolpavakoothu* (shadow puppetry of the Nayar community in front of the shrine (*koothumadam*), *Parayeduppu* (collecting paddy) and *Kathirvaravu* (procession with the spike of paddy corn) by the Paraya community, the shrine lead to the official declaration of *vela* festival in the shrine with the flag hoisting ritual.

IV. *Kodiyettam* (flag hoisting)

After the removal of *koora* (flag) from the *koothumadam*, the very next day morning the priest of the *kavu* take the flag after the *puja* from the *srikovil* and hands

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[6] Paraya community is the agricultural labourers and considers the descendants of the original inhabitanst of Kerala. Edgar Thurston, *Castes and Tribes of South India*, New Delhi: Asian Educational Services, 1987.

it over to the *ooralar* (owner of the *kavu*) of the shrine. The time of the flag hoisting is decided very early by the priest of the shrine. They clean the shrine premises with *shudhikalasham* (purification with water). Flag hoisting is done with the headship of *thanthri* (main priest) and *Mel shanthi* (sub priest) of the *kavu*. The flag hoisting on the *dwaja sthambha* (flagstaff)[7] indicate the beginning of the festival in the shrine. The Sanskrit word *dwaja* means flag. All shrines do not have permanent flagstaff. Instead, a temporary pole is raised as the occasion of festivals.[8] Eventhough, the permanent flagstaff is a feature of many shrines and it covered with copper. The patron receives it and hoists it in front of the shrine. This signifies that the festival has begun.

The flag (*dwaja*) denotes royalty and associated with kings and gods especially when they engage/engaged in battles/warfares. Normaly flags are carried by the infantry before the armies marching towards the enemy for waging war. In due course flag has become an identity of king and his territory. Interestingly, the same idea is transponded to gods and goddesses who are associated with some wars and battles to restore peace by eliminating the evil forces. This feature of sacred and secular power is commonly found in all medieval states which had feudal system of governance. The goddess Bhadrakali is created to wage war against the demon Dharika, and after the battle she is venerated as goddess. The shrines of the goddess are bestowed with flag especially during the days of annual festival which commemorate the event of vicory of Bhadrakali over Dharika.

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[7] The *dwaja sthamba* symbolizes the kundalini sakthi. The general belief is that the deity is seated above the *vaahana* (vehicle) and therefore the *dwaja* is considered as sacred. The *yashti* (flag stick) is fixed diagonally to the flag staff. Above all of the *dwaja* is the *vaahana* of the principal deity. The *vaahana* are different for each god and goddess. Bull for Shiva, Garuda for Mahavishnu, mouse for Ganapathi, horse for Ayyappa, peacock for Subramanya, vethala for Bhadrakali. Generally the *yashti* (flag stick) should face the right side of the main deity i.e, if the deity faces east, flag stick faces south. However exceptions can be seen and the priest of the shrine is the ultimate authority of the decision making.

[8] The carpenter of the area prepare the areca nut flag post and the surface of the areca nut tree should be chipped. The priest conducts puja in front of the shrine. The secretary of *kavu* (shrine) gets the post from the carpenter with the presence of villagers and he handover it to the priest. The priest of the shrine gets the flag from the sanctum sanctorum of the shrine after the *puja* and handover to the patron of the shrine. Then the priest post in a dig in front of the shrine. The patron put post with the flag on the post. The flag is to be fixed on the post in front of the shrine. The post should be decorated with *darbha* grass (grass *poa cynosuroides*), mango leaves and banyan tree leaves.

V. *Pankali* (**a play by Panan community**)

After the flag hoisting, the Paanan community perform Pankali in front of the shrine.[9] *Pankali* performs as an offering to Bhagavathi on the occasion of *vela* festival. This is a ritual performance by the Paanan community to propitiate Bhadrakali. Panan are the makers of umbrella, basket with bamboo tree. The word *pankali* originated from *panan kali* (play of Panan).The story of this performance is as follows:

Once when a Panan and his wife went to a forest to bring bamboos for manufacture of Umbrellas, they missed their way and the night approached, when they could not return. They became afraid because of the noise heard in the forest. They collected some pieces of dry bamboo and leaves of tree, which they burned. In the light thus obtained, they both danced seven times in honor of Bhagavathi with song. The day dawned at last and they cut many kaatuvalli on their return journey. Finally they found their way home in safety.

In memory of this incident and as a thanks giving to the Devi, this community performs in front of the shrine. There should be two female actors and eight male actors for the play, which is acted all through the night. Before the commencement of performance they conduct *kelikottu*[10] to inform the beginning of *ezhuvattamkali* to the villagers. Then the performers start prayer at first and praise Ganapathi, *Thrimoorthis* and ancestors.

 The woman who has not attained puberty and the woman whose menstruation has stopped would be the performers and she is known as *Paati*. The stage is the barren paddy field near to shrine. She wears a cloth on her forehead, *marvattam* (cloth cover her chest), earrings and *vala* (bangles) and a *kachi* (white piece of cloth) as her lower garment. The *Chenda* (a cylindrical percussion instrument) and *ilathalam* (cymbal) are the instruments. There should be nine players in a performance. Two hold the *valli* (climbing plant), one lead singer, two chorus singers, one for *chenda* (a cylindrical percussion instrument) and one for *cymbal* and one male and female for play. Instead of these nine members, there are two others who hold two *pantham* (rag-

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[9] According to Edgar Thurston, the Panan community may be descendants of the hill tribe who have settled in the plains. Another view is that, they are supposed to be one among the Panans of the Tamil country. Edgar Thurston, *Castes and Tribes of South India*, New Delhi: Asian Educational Services, 1987: 30.

[10] Overture on drums used as a preliminary sounding ritual to invite the people to participate often played using *chenda*.

torch) in each side of the stage. They are called as *mooppu* and they are the hereditary family member to hold lamp of shrine.

The total members of this performance is nine and they dance based on the rhythm. Standing in a circle, they sing and prais Bhadrakali. The performance is repeated seven times and that's why it is known as *ezhuvattomkali* (play repeated for sevan times). The performers take bath, smear ash on their forehead and a towel round their waist, and begin to dance. They start with slow movement of legs and finally end up gaining speed with the rhythm. Women also participate in the performance. Virgin girls performe based on the song of the Panan they will dance. The performance takes one hour. The performers sing the song as a praise of Bhadrakali and there are some chorus groups also to sing with them from the back. Finally at the end of the performance, they cut *mundu* (dhothy) as a representation of cutting *valli* in the forest.

The *chenda* (a cylindrical percussion instrument) and *ilathalam* (cymbals) are used as instruments and the performance is held at night to ten. They construct a *mandapa* (canopy) decorated with coconut tree leaves. The deity will be placed on the *peedam* (stool/pedestal) and the performers dance around the *peedam*. A *nilavilakku* (brass lamp) is lighted before the performance and there is no special costumes used for the ritual. The upper part of the body of the male performers is bare.

Based on the rhythm of the song of lead singer, Panan and Paatti dance. They keep banana post without its leaves and erect it in the middle of the stage and small lamps are lit on it. Before the beginning of the performance, two hold the curtain and remove it, once the performance is started. They are known as *vallipiduhakaar* (holders of climbing plant) and once the performers reach on the stage, they fold the curtain as rope and keep it on their hand. After the end of each round of the performance, they hold the curtain. In each performance, the speed of the movement is increases. This performance takes two hours.

After the performance, the patron of the shrine gives money, dresses and betel leaf and aracanut to the performer in front of the shrine. This performance would end up before evening. The performer seeks blessing from the Bhagavathi of the shrine and disperse to their home. After the performance of the *pankali*, the next ritual performance in front of the shrine is *paana*.

VI. *Paana* (material objects as ritual offering)

The *paana* is ritual a performance for propitiating the goddess Kali by the male members of the Nayar community of Palakkad (west side of Palakkad town) and performed on a grand scale. This performance is conducted as an offering to Bhagavathi in front of the shrine or in front of Nayar houses. The object of this propitiation is to protect people from epidemics and other calamities. The audiences are the members of Nayar community and the elder members of the community sit in the front of the performing place. The meaning of the word *pana* is a ritual act consists of many items.[11]

Table No 6.5: Material Used for Paana Ritual

Native Name	English Name
Pala kombu	Pala tree Branch
Thengola	Coconut Leaf
Chanagam	Cow Dung
Nilavilakku	Brass Lamp
Paddy Para	Paddy in a small dish
Chandhanam	Sandal
Idangazhi Nellu	Seeds of three *idangazhi*(a measure of volume equal to one and half kilogram)
Vaal	Sword
Chempattu	Red Silk
Kannadi	Mirror
Chilambu	Anklet
Peedam	Stool
Kindi	Brass Vessel
Pookula	Flower of Coconut Tree

The war between Dharika and Kali is described in a song with the help of four thousand four hundred and forty four verses. *Paanakurikkal* (decision) is the first ritual and the head of the performance decides the place, time and the list of the material for the performance and hand over the list to the oracle of the shrine or the administrator of the shrine. Generally this ritual is held for seven or fifteen days before the performance day. From this day onwards, the performers should start fasting.

Based on the prescribed day small temporary shrines supported on sixty four pillars (posts) of *pala* (*Alstonia scholaris*) tree and with the help of coconut leaf and

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[11] Chelanattu Achuthamenon, *Kali Worship in Kerala* (in Mal.), Madras: University of Madras Press, 1943.

the layers of leaf stalks (that cover the stem of the plantain tree) constructed either in Tuesday or Friday based on the auspicious times and are variously decorated in front of the Bhagavathi shrine or courtyard of the Nayars. The shrine is purifyied with cow dung water and the shrine would be decorated with fruit bearing plantain trees and other decorations.

After the purification, the *aashan* (master), oracle and the performers go to the *pala* tree near the shrine with musical instruments. They also carry *nilavilakku* (brass lamp) and paddy *para* (paddy in a small dish) for installing under the *pala* tree[12]. When *aashaan* starts the puja under the tree, the oracle becomes furious and he throws ash and rice. The carpenter of the village then climbs on the *pala* tree, cut one branch of the tree, and hand over to the *aashaan* without touching the land. The aashan receive the *palakombu* in front of the oil lamp and carry to the *paana* shrine with oracle, other Nayars and performers. In the afternoon with accompanying crowd, the procession is set by rhythm of percussion instruments amidst the vociferous shouting and chanting as mark of praise to Kali.

The *aashan* make three rounds around the shrine, smear sandal on the *kombu* (stump/branch) and install *kombu* in the middle of the shrine in the inner space of the four pillars (*mandapam*) of the *pala* shrine with the consent of elder Nayars and oracle. The *aashan* start Ganapathi *puja* and pour water on the plant. This part of ritual is called *palakombunaatal* (install pala branch). Then, *aashaan* deposits money, pay seeds of three *idangazhi* on the floor and keep sword, red *pattu* (red silk), mirror, sandal and anklet of Bhagavathi on the *peedam* (stool) in the eastern part of the *pala* branch (stump) from the shrine. It signifies the presence of Bhagavathi in the *peedam* (stool).

He deposit three *idangazhi* (a measure of volume equal to one and half kilogram) seeds of paddy and prepare *guruthi* (sacrifice) on it in the northern part of the *kombu* (branch). In south part he prepares material for Ganapathi *puja* and performs the *puja* for Ganapathi. In the western part, he deposits money in the *kindi* (brass vessel) and *pookula* (flower of coconut tree).

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[12] Trees consider very holy not only for their life sustaining powers on earth but also consider for their being the seats of divine spirits. Some trees are greater spiritual presence and significance than others. Among those, *pala* tree are believed to be the abode of Bhagavathi. In addition the *pala* tree is the abode of all the departed ancestral spirits and the feet of this tree formed the feet of Kali. The *pala* tree planted and grown in the shrine premise given great care by the people.

After distribution of material, *aashaan* starts *puja* by praising Ganapathi, Kali and their ancestors and this *puja* is *kindi puja* or *nadannu puja*/*dikpuja* (worship of eight different directions). He faces each side of the *mandapam* and does *puja* around for one and half hour in standing position in every side. Two assistants stand on either side of *aashan* and they provide water and flower to *aashan* when he reaches each side. Later, he prepares *guruthi* in the north part of the shrine in an *uruli* (round vessel) and sprinkle to his body and the body's of the spectators from the *uruli* of the western part of *mandapa*. The *aashan* becomes furious after the sprinkle of the *guruthi* and the assistance give sword to him. Suddenly, *aashan* rounds the *mandapa* in three times and throws flower and rice on each side of the shrine. With this they believe that, the shrine is freed from all bad omens.

The next performance is *thiruuzhichil* (passing a lighted torch over the body and limbs are highlighted by dance movements). They prepare big *thiris* (wick of a lamp) on the edge of *palathandu* (branch of *pala* tree) and cover with inner layers of plantain dip in the oil. They lit fire on it and dance around the shrine. The *aashan* start the *thiruuzhichil* and later he gives this *thiri* to one of his experienced student to continue it. After this ritual, the performers take a short break for one hour.

During the resting time, the musicians start some rhythm to entertain the audience. This action is called *kelikai*. After this, the *paanapiduthakaar*[13] (those who take fasting and prepare to dance in pana) dance around the shrine as one group with *palathandu* and *pookula* (flower of coconut tree) with the rhythm of *nanduni* (an instrument similar to veena), *para* and *ilathalam* instruments. This dance is known as *panapidutham*/*paanachadal*. Assistants continue fasting to perform this dance and get training from the *aashan*. After this ritual, all performers sit in the south part of the shrine and sing *thottam* song with the music of *nanduni*, *para* (a particular kind of percussion instruments) and *ilathaalam* (cymbal).

The *thottam* is a poetic narrative which explains the origin and evolution of the particular deity or goddess or hero. Generally the word *thottam* use as *thottam paatu* (*paatu* is the Malayalam word for song). Here, *thottam* means the song

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[13] Male member from Nayars vow to perform in the *panapidutham* and they bathe early in the morning forty one days before the performance of a shrine/house, follow vegetarian food, remain celibate and to be devotion to the deity and practice the *panaidutham* under the *aashan*. The minimum performers are sixteen in numbers.

rendered in the ritual performance. There are two meanings associated with the word *thottam*.[14] (1) *thottam* as a ritual (2) *thottam* as the song in the ritual. There are different opinions about the origin of the word *thottam*. According to C.M.S Chanthera[15], it is from the idea of *sankalpich undakiyathu* (created through the concept). Chelanattu Achuthamenon says it is from the word *prathyakshapettathu*[16] (appeared) where as M.V Vishnu Nambuthiri says it is the praise song which explains the origin of the Bhagavathi.[17] In the *thottam* song, they praise *Ganapathi* and Bhagavathi first and narrate the war between Kali and Dharika. The singers give preference to the deity of the respective shrine and narrate her name in the songs. The *thottam* songs start with praises of god Ganapathi; god/godess, Nayar ancestors; main Nayar landlords of the locality; narratives of the reason behind the birth of Kali, preparation of Kali against Dharika, death of Dharika and Kali receiving instruction from her father to go to the earth. The content of *thottampaatu* (song) of this performance is the war between Kali and Dharika.

Table No 6.6: Structure of *Thottam*

S.No	Episode	Native Name	Content
1	Supportive praise	*Thunavazhthu*	Praise of Ganapathi
2	Praises	*Vazhthu*	Praise god/godess, Nayar ancestors; main nayar landlords of the locality;
3	Birth	*Jananam*	Birth of kali from Shiva's third eye
4	Preparation	*Purapadu*	Kalis departure for war with military
5	Combat	Kali Dharika *Ettumuttal*	Fight between kalai and Dharika; death of Dharika; Kalis to earth
6	Praises	*Vazhthu*	Praise

This *paana* is conducted as an offering of Nayar family and it believed that, the killing lines of Dharika should not be heard by the pregnant women. The performance is usually conducted at evening. After the narration of *thottam* song, the Nayar oracle of the shrine arrives in the shrine and face the *sreekovil* (sanctum sanctorum) with anklet, sword and round the shrine thrice. Once the oracle finishes

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[14] Raghavan Payyanad, *Folklorinoru Padanapadhathi*, (in Mal.) Thrissur: Kerala Sahithya Academmy, 1998.

[15] C.M.S Chanthera, *Kannakiyum Cheermbakavum*, (in Mal.) Kottayam: Granthakarthavu, 1973.

[16] Chelanattu Achuthamenon, *Kali Worship in Kerala*, (in Mal.) Madras: University of Madras, 1943.

[17] M.V Vishnu Nambuthiri, *Thottam Paatukal Oru Padanam*, (in Mal.) Kottayam: Granthakarthavu, 1990.

his round, all the performers including the oracle go to the pond near to the shrine and take a dip in it. This ritual act is *kulamchattam* (jump to pond). They return to the shrine and destroy the shrine. At the end of a series of rites, the oracle moves in a trance around the *pandal* (canopy). The *para*, a variation of the *chenda* is the main percussion accompaniment. The dream beats work up to a frenzy to match the steps of the oracle.

The oracle of the *kavu* gives the divine prophecy of Bhagavathi to the devotees of the paana ritual and blesses the performers, villagers and the offerers. After the ritual possession the oracle comes to normalcy. The *Paana* is performed at night, a performance which covers two to three hours. Next day, with the presence of the priest, the patron of the shrine hoists down the flag and hand it over to priest. Then he does *puja* on the flag from the *srikovil* and keeps the flag inside the shrine.

VII. *Kanyarkali*

The *kanyarkali* is the ritual performance in the border villages of Palakkad (Palakkad town and its east side) and starts before four days of the main day of *vela* festival in the *Bhagavthi* shrine. This ritual performance of Nayar community is to propitiate *Bhagavathi* in the shrine of Pallakkad taluk. People believe that, the ritual worship for Kannaki Devi changed as *kannakiyar kali* (here, literally *Kali* means play and the contextual meaning is performance) and later it came to be known as *kanyarkali*.[18] Some of the lines of *vattakalipaatu* (ritual portion of the performance) are in praise of the reigning deity of the shrine of their area. The *kanyarakali* is Nayar community based ritual and the performance is night long generally presented in the agriculture off season i.e., April, May in front of a deity or at a common place of Nayars called *mannan*, where social gatherings are held.

The performers of the Nayar community are agricultural landlords or agriculturalist. The members also engage in other works such as industry and service sector. It has been performed in two hundred *tharas* and *kavus* (shrines) of Palakkad area and most of these sacred places are under the control of Nayar patronship. All the learning is handed by practice and there are no written records about the contents and ritual of this act. There is no age limit of the performers and the number of performers in the performance is twenty.

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[18] This performance is also popularly known as *ponnanakali*, *desakali*, *mannathukali*.

The Nayars assembly called *mandham* meets in a day and the elder members of the committee decide the date of *kanyarkali* ritual as part of *vela* in the shrine. Then the members those who are interested to participate in the coming *kanyarakali* meet in the *kalari* of *aashaan* gives *dakshina* to him. The *kaliachan* (master of the performance) and performers follow fasting from practice of the performance till end of the ritual. They abstain from all non-vegetarian food and sex. They start the practice which is known as *idakali*. It needs two months rigorous practice to learn the performance. They practice in the morning four to six o' clock and in evening from nine to twelve o' clock. First *kaliachan* teach *vandhanam*, songs of Kanyarkali and steps of the performance.

The story behind the performance is that, after the destruction of the Madura city, Kannaki Devi became furious and reaches Palakad. The Nayar community of the region starts to appease the Devi and she becomees cool after the dance and songs of Nayars. As a continuation, the Nayars follow the old performance.

It is believed that Nayars who wrer once the peasent warrior community of Kerala, performed *kanyarkali* not only as offering to Bhagavathi but also to prepare themselves for warfare which involves physical and mental fitness. This annual ritual performance becomes a rehersal ground for the community. The performance is a long and continues through out the night. The stage is prepared under a *pandal* (canopy) and built according to traditional specifications. The *kanyarkali* is a group dance and is performed in a circular motion. Because of its performing style in round (*vattam*), it also called *vattakali*.

As a ritual, *vattakali* is performed in the worship of the deity. The male members of the Nayar community participate in this performance, after the bath they smear sandalwood paste on their bodies and wear a turban and a *dothy*. The upper part of the body is not clothed and kept bare. The *vattakali* is merely devotional dance. The *kanyarkali* is generally presented in three days, first of which is known as *aandikoothu*. The second day performance is called *valluvankali* and the third day's performance is called *malamakali*. The third day Kanyarkali ends with *poovaral* which is also devotional. It is the concluding part of the performance. Each day *vatakali* is performed three times at night, which means they perform nine *vattakali* in three days. Each *vattakali* in three days have its own specific steps.

The *kanyarkali* presented in troupe is accompanied by vocal support and percussion. The headman of the troupe will lead the troupe and he is called *kaliachan*. He is the master in all the wings such as music, percussion and ritual. To give vocal support to the main musicians there will be assistants to repeat the recital. The *chenda*, *chengala* and *elathalam* are the supporting instruments. The conversation used in the performance is humorous. The songs of *kanyarakali* are organized in a structured way.

As a preparation, they take fasting and after that *kaliachan* install the central post of *pandal* (canopy) with *puja*. The *kanyarkali* is presented in a pandal erected on nine bamboo posts; each post has eleven feet height. The size of the performing area is 25.3 x 25.3 sq feet and top portion is covered with bamboo mats leaving a gap at the middle over the central post. The whole pandal is decorated with coconut tree leaves and *kanikona* flower (*cassia Indian laburnum*). Each post will be provided with small oil lamp called *thookkuvilakku* and center post with *kalivilakku*. The *pandal* (canopy) face to the *kavu* and purify pandal with *punyaham* (holly water).

The priest of the shrine performs *puja* (*athazha puja*) for Bhagavathi during the nighttime with the presence of elder people of Nayar community, landlord family, oracle, *kaliachan* and the performers. After the *puja*, priest takes fire from the *koothuvilakku* of Bhagavathi and lit to the *nilavilaku* ((brass lamp). The elder member of the landlord family carries lamp to the *pandal* with the rhythm of instruments and install it under the middle post of the pandal. Then the *kaliachan* and performers bows their head to Bhagavathi and go to the shrine with oracle in the rhythm of instruments and round the shrine thrice. Then the priest of the shrine gives sword, anklet, *pattu* (silk cloth), *kora* (small cloth), *peedam* (stool) to the *kaliyashan* and install near to the *nilavialkku* on the *peedam*. The oracle of the shrine blesses the performers by throwing flower. Then they start *kelikottu* in front of pandal (canopy) with the help of *chenda* (a cylindrical percussion instrument), *maddalam* (drum and has two sides for playing), *idakka* (hourglass-shaped drum), *chengila (gong), kurumkuzhal* (a short pipe) and *ilathalam* (cymbal) before the commencement of the *kanyarkali*, in order to convey the message about the programme.

Table No 6.7: Structure of Kanyarkali ritual Performance

S.No	Day 1 Aandikoothu	Day 2 Vallonkoothu	Day 3 Malamakoothu	Day 4 Poovaral
1	Praise	Praise	Praise	Praise
2	Vattakali and Thottam of Kali	Vattakali and Thottam Advices of Thiruvaluvar and Avvayar	Narrates the life of Malaya community	gathering the flower and offer to Bhagavathi
3	Kalpana	Kalpana	Kalpana	Kalpana

Aandikoothu - The first day performance is *aandikoothu*. *Andi* means Shiva and in the song of a*andikoothu*, first they praise Shiva, Parvathi, and the deity of the respective *kavu* of their area. The *kaliachan* sing praise of Devi from the northern side of the *pandal* and this is known as *nadavattam*. Before entering to the performing stage, with the leadership of the head of the performance (*kaliachan*), the performers folding palms in front of the Devi and get blessing. Then with the background music of *chenda, chengila, ilathalam*, and *kurukuzhal*, they enter the stage and sit in round shape in the pandal. The *kaliyashan* use *chengila* instruments in the performance. Then they worship the ancestors and earth goddess and start the performance. They wear a *kasavu dothy* (cloth with golden embroidery), cover the head with *kasavu* cloth, smear sandal, *kumkum* (*crocus sativus*) in forehead, and start the dance around the central post. After the praise they enter to the pandal and bow the *kalivilakku* (play lamp). Then *kaliachan* sing the songs of *vattakali* as a lead singer and other performers dance with *kaliachan* around the lamp. They start the dance in slow movements and in due course, the songs become very speedy and the dance also gains speed and ends the performance. The participant takes stylized steps, bow down and leap up as they go through it. The actors carry sticks having bells. The *chuvad* (steps) in the *vattakali* is a combination of four, eight, twelve, sixteen, twenty and twenty four steps and it is presented in various movements such as *pathikalam* (slow), *edakalam* (medium speed) *eratty* (double speed) and *thullaleratty* (swift movement). This is the performamce style and it end with speedy movement and finally the performers bow to the *kaliachan*. The *vatakali* performers dance in accordance with the songs of praise to Shiva and moves their leg based on the rhythm of *chenda*.

Then, the *kaliachan* sings the *thottam* song of Bhagavathi which narrates the praise of Bhagavathi. This song is performed without the rhythm of any instruments. This song narrates the origin of the Bhadrakali from the third eye of Shiva and she is also the destructive power against the all evil. Once they finish the *vattakali*, the oracle of the *kavu* enters to the pandal and gives *Kalpana*. The *kanyarakali* is a round dance (*vattakali*) and all songs are devotional.

In the *thottam* songs of *andikoothu* day, they praise Shiva as the one who destroyed Kamadeva with his third eye, keeps Ganga in his hair and the creator of Kali. Kali had born from the third eye of Shiva and she carries trident and sword. Then narrate the Kali Dharika war and finally they all praise Kali. She is the Bhagavathi residing in the shrine performing *kanyarkali* area. They praise the Bhagavathi of the shrine and surrounding villages. Then they praise Kannaki and the features of *Kaveripoompattinam* (a village in Nagapattinam district in Tamil Nadu state). They narrate the beauty of Kannaki, her body parts such as hands, forehead, eyes and neck.

Vallonkoothu- Thiruvaluvar and *Avvayar* are considered as the incarnations of Saraswathi Devi and they narrate the advices of Thiruvalluvar,[19] a Tamil poet and philosopher and Avvayar[20] in the *vattakali* of second day. The second day performance gets its name as it express the advice of Thiruvalluvar, the Tamil philosopher. The performance of second day starts at night with the praise of god/goddess such as Ganapathi, Saraswathi, Shiva, and Bhagavathi and perform dance like the last day performance in three steps (slow, medium and fast) based on

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[19] He is belived to live in between second BC and eighth Century A.D. His contribution to Tamil literature is the work, 'thirukural' which narrates the ethics of human life. There are many opinions exist about where he has lived. One opinion is that he lived in Madurai, the capital of Pandya kingdom. Another oipinion is that, he was born and lived in Mylapore, a part of modern Madras presidency and he has submitted the thirukural for the Pandya king. His philosophy is about the human morals and betterment of life. In another way it is about good ethgical behavior with conscience and honor; the right nanner of conducting worldly affairs, love between human beings, ethics in public life. In short, his philosophy concentrates on the need of righteous living in oublic life. See S. Padmanabhan, *Thiruvalluvar*, Kanyakumari: Kanyakumari Historical and Cultural Research Centre, 2003; P.C Babu and D.B Rao, *Flowers of Wisdom*, New Delhi: Discovery Publishing House, 2003.

[20] The Avvayar were the famous and important female poets of the Tamil Nadu. The Avvayar means respectable women was the title of more than one poet who was active during different periods in Tamil history. There were three female poets titled *Avvayar*. Among them, Avvayar 1 lived during the sangam period (1st and 2nd century C.E). Avvayar II lived during the reign of the Chola dynasty in the 13th century. They explain the basic wisdom that should govern mundane life. Ramachandra Dikshitar, *Studies in Tamil Literature and History*, Madras: Biblio Bazar, 2007.

the rhythm of instruments. After the initial praise of the gods and goddess, rests of the songs narrates the advices of Thiruvaluvar and Avvayar.

Malamakoothu- the word *malama* means prosperity. Most of the *malama* song is praising of different gods and goddess. They praise Madhuara Meenakshi, Ganapathi, and Thrimoorthis, Krishna, Bhagavathi. They narrate the life of agricultural workers, Malayans. Malayan collect forest product and gives it to landlord. Landlord gives grains to them and assures to give support all their life. Then Malayan returns to their village.

The performance would end up in the fourth day morning with the ritual of *poovaral* (flower gathering) and *thottam* (recitation of song) by praising the Bhagavathi. The performers collect flowers throng in the canopy and pour it on Bhagavathi's *peedam* (stool/pedestal). The oracle come to the shrine after bath and prays in front of shrine. Later, he comes to the *pandal* and throw flower to the performers and devotees. It is believed that Bhagavathi enters the bodies of the oracle and he has given the *kalpana* (order/command) of Bhagavathi to the performers and devotee. Then the elder member takes the lamp and the *kaliyashan* (master of the performance) collect the sword and other material. They make procession to shrine and handover the sacred objects to the priest of the shrine. He installs the idol in the *sreekovil*. In the fourth day they clean the shrine and surroundings and with the order of the oracle they end up the performance. Each day *kanyarkali* starts at nine o' clock and ends up in the early morning.

After the *poovaral* ritual, the *kaliyashaan*, performers and *deshakaranar* (elder man) meet and calculate the expenditure of performance. They announce the total amount and get sanction from the members of the community. The food and accommodation of the performers is the responsibility of the respective family. They also decide the expenditure of next year performance and distribute the expenses among each family of the village and they select the members of host of the community through lot.
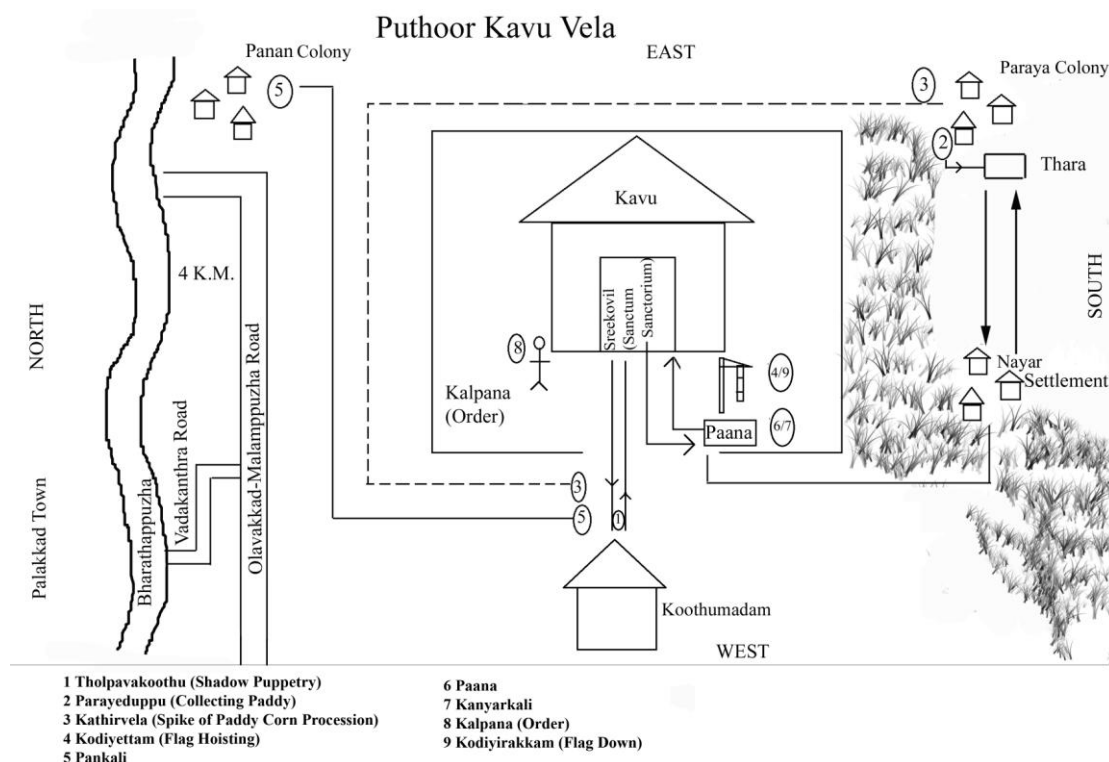
The audience of the performance is mostly the Nayar community and they have been watching the ritual since years. They sit around the *kalipandal* (canopy of the performance) and the hereditary family and elder members of the community sit in front side of the *kalipandal*. The harijans sit in the last section of the audience.

Menstrual women are not allowed to watch the performance. The women are kept out of these activities and they become mere spectators.

The *paana* is a one day ritual performance where as *kanyakali* is the four day performance. Both performance ends up the *kalpana* (command or order) of the oracle of the shrine. This would also lead to the flag hoisting and the annual festival of the *kavu* end up for next year.

The annual festival of the Bhagavathi shrine in the origin part of Bharathppuzha begins with the shadow puppetry by Nayar community and end up the performance by the *kalpana* of the Nayar oracle. Most of the shrine in the origin part is under the patronship of the Nayar community and they accommodate other communities such as Paraya, Panan to their festival. The rest of the ritual is being performed by the Nayar community and by giving the order of Bhagavathi to the villagers, the Nayar community emphasise their socio-political supremacy through the ritual performances of the shrine. The performance begins with the entering of Nayar communities' ritual performance and flag off the ritual command of the representative of Bhagavathi, i.e oracle. This shows that the reinforcement of hierarchy can be seen in the entry and exit point of the different communities in the annual ritual performances.

Grpah No 6.1: Puthoor Kavu Vela

Puthoor Kavu Vela

1 Tholpavakoothu (Shadow Puppetry)
2 Parayeduppu (Collecting Paddy)
3 Kathirvela (Spike of Paddy Corn Procession)
4 Kodiyettam (Flag Hoisting)
5 Pankali
6 Paana
7 Kanyarkali
8 Kalpana (Order)
9 Kodiyirakkam (Flag Down)

The above is the graphic depiction of the Vela ritual observed in Puthoor kavu, which is situated in the Puthoor area, Palakkad district (origin part of Bharathappuzha) which is lying on the banks of tributaries of Bharathappuzha.

The above description of the structure of the *vela* is taken from two *kavus* in the Palakkad district as stated earlier. If one looks at the performances on the basis of geographical dispersal the performance sequence is as follows:

Table No 6.8: Linear arrangement of events in Origin part

Kanyarkali	Paavakooothu (shadow puppetry)	Parayeduppu (collecting paddy)	Kathirvaravu (paddy offering)	Paana	Kodiyettam (flag hoisting)	Pankali	Kalpana (Order of Oracle)	Kodiyirakkam (flag Hoisting down)
Narrat	Narrate	Blessing	Seeks	Kali	Denoting the	Dance	Dance	End of

ive of Kannaki with Dance form	the Ramayana in Shadow puppet Theatre form	the villagers	blessing of Bhagavathi	Dharika war (Narrative)	event of ritual of Bhagavathi	of Panan community as offering	with Narrative	the event of ritual of Bhagavathi

It is interesting to note from the above linear arrangements of the events that are connected with *vela* ritual in the oprigin part *kanyarkali* performance preceeds *pavakoothu* performance. These two are narrative centric wherein the stories of Kannaki and Ramayana are narrated. The story of Kannaki is basically migrated from Tamil Nadu and in the soils of Kerala; it is imported as the story of Bhagavathi. The search of missing anklet in the story of Kannaki is the major theme and when it was found, Kannaki burns the city of Madhura to avenge the killing of her husband. However, in the story of *kanyarkali*, the protoganist Kannaki is still serching for the lost anklet even to this day in the form of Bhagavathi. Since, the lost anklet is not found, the story remains in complete and warrants for recurring enactment. In the name of searching Bhagavathi visits the households and blesses them. In this myth, there is no mention of war with Dharika.

The next major performance that follows *kanyarkali* is *pavakoothu* (shadow puppetry). The story of this performance is the story of Ramayana by a Tamil performing community known as Pulavar. Both *kanyarkali* performers (Nayars) and *pavakoothu* performers (Pulavar) are suppose to have migrated from Tamil Nadu and both communities figure in Sangam literature. It is believed that *pavakoothu* performance is meant for Bhadrakali who happened to have missed witnessing of the war of Rama-Ravana as she herself was engaged in the war with Dharik. It is at the behest of Shiva's command that the Pulavar is enacting this performance. Therefore, this performance denotes that the *pavakoothu* is a post-war event of *Dharikavadhanam* (killing of Dharika by Bhadarakali). In the first performance (*kanyarkali*), there is no reference to war of Bhadarakali with Dharika whereas in the second performance (*pavakoothu*), there is a reference of war of Bhadarakali with Dharika as a foregone event and no description of whatsoever is connected with the war itself. In both the cases Kannaki and Bhadrakali are referred to as wandering deity who was in search of the demon, Dharika. However, the events (*Parayeduppu,*

Kathirvaravu, Paana, Pankali etc,) that follow these two narratives denote the worship of the deity not as Kannaki nor as Bhadarakali but as Bhagavathi. In a way, myth is narrated and the ritual is performed. But there is no enactment of myth as such, which means myth and ritual are in non-coexistence in the origin part of banks of tributaries of Bharathappuzha.

According to one school of myth ritual theory[21], myths and rituals have freedom from one another. The myths and rituals often appear together but every myth has a corresponding ritual or vice versa. Walter Burkert believes that myths and rituals were originally independent. When myths and rituals come together they reinforce each other.[22] A myth that tells how the gods established a ritual reinforces that ritual by giving it a divine status. A ritual based on a mythical event makes that event more than a mere myth. The myth becomes more important because it narrates an event whose imitation is considered sacred. Besides, Burkert argues that myth and ritual together serve as a socializing function. By providing hunting rituals as an example Burkert argues that hunting had a sacred, ritualistic quality once and it was the part of survival. But hunting lost its basic function with the emergence of agriculture. Even though hunting ritual became important that it could not be given up. By performing the ritual of hunting together, an ancient society bonded itself together as a group and also provided a way for its members to vent their anxieties over their own aggressiveness and mortality.

Bronisław Malinowski argued in his essay *Myth in Primitive Psychology* (1926) that myths function as fictitious accounts of the origin of rituals, thereby providing a justification for those rituals.[23] However, Malinowski also points out that many cultural practices besides rituals have related myths. Therefore in his view myth and ritual are not coextensive. In other words, not all myths are outgrowths of ritual and not all rituals are outgrowths of myths. Mircea Eliade says that the function of

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[21] There are three major schools of thought in the myth-ritual theory. The first argues that myth is primal and rituals have originated from the myth. The second school argues myth is emerged from the rituals whereas another school argues that myth and ritual have freedom from another.

[22] W.Burkert, *Homo necans: The Anthropology of Ancient Greek Sacrificial Ritual and Myth*, Translated by Peter Bing. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983 & W. Burkert, *Structure and history in Greek mythology and ritual*, Berkeley: University of California Press, (1979), 1982.
[23] Bronisław Malinowski, *Myth in Primitive Psychology*. Indiana: Negros University Press, (1926), 1971 (Reprint).

myth is to provide an explanation for ritual. In many societies, rituals are considered important precisely because they were established by the mythical gods or heroes.[24] Therefore, making the rituals seem all the more important. However, Eliade notes that the societies use myths to sanction many kinds of activities and not just rituals. By giving an explanation Eliade says why myths can confer such an importance on rituals. In a ritual, myth was re-enacted as a time machine. It carries the believers back to the time of the myth and thereby brought one closer to god. Even though, the same return to the mythical age can be achieved simply by retelling a myth, without any ritual reenactment, which means myth and ritual are not co-extensive. The recital of myths and enactment of rituals serve a common purpose. The traditional man sees both myths and rituals as vehicles for eternal return to the mythical age.[25] They are two different means to remain in sacred time. Many scholars now believe that myth, ritual share common paradigms, and that they are not developed from eachother.

To sum up, Bhadrakali myth itself is not native to Kerala and in the process of migration, the communities which immigrated to Kerala in different historical times brought the myth of Bhadarakali in the form of *kanyarakali* (Nayar version) and Kali (Nambuthiri Brahmin version). In the process of oico-typification, the ritual is transformed to Bhagavathi.

(B). Ritual Performances: Middle Part of Bharathappuzha

Kerala was never ruled by a single kingdom. It is evident that Kerala was the totality of many *swaroopams* under the *naduvazhi* and the *swaroopams* never had a centrally controlled military organization. The medieval south Indian state was a segmentary state in which political authority and control were local in several crucial ways. The boundary of the constituent units of the state was limited to well-defined and persistent ethnic territories. In most of the case its chief was the leaders of the dominant community of the locality.[26]

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[24] Mircea Eliade, *Myth and Reality*, Willard R. Trask (Trans.). New York: Harper & Row, 1963 & *The Myth of the Eternal Return: Cosmos and History*, Willard R. Trask (trans.,), Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971.

[25] Mircea Eliade, *The Myth of the Eternal Return: Cosmos and History*, Willard R. Trask (trans.), Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971.

[26] Burton Stein, *Peasant State and Society in Medieval South India*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1980.

One of the peculiarities of medieval south Indian state especially Chola and it successors was the segmentary nature.[27] This segment incorporates the peasant society and trading community. The interaction of various communities constituted a cultural nexus of medieval south Indian village and the rural village settlement was a single cultural system. It envisages the interaction of Brahmins and non-Brahmnis culture in the scared complexes. This shared cultural system more or less encompasses all who lived in the village settlements(here *thatta*ka) and therefore included Brahmins, non-Brahmin cultivating groups (Nayars), temple servants, agricultural labourer community, artisans and traders.

Each locality was not uniform and varied in their composition. The Brahmins mediated the power and legitimacy of the area. Each community segregated in accordance of their ritual right. Eventhough they have followed social, ritual and political co-operation and interdependence.

The smallest unit was known as *nadu* in the Chola period and this included various groups from cultivators to labourers. This local segment provided the foundation of medieval South India. The Chola and Vijayanagara state of medieval South India was a segmentary state. Aidan Southal[28] used the concept of 'segmentary state' first in his study about the political organization of African society. This type of state exists not only in Africa, but also in contexts of Europe and Asia as well. In the segmetary state, the segments of which the state is composed are seen as prior to the formal state. These segments are structurally coherent units in themselves. These parts/segments together comprise a state in their recognition of a scared ruler whose over lordship is of a moral sort and is expressed in a ritual idiom.

The macro region on the banks of Bharathappuzha is known as '*swaroopams*'. A *swaroopams* is the totality of many localities/*deshams*. Based on the ecological condition and the settlement pattern of communities and their social composition, the micro regions known as *desham* were the basic units of society. In a way the locality was an interactional zone by different communities with different interest. By

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[27]The presence of multi power segments within state is called the 'segmentary state' by Evans Pritchard. Gellner also argued for a 'segmentary state' model in Morocco where in tribal and urban Islam can coexist. For further details, see Evans Pritchard Pritchard, *The Sanusi of Cyrenaica*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, (1949); Meyer Fortes and Evans Pritchard (Eds.), *African Political Systems*. London: Oxford University Press, 1940.

[28] Aiden Southall, *Alur Society: A Study in Processes and Types of Domination,* Nairobi: Oxford University Press, (1956)1972.

providing ritual right in a sacred place (shrine), the king created consensus of different communities with different interests. The *desham* is the term which designated the micro region (in chola and vijayanagara kingdom *nadu* was the micro region). The territorial term *desham* was the fundamental block of rural organization during the time of *swaroopams*.

The *desham* was the prime administrative unit which has a regular representative in each locality known as *deshavazhi* who was the most influential persons of a locality.[29] The territory could be the scope of ritual supremacy. This creates a series of zones. There is a central power and at the same time the centre has limited power over the local administration or *deshams*. The basic segment of the segmentary political system were *deshams* under the leadership of *deshavazhi*. In a way the political control is distributed among many *deshams*, the ritual supremacy is conceded to a single centre i.e *swaroopams*. This is a ritually incorporative kingship.

A king or *naduvazhi* attributes as representative god/goddess, great warrior and the king sets right to the ritual arrangements at some temples. The nature and boundaries of *deshams* often vague and great *swaroopams* are reduced to minor ones. The political system which is called segmentary was ritual in respect to rule over peoples and territories of the macro region beyond the home territories of each kingship.[30] The temples were the spot of major economic importance, centre of the identity of different communites through ritual right. During the reign of Zamorins period most of the shrine received money, gifts from the king. The social and cultural features of *desham* expressed in the shrines.

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[29] For further reference of the nature of nadu in medieval Chola empire, See, K.A. Nilakanta Sastri, *The Colas,* Madras: University of Madras, 1955:503-504 & T. V. Mahalingam, *South Indian Polity*, Madras: University of Madras, 1967:369.

[30] The characteristics of segmentary states are: (a) territorial sovereignty but limited and essentially relative, forming a series of zones in which authority is most absolute near the centre and increasingly restricted towards the periphery, often shading off into a ritual hegemony (b) there is centralized government, yet there are also numerous peripheral focused of administration over which the centre exercises only a limited control (c) there is a specialized administrative staff at the centre, but it is repeated on a reduced scale at all the peripheral focuses of administration (d) monopoly of the use of force is successfully claimed to a limited extent and within a limited range by a central authority, but legitimate force on a more restricted order inheres at all peripheral focuses (e) several levels of subordinate focuses may be distinguishable, organised pyramidically in relation to the central authority (f) the more peripheral a subordinate authority is the more chance it has to change its allegiance from one power to another. The segmentary state are thus flexible and fluctuating, even comprising peripheral units which have political standing in several adjacent power pyramids which thus become interlocked. See Burton Stein, *Peasant State and Society in Medieval South India*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1980:265.

The cultural system of different communities is highly localized, varieties of a single culture and shared cultural traditions. Each *desham* was also a segmented unit of production. Which means it is an economic and ethnic territory. Boundaries of each *desham* were defined by the influence of Bagavathi and interaction of the folk communities. The shrine was also an important trade centre. The person with the title of *deshavazhi* was an agent of the king. These local rulers were not identified by their personal name but their locality often given.

Shared sacred allegiance was another dimension of the segmentary state. The *deshavazhi* had the responsibility for the maintenance and supervision of shrines. The folk religion and Brahminical religion blurred and several communities participated in the annual festival of the shrine. The *deshams* were the nuclear localities with variations of population, ritual right and natural resources. Each *deshams* had differences with respect of their connection with other localities. Some *deshams* were hierarchical with their ruling lineages. Each *desham* was linked to the ruling dynasty during the time of Cochin, Nedumpurayoor and later with Zamorins *swaroopam*s.

Most of *deshams* in the middle of the banks of Bharathappuzha contained small shrines and only later they changed it as temples during the reign of Zamorins of Calicut in medieval times. The shrines had ritual obligations to the community of the village and the kings have helped in the annual festival of the shrines. The rise of temple centres, markets (*angadi*) and administration has influenced the village settlements on the middle banks of the Bharathappuzha. The situation is that the shrine and its folk is the central figure and the rest of the community is around it. In each village they have occupational groups such as carpenters, goldsmith and so on. This shows the establishment of temple oriented social structure. This is the centralisation of the village system. The small shrines became temples and the temple was surrounded by the temple folk. The wealth and occupation is centred on the temple folk and this paves the way for the politics of the kings. Each community has affiliation to temple by ritual right. The temple also accommodates the market as the basic unit of the administrative division. The nexus between king, temple, and market shows that there was a kind of distribution of powers outward but based on the centralised administration. Each community has been linked to the temple and this temple leads to the centrifugal power point of the local king.

The development of the decentralised village administration is one of the features of the evolution of village in Kerala. The migration of different communities

in the central banks of the Bharathappuzha creates a new political power on the existing village settlement which was based on the ancestral family. After the establishment of the centralised villages by the temple, administers accommodates the migration of trading community to the banks of Bharathappuzha. In another way the medieval Kerala temple was the central element which accommodates agricultural land in one way and trade in another. The annual festival and the hereditary right of each community on the middle banks was part of that accommodation to temple.

The middle banks of Bharathappuzha are the totality of the places such as Palakkad, Eranadu and Valluvanadu. The geographical features such as hills, plain lands, and paddy field create a unique economic system. The Muslims from the end part of Bharathappuzha engaged to trade in the market during the annual *pooram* festival of the shrine and they were not allowed to stay in the respective places. Because of this reason there are very few Muslim settlements which can be seen in these areas. The local kings engage inland (*kara*) trade and give much importance. The *swaroopams* was not interested to the rise of Muslims in the middle banks as a trading community because Muslims were more concentrated in the foreign trade. The forest products had handover to the Cochin and Tranvancore *swaroopams* than Zamorins.

There were many markets in the middle banks of Bharathappuzha and this was held at the time of the *pooram* festivals. The market of Vaniyamkulam in Shornoor, Chinakathoor in Ottapalam, Perumbilavu in Thalappily, Paruthur in Kodikunnu, Mullakkl in Arangotukara, Kudapara in Deshamangala, Mulayan*kavu* in Vallappuzha, Palakkal in Varavoor, Ammakavu in peringodu are some of them. All the products from different village reach the market and it was the occasion of the people to buy essential goods for the coming year. The festival of the shrine is held before the rainy season i.e, South West monsoon (June to September).[31] All the agricultural and non-agricultural products came in this market and distributed. The villages were dispersed in nature for the decentralisation of power and wealth, and thus, the creation of *thattaka* and annual festival in the shrine was inevitable for this. The *thattaka* as a geographical unit, belief, ritual, festival and rights were the nexus of the rise of patron

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[31]South west monsoon is the main rainy season in Kerala. This season known as *edavapathi* because the rain starts by the middle of the Malayalam month edavam (May to June). The next few months are the period of heavy rain and the season lasts till the end of September month. C.K Sujith Kumar, *Krishimalayalam*, Kannur: Samskrithi Publication, 1999.

in the shrine. In another way, through the annual festival by the different right of each community, they have accepted the power of king. The procession of different communities to a central (here shrine) is the evidence of centralisation of power. The Nambuthiris Brahmins became the priest in the shrine and they also accommodate different communities.[32] The local kings were the power centres in the middle banks.

In later medieval period, Zamorins of Calicut captured most of the land on the central banks of Bharathappuzha and created different *thattaka* for each Bhahgavathi. This *thattaka* is associated with zamorins power and he has certain right and gives money to the annual festival and each *thattaka* was under the control of land lords. This shows the relationship of cultural evolution, social change and the concept of *thattaka* and power of the king in the middle banks of Bharathappuzha during medieval times.

The Geography, society, markets, forests and the presence of river, and agricultural land, valley culture helped to create a unique zone in the middle banks of Bharathappuzha. The collection of forest and non-forest products, its distribution and exchange was prominent. The regional market was the backbone of each landlord and *swaroopams*. The *swaroopams*, such as Nedumpurayyor, Tharoor and Kavalapara had friendly relationship with the Cochin kingdom. The markets and trade of forest products were more or less with Cochin kingdom and the kingdom had port in Kodungaloor. The migration of different communities and the power of the landlord were based on the temple. The land lords were under the control of the *swaroopams* and this *swaroopams* had a bad relationship with zamorins. Later Zamorins captured these lands and provided all help to the *pooram* festival of this area such as the *pooram* of Aryan *kavu*, Chinakathoor and Paruthur.

All these show the chain and distribution of small markets was the key elements of the medieval landlord and kingdom. In 15th century Zamorins captured all these middle lands and give administrative power to the landlords. Zamorins collected money from the landlords as remuneration for the markets and products.

The *thattaka* was under the control of *deshavazhi* and he was the supreme authority of the temple. This *desham* was the totality of many communities. The

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[32] It is believe that after the creation of Kerala Parashurama brough Brahmins from north and they settled in sixty four villages (grammams). In another way, it means the Nambuthiri Brahmins came from Northen part of Kerala. Among these sixty four villages, two prominent villages were Shukapuram and panniyoor which was on the middle banks of Bharathappuzha. See Edgar Thurston, *Castes and Tribes of South India*, New Delhi: Asian Educational Services, 1987:154.

temple oriented administrative strategy was the base of *pooram* and this can be seen in the social structure. The *pooram* is the festival of the congregation of many communities. The different *desham* leads to a single *thattaka* of Bhagavathi. The ritual performance such as thira poothan, ox procession, kalam, dharikavadham and procession of Bhagavathi to the village is the right of communities. The divine market during the festival is the centre of the festival. The divine power of *thattaka* is the backbone of power. For the victory of markets, the *pooram* festival is conducted for four or seven days. The belief and rituals of the community used for administration purpose was the idea behind this annual festival. The integration of mainstream society and the lower society can be seen in the *pooram* festival. It has structured by a net.

The *pooram* is the annual ritual festival on the central banks of Bharathappuzha which includes the Shornur, Ottapalam, Pattambi, Thalappily, Lakkidi area. The word *pooram* has many meanings such as 'festival', and 'crowd' and the festival is celebrated on the '*pooram nakshathram* (star)' of the Malayalam month. Now-a-days, the word *pooram* denotes the annual festival on the middle banks of Bharathappuzha with the congregation of many communities (even though the *pooram* festivals of many of the shrines are not celebrated on the *pooram* day of Malayalam month). Generally it is celebrated in the month of Makaram (February) to Medam (May). Each *pooram* has its difference in relation to the region and its ritual. The *pooram* of the *kavu* (shrine) confined to the *thattaka* of the respective Bhagavathi *kavu*. The *thattaka* of *pooram* would be the totality of more than one *desham* (the term is known as the modern classification of village) eg: - the *thattaka* of Kavassery Bhagavathi is kazhani, vavulliyapuram and Kavassery desham (the term is known as the modern classification of village); the Chinakathoor Bhagavathis *thattaka* is palappuram, pallavur mangalam, ottapalam, meetna, erkotiri, thekkumangalam and vadakkumangalam *deshams*; the Uthrali *kavu* Bhagavathi *thattaka* is the enkakadu, vadakancheri and kumaranelloor *deshams*. Every *kavu* has its *pooram* festival once in a year and lasts for seven or four days. It begins with the *kodiyettam* (the hoisting of the flag). During festivals various kinds of rituals take place such as processions, ritual offerings, dancing of the oracle and other rituals.

Table No 6.9: Pooram and participating Deshams

S.No	kavu	Place	Deshams
1	Thonikadav	Rayamanagalam	Iringutoor, Rayamanagalam
2	Ponuniyar	Nelikatiri	Vadakeveladikunu, mathipuram, nelikatiri
3	Amakavu	Kutanadu	Amakavu, peringtu, kothachira, thozhukad, kutanadu, vattenadu
4	Koyamkavu	Nagalashery	Thekevavanoor, vadakevavanoor, chalapuram
5	Paruthur	Paruthur	Pallipuram, paruthur
6	Muthashiyar	Muthuthala	Perumudioor, pattambi, kodumunda, kozhikotiri, valor
7	Mulayamkavu	Kulkaloor	Ezhuvanthala, cherukodu, pariyanampattathara, natyathara, vaduthara, vadakethara, thekethara, machatukara, chaundangathara, orupulathara, eravathara, puramathara, vallapuzha
8	Maruningal	Mudapakad	Mudapakad, kodumunda, thrithala
9	Kanakar	Irimbiliyam	Kotapuram, karambathoor, valiyakunu, ambaloor
10	Pathamkulathi	Vaniyamkulam	Kothur, panamana
11	Virutanam	Virutanam	Chathanooor, thichur, kondayur, njangatiri, iringutur, deshamngalam, arangode, thirumitakod
12	Palakkal	Varavoor	Thekummuri, vadakummuri
13	Mulakkal	Thirumitakode	Ezhumagadu, pulathuparambu, thekummuri, vadakumuri
14	Kudapara	Deshamangalam	Vadakum muri, thekummuri
15	Vazhalikavu	Painkulam	Kilimangalam, painkulam, thozparam, vazhali
16	Aryankavu	Kavalapara	Thrangali, mananor, chuduvalathur, shornur, nedungotur, panayur,kallekadu,kavalapara,karakad,cherkatpulam,kunathara,vadakummuri, thekumuri
17	Chinakathur	Chinakathur	Meetna, otapalam, erakotiri, pallarmangalam, palappuram, vadakumangalam, thekumangalam
18	Vilangott	Vilayoor	Karindankundu, Vilayoor,
19	Pulakkat	Pulakkat	Nellaya, Pulakkat
20	Puttanalukkal	Karumanamkurishi	Karumanamkurishi, puthanalkal
21	Toota	Cherpulasheri	Aaliparambu, aalupara, karalmanna, ambalavattam, kaalikadavu, vazhenkada, naripattapadi, ambalakunnu, marayamangalam
22	Utrattil	Ilanjikal	Ilanjikal, kundupuram, nirangelpadi, kuranasheri, kuruvatoor, thiruvazhiyodu, bhothathankotta, kozhinjallipadi

As evident from the above table, the annual ritual festival *pooram* is spread to a wide geaographical area. Each *kavu* is havinga ritual space in terms of *deshams,* unlike in the origin part where *vela* is highly localized and confined to a *kavu.* In othet words, *pooram* denote incorporative process of the ritual of Bhagavathi. In the orgin

part it is in the formative stage and in the middle part it not only got stabilized but also became incorporative thus manifested as community ritual cutting across several caste groups.

Table No 6.10: Structure of *Pooram*

SNo	Ritual Events	Role of the Community
I	Flag Hoisting (flag hoisting)	Priest of the shrine
II	*Parayeduppu* (collecting paddy)	Temple authority/committee
III	*Thira* and *Poothan*	Mannan
IV	*Kalamezhuthu*	Kallattukuruppu
V	*Dharikavadham*	Paraya
VI	*Kalavela*	Pulaya
VII	*Pooram ezhunalippu* (procession of Bhagavathi)	Priest and oracle of the shrine
VIII	*Kalpana* (order)	*Velichapadu* (oracle)
IX	*Kodiyirakkam* (flag hoisting down)	Priest and oracle of the shrine

The *Pooram* is the ritual performance celebrated in the middle banks of Bharathppuzha. It is based on a dominant theme which is for the welfare, fertility and protection of the region and the communities. Through the procession in the *pooram*, it announces the right of the community to the goddesses. Within the communities, thay have different levels of relationship in *pooram*. It has been appearing in the manner of ritual, myth and ideology disbursing each other into more exclusive element. Each community participates in *pooram* with their ritual performances and asserts their identity.

Even in the performance day, some communities such as Paraya, Mannan and Pulaya are not to enter inside the *kavu* specially the *pooram* days. They believed that they were the low caste people and should follow the hereditary thing only through the ritual performance once in a year. It has been institutionalized and standardized as per the norms and regulations of shrine and at the same time it has fostered its own uniqness. It is also practiced by different social groups from Nambuthiri to lower caste. The discursive space of this practice is expressing through narratives and performances. It keeps this practice alive through out centuries. The *pooram* starts

with the flag hoisting in front of shrine by the priest. The shrine is under the control of executive officer assigned by the government dewaswam board and the day to day administration is by the shrine committee. The priest of the shrine has more power realted to the shrine.[33] Now-a-days the priest of the shrine hands over the flag to the secretary of the shrine committee with the presence of oracle and the secretary returns the flag to the priest. Then the priest of the shrine hoists the flag. Once they hoist, it signifies the beginning of *pooram*. The very next day onwards, the oracle of the shrine with elephant, musical instruments visit almost all the houses in the *thattaka* (jurisdiction) of Bhagavathi and collect paddy, parched rice, banana, flower, turmeric and money as an offering for the shrine. The shrine authority decides the route of each day collecting paddy with the territory of Bhagavathi. This ritual continues until the main day of the *pooram* festival. After the flag hoist in the shrine as an indication of the starting of pooram in the shrine, the *poothan*, a ritual performance of Mannan community visits every house before the main day of the *pooram* and collect paddy and money as their hereditary right. The major ritual performance associated to *pooram* in the shrine is as follows:

III.*Thira* **and** *Poothan*

This is a ritual performance of Mannan community in the middle part of Bharathappuzha during the *pooram* festival of Bhagavathi *kavu* (shrine).[34] The *poothan* (*bhootham*), consider a *bhoothagana* of Shiva visits every house in the desam (village) before four days of the main *pooram* day of the shrine and plays in front of the house and blesses them. The *Thira*, representing Bhadrakali visits each house in the main day of *pooram* in the shrine.

The myth of this performance is as follows.

1. *There was an asura called Dharika and after performing severe penance he got a boon from god Brahma that no man can kill him. After gaining the boon he became*

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[33] The committee is the composition of villagers and the financial matters of the shrine are dealt by the executive officer of the dewaswam board. Most of the shrine in the middle part such as Chinakathoor, Aryankavu, Paruthur, Varavoor etc., has huge amount of income. The festival of the shrine conducts by this committee.

[34] There are two views exist about the origin of Mannan community in Kerala. They are the natives of Kerala and their origin myth shows that they are originate from *mun* (earth) whereas there was Mannan community in the Pandya kingdom and they could be migrate from Madhura(capital of Pandya kingdom) to Kerala with the myth of Kannaki which they are attributing in their ritual performance of *Thira* and *Poothan*. Edgar Thurston, *Castes and Tribes of South India*, New Delhi: Asian Educational Services, 1987.

arrogant and started to attack both devas and humans. The Devas met Brahma and Vishnu respectively and pleaded for help. Finally, the Devas approached Shiva who created Bhadrakali from his 'third eye'for killing Dharika. Kali fought against Dharika and finally he is been killed by her. After the assassination of Dharika, Shiva directed Bhadrakali and her helper poothan (the bhoothaganna of shiva) to enquire about the life of the people on the earth. For this purpose, pooothan and thira (a symbolic representation of kali) visit every house during the time of festival and Bhadrakali gave the right to perform this ritual to the Mannan community because it is believed that one member of this community was the guide for kali and poothan during their first visit to each house. Kali was very happy and she was giving the boon to mannan community to perform this ritual year by year.

2. Bhadrakali had been furious after the death of Dharika and she came on the vethalavahana. In commemoration of this incident the Manan community is performing the ritual.

3. Kannaki Devi has given her anklet to her husband, Kovalan. But while trying to sell the anklet he was killed by the Pandya King because one goldsmith mis-informed the king that the anklet is a stolen from the palace of the king. She lost her anklet and husband. Kannaki became furious and started to search for the goldsmith who cheated her husband Kovalan. She got the help of poothan (the bhoothaganna of Shiva) for this search. The people still believe that, Kannaki is coming in the form of thira in search of the goldsmith. It is also believed that Mannan community has attained the right to perform this thira and poothan from Kannaki because one of their ancestors of this community helped the endeavour of Kannaki to search the goldsmith.

Poothan

Mannan community has a right in the *parayeduppu* ritual of the shrine. After the *parayeduppu* of the shrine administers, Mannan community carry the *poothan* from their ancestral house, first they visit to the shrine, and from there they will visit other communities' house.

The *poothan* performer follows fast for seven days and abstains from non-vegetarian food. They have to worship their ancestors in the small shrine of their houses during these days. After this, they wear the dresses in front of the *thara* (small

elevated place/shrine where the spirits of ancestor of the community lives) after a *puja* and lit a *nilavilaku* ((brass lamp) on the shrine for ancestors. It would take two hours after which, the elder male member of the family put masks on the head of the *poothan* performer. Once the *poothan* carry the mask he would not speak till he removes the masks. After the *puja* in the ancestral shrine, *poothan* would go to the Bhagavathi shrine and worship her in front of the shrine with small dance. Then *poothan* goes to the higher caste families of the village and dance on the base of *thudi* (small percussion instrument) instruments. Finally in the evening, *poothan* goes to the ancestral shrine and ends up one day's performance.

The *poothan* dances with masks based on the rhythm of *thudi*. There are two or three *poothans* who would be performing and there is no compulsion in the number of *poothans*. Male members at the age of twelve to forty five of Mannan community perform this ritual. Generally *poothan* is performed by the youngsters and *thira* is performed by the elders. The performers should have good flexibility of body for these two performances. The children of Mannan community start to learn *poothan* at the age of ten and most of the parents offer training to their children to perform this role when they grow. The first step of the performance learning is to fix foot movement and gestures. The *poothan* use big mask and paint with white, yellow and red color. For this they use sandstone powder, lime and charcoal. Performer looks through the protruding tongues of *poothan*. They are usually attired in bright, tightly woven clothes embroidered with gold coloured border. The larger headdresses and hair are decorated with peacock feathers. The upper part of the headgear is in the shape of sixteen serpents. They put one hundred and eight small mirrors on the headgears and it is tied up in the neck. The *poothan* wears ornaments such as, *chitada* (cloth), anklet, *marthali* (necklace), and wrist watch. It carries *paricha* (shield) and stick in hand.

The *poothan* use semicircle headgear and face resembles a *bhootham* (spirit) whereas *thira* has heavy wooden headgear. While visit to every house they are accompanied by drummers. The *poothan* and *thira* shout and dance with wild gestures. Villagers welcome them with respect, believe that the goddess visits her devotees, and bless them.

With the help of the *thudi* instruments *poothan* visit each houses and ask about the anklet of the Devi. The *thira* will visit the houses in the rhythm of *para* (here *para*

means a small drum instrument) instruments only in the day of the main *pooram*. The raw material of this instrument is jackfruit tree, the skin of goat. The stick is made with coconut tree (for *thudi*) and tamarind tree branch (for *para*). The carpenter (*aasari*) community has the right to make the headgear of *thira* after seven day fasting. They cut the root of jack fruit tree in sixteen pieces and make the headgear of the *thira* performer on which the forms of Bhadrakali, Lakshmi Devi, elephant, instruments and the lamp are carved. The mask of the *poothan* is made by the Mannan community.

There is some style to perform *thira* and *poothan*. Both will perform 18.5 *kolu* (a kind of measurement for dancing style) in the total performance. In front of the houses of the village eighteen *kolus* are performed and the rest of the half will be performed in front of the Devi on the *pooram* festival day.

After the performance of the houses of the village, *thira* and *poothan* will reach the shrine at the evening. They will perform in front of the Devi, get the blessing, and finally go to their houses and they will give up the costume in the ancestral house. The *poothan* visits houses of the villagers before two days of the main *pooram* day and it is considered as the *bhoothagana* of Shiva.

The *poothan* use some gestures once it reaches the houses of villagers after the dance in the house. The *poothan* beats the *paricha* (shield) on his hand with stick many times and the house owner asks what he needs. The *poothan* asks for dress and the owner gives it from his house. The basic need of this ritual is for the prosperity of the village. Communities are offering *thira* to the *kavu* for the prosperity in agriculture, animals, to prevent epidemics.

The *poothan* sings the following while beating the *thudi*:

Ithu varshamanu
(This is the annual time)
Ee dhinam kavilammayudethanu
(This is the day of goddess of *kavu*/*kavilamma*)
Ee dhinam kavilammayudethanu
(This is the day of goddess of *kavu*/*kavilamma*)
Ee dhinam kavilammayudethanu
(This is the day of goddess of *kavu*/*kavilamma………*)

The *poothan* will not go to the house of Gold smith because Gold smith cheated *poothan*, the assistant of Kannaki Devi. The story is follows:

(1). *One day, the landlord gives gold to the Goldsmith to prepare an idol in the village and appointed poothan as security to check if the goldsmith does any mischief in the preparation. Gold smith kept one piece of gold on the padavalanga (snake-gourd) fruit. After the construction of throne king became very happy and he ask the goldsmith for any present. Goldsmith asked for a pdavalnga and the landlord give snake-gourd to goldsmith. After some days, landlord checked the weight of throne and found out the mischief. He asked pootham about the rest of the gold and poothan could not give any answer. The poothan bit his tongue. The poothan understood that the goldsmith cheated him and thereafter he did not visit the house of gold smith.*

(2). *Once, while bathing in the Bharathappuzha River, poothan got a box. He thought that it is full of gold and handedover it to the goldsmith. He ordered to make chains with this gold and goldsmith told him that, come after one week. After one-week poothan went to the goldsmith and he gave the charcoal instead of gold. The goldsmith escaped and the poothan started searching for the goldsmith in each house.*

Thira

At the main day of the festival, it is considered that Bhagavathi is coming in the form of *thira* in each houses to enquire about the well being of the people. Another version is that Kannaki visits each house to enquire about her lost anklet and alo search the goldsmith, who cheated her husband Kovalan. At the main day, the people should welcome the *thira* and *poothan* with the lamp, rice, money, paddy. The performers get money and cloth in the houses. Three colours used for the *thira* are yellow, black and red. After the costume they will carry the form in their head and firstly they will go to the shrine and after that they will visit the houses of the *naduvazhi* (landlords) of the village. Then, *thira* visits the houses of carpenter, he is the one who makes the headgear of *thira* and as a blessing, *thira* visit his house prior to the search for the goldsmith (*thira* is in serach of the goldsmith who cheated the husband of Kannaki). After this visit *thira* goes to the houses of lower caste people. The *thira* denotes the name of the perfomer as well as the headgear.[35] The half-circled

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[35] Chelanatu Achuthamenon, *Keralathile Kaliseva*, Madras: Madras University, 1959:17.

headgear made of wood has three to four feet in diameter. Two cotton strips soaked in turmeric water are attached to the two sides of this headgear and the performer holds it with the hands.

Mannan beats *thudi* from their house when the date of *pooram* of the shrine fixed. Through this they inform the villagers to the arrival of *poothan*. The arrival of *thira* is announced in the main day of the *pooram* by beating *para* instrument in the shrine. This ritual is called *kottiyariyikuka*.

In the main day, *thira* will dance according to the rhythm of *para* instrument and *poothan* will dance on the rhythm of *thudi*. Once they finish visits to the houses, *thira* and *poothan* would go infront of shrine and dance together and will not enter inside the shrine. Then both will go to their ancestral shrine and remove their makeup and get blessings in front of the ancestral shrine.

Thirrakali

The word *thira* also denotes submission.[36] The *thira* is more ritualistic than *poothan*. The headgear of *thira* performer is made with the wood of jack fruit tree. One *thira* headgear weighs approximately forty kiliogram and the performer dance carrying this headgear. The sixteen pieces of jackfruit logs are tied to make the headgear. The *thira* is the symbol of Bhadrakali who killed Dharika. She went with the *vethalam* to fight against Dharika and they draw the form of *vethalam* on the headgear showing big tongues. The Bhagavathi would sit on the *vethala* (demon). The performer ties cloth on his head, puts headgear on the cloth, and ties it in his neck. Instead of masks, *thira* has some make up with rice powder and turmeric on his face. They put yellow colour on beard, draw trident on forehead and black color in eyes. The performer also wears garland of *kumkum* and bells worn around the waist as a symbol of Dharika's head. The small lays on around the waist is considered as the hands of Dharika.

The *thira* follows all rituals which *poothan* does in front of the ancestor shrine, go to the shrine, and get blessings of Bhagavathi with small dance. Then it visits the house of upper caste with the rhythm of *para* instruments. The families welcome *thira* with paddy, money and *nilavilakku* (brass lamp). The *thira* dance around the lamp and

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[36] M.V.Vishnu Namboothiri, *Thottam Paattukal-Oru padanam*, Kottayam: National Book Stall, 1990:54.

pick little paddy and shower on the family members as a blessings of Kali. After visit most of the houses of the village, it returned to the shrine and dances in energetic movements, bows outside of the shrine. Then return to the ancestral shrine and remove the *thira* from the head with *puja*.

There is no special place to learn to perform *thira* and *poothan*. Father or grandfather would be the teachers and a Mannan boy learns infront of his house. The students should have good body movement and the training could be in accordance to the flexibility of body. They learn the footsteps, rhythm and later they learn how to use the instruments.

Performers do the *puja* to Ganapathi, ancestors and in each side (*dikhu*) and the *guru* (master/elder member) takes the dress (here the costume) and goes around the ancestor shrine for three times. The performer gives *gurudakshina* (offering to the master) to the *guru*. Then the *guru* decorates the body of the performers.

The *thira* wears inner cloth which is sinked in turmeric and dries it up. Its length is seven meters (ezhu muzham). They wear all the ornaments and garlands of *thechi* (Ixora Coccinea), *arali* (Nerium Indicum) and *chembarathi* (Hibiscuc Rosasinensis) flowers. The *thira* also wore the same colour cloth of *thira* as inner garments. The backside of *poothan* lifts little as the *kathakali* performers with the help of *vaikol* (dry grass). They wear anklets also.

The material which use for *poothan* is thin *pala* tree and the ornaments such as *tholvala* (bangles of wood)), wristwatch made by root of jackfruit. The anklet of *thira* and *poothan* is made of bronze. The *thira* and *poothan* has different style of dancing, rhythm and dody movement. The *thira* has furious mood (*raudra bhava*) where as *poothan* express happiness mood (*lasya bhava*). Two or three *thira* dance together and each one has separate *para* instruments. The *poothan* also dances as a group on the rhythm of *thudi*. The rhythm of these two performances starts in slow and ends up with speed.

After visiting the houses of the *thattaka*, the *thira* and *poothan* ritual peroformance visit Bhagavathi shrine before noon and dance infront of the shrine and end up infront of the Bhagavathi shrine. This ritual is an indication of the beginning of another ritual performance in the shrine i.e., *Kalamezhuthupaatu.* It shows that

through the *thira* and *poothan* ritual, the Bhagavathi visit houses of her *thattaka* and seeks the life of the people and blesses them for prosperity.

IV. *Kalamezhuthupaatu* (floral drawing song)

After the departure of the *thira* and *poothan* ritual performance infront of the shrine, the Kallattukuruppu community starts their ritual perofmance *Kalamezhuthupaatu* in noon.[37] The drawings of the *kalam* commences with a ritual called *uchappattu* (noon songs).

Kalamezhuthu is a ritual performance during the *pooram* of *Bhagavathi kavu* (shrine) to draw the image of *Bhagavathi* in the floor and sing the praise and deeds of Bhagavathi accompanying with musical instruments.

The *kalam* is a unique drawing and is also called *dhulee chithram* or powder drawing. *Kalamezhuthu* artists are generally members of Kurup communities. In Malayalam *Kalamezhuthu* means drawing. The artist uses the floor as his canvas. *Kalamezhuthupaatu* is performed as part of the rituals to worship and propitiate goddess Kali. This art form is over six hundred years old and is still performed in shrines. It is a form of offering to a Deity. The process of drawing is called *Kalamezhuthu* (writing *Kalam*).

This ritual is a common feature of shrines. Decorations like a canopy of palm fronds, garlands of red chembarathi (hibiscus) flowers and *thulasi* (ocimum) leaves are hung above the *kalam*. Very first part of the performance is the drawing the portrait of the Kali made on the floor using natural powders in different colours. It is made using rice powder (white), charcoal powder (black), turmeric powder (yellow), powdered green leaves (green), and a mixture of turmeric powder and lime (red). It takes more than two hours to finish a *kalam* drawing with appealing perfection. The figures drawn usually have an expression of anger, and other emotions. The *kalam* is

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[37] The origin myth of Kallattukuruppu community is that, they originate from the Nayar community in relation with Nambuthiri Brahmins. The Nayar became Kallattukuruppu after drawing the picture of Bhadrakali on a stone (kallu) and they got the name one who write/drawn on stone. The descendants of this Nayar known as *Kallattukuruppu*. The social status of Kallattukuruppu is above nayar and below Nambuthiri Brahmin. See Babu Mundekkad, *Kallattukurupanamarude Kalamezhuhupaattukal*, Kottayam: DC Books, 2002.

erased at the end of the ritual to the accompaniment of musical instruments like *ilathalam* (cymbal), *chenda* (a cylindrical percussion instrument), *veekan chenda* (a cylindrical percussion instrument which use for basic rhythm), *kuzhal* (pipe) and *kombu* (a horn).

The drawings of the *kalam* commences with a ritual called *uchappattu* (noon songs). The *kalam* would be completed by evening. Performers use an instrument called *nanduni*. The Kurup who sings *kalampaatu* uses a percussion instrument with cymbals and song as accompaniments. After *kalamezhuthu*, the *kalampaatu* or *kalamezhuthupaatu* is performed in front of *kalam*. Along with the song, dance is performed all through the night. A series of songs known as *kalampaatu* are sung during the performance in praise of the god.

The *kalamezhuthu* ritual is performed in three stages i.e., *kalamezhuthu* (drawing), *kalampaatu* (traditional way of singing the prayers accompanied by special types of musical instruments) and *kalam thullal* (*velichapatu*/oracle dances over the drawing and destroys the *kalam*). The *kalampaatu* is based on the believers of the particular community which conduct these rituals.

The whole function starts just before noon. In the beginning the platform where the ritual is going to be performed will be cleared and the basic arrangements are made. The place where *kalamezhuthu* conducted is known as *patarangu*. Generally, it will be a rectangular platform or a floor where four wooden posts, about six feet high, will be fixed at four corners. They will be connected to each other at the top using wooden rods. Parallel coir ropes will be tied across, width-wise. The *pattarangu* has four to eighteen *aasharikol* (a measurement of carpenter) lengths in east west and three to ten *aasharikol* width.

They places the *valakannadi* (mirror) of Bhagavathi on the *peedam* (stool) on the red *pattu* (silk) and offering paddy, rice, cucumber, *vettila* (betel leaf), araca nut under the *peedam* (stool). Then after a short *puja* (worship), the owner gives a small flag of red *pattu* (silk cloth) to Kuruppu and he turns to east side and puts the red clothing across the top (length-wise) of the rectangular platform with the permission of the person who organize the *kalampaatu*. This ritual act is referred as *kooraidal* (a kind of flag hoist). Then it is the time for *uchappattu*.

This song is sung at noon (*ucha*) and that's why it is called as *uchappattu*. The priest of the *kavu* does *uchapuja* in the shrine. After the *puja* priest gives sanction to Kuruppu to sing. They start *chenda* and two Kuruppu sit in the *paatarangu*, praise Ganapathi, Saraswathi, Sri Krishna, Shiva and Bhadrakali. The main singer use *nanduni* and the assistant use *kuzhithalam*. *Nanduni* and *kuzhithalam* are the musical instruments use for kalam song. *Nanduni* is made either with *kumizh* (Gmelina arboaea) or *koovalam* (Aegle mermelos) tree. They explain the details of the shrine on the way from Kailasa. Finally they end up with this *uchappattu*. The narrative style or songs process is *vandhanam*, *nirangal*, *sthuthi*, *vazhinada*, *ammanachaya* and *paadivekkal*.

The Kuruppu narrates the life of Bhadrakali in his *kalampaatu*. Shiva created her from his third eye to kill Dharika *asura*. Kuruppu draws fearful image of Bhadrakali with the head of Dharika in their *kalam*.

Kalamezhuthu (Drawing of kalam)

Photograph No 6.1: Bhadrakali Kalam

After lunch, they clean the *patarangu* and put oil lamp in each corner side of the *patarangu*. Before the form of the goddess is drawn, a chakra is drawn for Ganapathi with the writing of words '*om hreem*' using two colours, white and yellow

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on the northeastern corner of the place in which the image of Kali is proposed to be drawn. At the centre of this drawing, a bronze oil lamp is lit with the belief that by the lighting of the lamp, the goddess would make her divine presence at the spot. Before the lamp is placed on the floor, a plantain leaf, with offerings to the goddess such as paddy, rice, coconut and jaggary is placed.

Then, the Kuruppu start drawing the *kalam* in the middle of the *patarangu*. This ritual act is *kalamezhuthu*. The drawing has to be done systematically and following all norms. The whole process of drawing may take two to three hours. It starts with the marking of a full-length vertical line at the centre and slowly progresses to all sides. Then they start to draw face, neck, hands, and weapons respectively. The position of Bhadrakali is in sitting style with two big teeth and three eyes drawn. She has eight hands with sword, *vattaka* (long sword), and trident, *gadha* (club) in her right hand and *parashu* (axe), *kapaalam*, bell, head of Dharika in left hand.

First the portion of head and headwears are drawn marking a horizontal base line. The artist uses his thumb and index finger for drawing borderlines. For beautification the other portions of his palm is also used. The borderline of the Deity's figure is first drawn with white powder. Then colors are applied with colored powders to make it more natural. Rice powder is used for white color. Black is the powder of burned husks of rice. The green is obtained by powdering dried green leaves such as leaves of *manchadi* tree (Adanthera pavonia), *vaaka* tree (Acacia adoratissima), *kunni* (Abrus precatorius) and *ithikani* (Loranthus). Yellow powder is obtained by grinding dried turmeric. A mixture of turmeric and lime gives red powder. The concept is that these five colors represent the five basic elements (*panchabhoothas*). The head of the Kali is in the eastern part. The lead artist draws the face of Kali.

Yellow colour stands for earth, white for water, green for air, black for sky and red for fire. Drawings are a mixing of two and three-dimensional drawings. The body parts like nose, eyes and breasts are given three-dimensional effects by putting colors in thick or by using fillers. Two small rice or paddy heaps covered with colors make breasts. Normally the image has sixteen hands with weapons in each hand as described in the *dhyana sloka* (invocation verse). The drawing will occupy the whole area under the rectangular platform demarcated. The Kuruppu draw all the details generally attributed to Kali such as her weapons, four arms, and other symbolic

gadgets. Generally the eyes are drawn in the open form at the end, since it is believed that once the eyes are opened the deity drawn gets the power. The one who draws the face of Bhagavathi should draw her feet as well. To draw an image of Kali needs more than two persons. Each draws and embellishes the figure from a different angle, while the leading artist seated at the centre of the figure makes the flourishing touches to convey the total visual concept.

There are distinctions which exist between two types of images such as movable and imovable. The *kalam* is a kind of fixed idol but lasts only a short while. During the period after the *kalam* drawing, it has all the divinity of a shrine idol. When the *kalampaatu* is concluded, the image is gone and the materials left are nothing but dead matter. The power of image is reached with its ritual ending.

Kalam Puja

Once the *kalam* drawing is completed, the Kuruppu would go to wash his hands and legs. The presence of Kuruppu is absent in the *puja* as priest. During this time, after evening *puja* (*sandya puja*) there is a procession with the headship of priest of the shrine from the *srikovil* of the shrine with a lamp lit from *srikovil* and red silk (*thiru udayada*), *vaalkannadi* (oval shape metal mirror with an handle)*, sword, garlanded with flowers will be placed at the top side (just above the head of the *kalam*) on a stool. The Brhamin priest is assigned the privilege of doing the first special *puja* of the image before the onset of the *kalampaatu*.

The shrine priest sits there on a wooden plank and does the worship. After the *puja* it is believed that the presence of Kali is in the *kalam* image. Then priest prepare *kuruthi/guruthi* (sacrifice) with color and offer in the north side of *kalam*. The drawing will have its head on the east and feet on the west. At the bottom, below the feet, arrangements for *puja* will be made. Oil lamps, sandal sticks, flowers, water etc. will be there.

Once the priest finishes the *puja*, the artists who prepared the *kalam* will sit on the southern side of the *kalam*, with *nanduni* (a string instrument) and cymbals in their hand. They are to sing the songs depicting the spiritual and historical importance of the deity. The narration progress is *vandhanam* (Salutation)*, sthuthi* (Praise)*, vazhinada* (The designated path)*, padadikesham* (From feet to hair)*, keshadipadam,*

(From hair to feet)*, padivekkal* (Sing and offer) *and sthuthi* (Praise). The entire song is known as *thottam*.

Table No 12: Structure of Thottam

SNo.	Episode	Native Name	Content
1	Salutation	Vandhanam	Greeting Ganapathi, Thrimurthi; Krishna, Saraswathi
2	Praise	Sthuthi	Praise the goddess of the *kavu* & Kali
3	The designated path	Vazhinada	Kalis departure from Kailasam
4	From feet to hair	Paadhadikesham	Explain the beauty of Kali from foot to hair
5	From hair to feet	Keshaadipadam	Explain the beauty of Kali from head to foot
6	Sing and offer	Paadivekkal	Narrets the war between Kalia nd Dharika; Kalis return to Kailasam; Kali to earth
7	Praise	Sthuthi	Praise the Kali, Bhagavathi of the *kavu* and other god/goddess

Kalampaatu (*kalam* song):

The content of the *kalampaatu* is as follows:-

In the *kalampaatu* first they praise Ganapathi, Sarswathi, Thrimurthi, Sun, Agni, Wind, Yama, Varunan, Devas and sages. Then they narrate the reason of the origin of Kali in the earth.

Kalamthullal (*kalam* dancing)

The *kalampaatu* is associated with another ritual of oracle known as *itum kurumchavittu*. Once the *kalam* song is over the oracle (the representative of the Deity and generally an expert performer will assume this role) appears and do a sort of dancing around the *kalam*. The Oracle will be dressed in coloured clothes, red colour as the case may be and will carry a weapon (sword). A belt with small bells and anklets also with bells will also be worn by the Oracle. This dance form is called *eedum koorum chavittal* (stamping the border). The Devi is believed to enter into the

body of oracle and the goddess expresses herself through the ritual dance. As the oracle gets possessed by the goddess, his limbs move and he utters uncontrollably.

In this dance the oracle takes different steps according to the drum beating and devotional songs. Then he smears rice and flowers and places nine lamps made of oiled wicks in half coconut pieces along the border of the kalam. Later the wick is been lit with a lamp. Then again he threw rice to the *kalam* and goes around the *kalam* for three times.

To mark the end of the ritual of *kalampaatu*, the figure of Kali is wiped out, but keeping the breast untouched. Later come to the head side of *kalam* and pray, and erase the face of *kalam* with *pookula* (flower of coconut tree). Then oracle comes to feet of *kalam*, put rice, flower, and remove the feet of *kalam*. He sits on a stool and moves the stool, pushing with legs, in side the diagram of the deity (called the *peedam nirakkal*). Because of this, naturally, the diagram gets destroyed almost. The drum beating will be alternately continued during this time.Then oracle take flower garland and sword from the *peedam* near to the *kalam* and dance around the *kalam*.

After this the oracle will stand up and as part of the dance will cut off all the tender coconut leaves hung around, and with this completely defaces the *kalam*. Then he put the sword on the *peedam*. Kurupp praise *thrimoorthy* with *nanaduni* instruments.

At the end of this, the powder mix collected from the floor especially, the powder used for painting the breasts is then worshipfully collected for distribution as *prasadam* (remnants of offerings to the deity) to the devotees. This powder is pasted by the devotees on their forehead. Before distributing the *prasadam* the oracle will convey the blessings of the deity to the organizer. If the deity is not pleased with anything, that also will be conveyed. Oracle takes rice to his hand and prays. He removes the *koora* (flag) with the consent of offerer and shrine authorities. Then the priest of the shrine takes the oil lamp of Bhagavathi and goes to the *srikovil*. That is the end of *kalam*. Earlier day's people offer *kalam* to prevent epidemic diseases where as at present they offer it for well being of the people.

Meanwhile the drawing of Bhagavathi perform in front of the sanctum sanctorum of the shrine, the Paraya community visit the shrine.[38] They begin their ritual performances in the outside of the shrine and seek blessing of Bhagavathi. This performance would start in the evening.

V. *Dharikavadham*

This ritual is a traditional ritual performance of Paraya community in the middle banks of Bharathappuzha. As a dance of Bhadrakali it is also called *Bhadrakaliyaataam*. This is performed after noon during the main *pooram* festival of the Bhagavathi *kavu* (shrine). The theme is the fight between Bhadrakali and Dharika and the victory of Bhadrakali in the fight. The origin myth of this ritual performance is follows:-

After the killing of Dharika, Kali became furious and stand in the hot paddy field without any umbrella. On his way, Pakanar (one of the ancestors) saw Kali, ran to his house, made an umbrella of palmyra-leaf with sixteen bamboo sticks, thirty-two sides, and covered the leaf of palmyra tree and gave to the Bhagavathi. She became happy and blessed the Pakkanar that I will be always in your umbrella and you should use the umbrella for all your celebration. During the procession to the kavu for Dharikavadham performance, Kali comes with umbrella. As a commemoration of this incident Paraya community performs Dharikavadham at the time of pooram festival in the kavu.

This is an offering of the Paraya community in a village to Bhagavathi for the welfare of their own community, protection for animals and agriculture. The story of this performance is considered as the victory of good over evil. Middle-aged men join to present this. Fourteen persons are needed for the performance. The main performers who are acting as Kali and Dharika follow fasting. They have to avoid non-vegetarian food and relationship with women.

The ritual starts with the drawing of one feet square *kalam*. This square *kalam* is further divided into sixteen small *kalams*. They use rice powder to draw the *kalam*. Separate *kalams* for Kali and Dharika are drawn on the ancestral shrine of Paraya community. Small stone lamp (*kalvilakku*) with burning wicks all round are used. They install paddy, rice, coconut, in front of the *kalam*.

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[38] Paraya community is considering the native of the land and they are the manufacturer of drums, baskets. See L.Anantha Krishna Iyer, *Tribes and castes of Cochin*, New Delhi: Cosmo Publications 1981.

After the drawing of *kalam*, the priest conducts *puja* for Kali. Then they praise all the god/goddess. They narrate the story till the episode which portrays the challenge before the war between Kali and Dharika. Some of the line of the praise is follows.

Oomkali mahakali, shivante thirunethrathilninu janichavale
(Oom kali kali mahakali, you are the one born from the third eye of Shiva)
Dharikane konu jayipavale
(You are the one who killed dharika)
Sree kailasam valathum vechu bhoomi Bharathe theerthu
(Circumabulate the kailasam in right way)
Enneyum, ninneyum bhootha pretha pishachukaleyum
(You, me and the all demons)
Vetty, vetty varam cheythu tharika bhadrakaliyane swaha....
(Give boon to us goddess bhadrakali

Once they finish *puja*, the drummers start *kelikottu* for few minutes. The *chenda*, *maram*, *cymbals* are the instruments employed. After the ritual in the ancestral shrine, the performers go to the Bhagavathi shrine of village with a procession with the consent of priest. Shiva, Kali with a palmyra-leaf umbrella, Narada and Dharika walk to the shrine and stand in the paddy field near to the *kavu*.

There are four characters in this performance such as Bahdrakali, Dharika, Naradan and Shiva. Bhadrakali will have a long hair, golden coloured crown, jewels on the nose and ears, necklace, red tongue. Breasts moulded out of bronze and trident in the right hand is other features of the costume. The bottom costume of Kali holds a white *mundu* (long piece of white cloth) and pleated silk. Kali uses anklets and bells around the waist. Bhadrakali's costume produces a terrifying effect with make up on the face and reddened lips with tongue outthrust.

The Dharika has a hair till his shoulder and long moustache. He wears chain in his neck, thick bangles. Dharika has a pleated cloth with red, black and white colour at the waist and carries a mace in his hand. There would be a sword round the waist.

The Shiva's costume is on the basis of description in the *purana*. Shiva has long hair (*jada*) tied on his head. Body is in blue colour. He wears snakes and carries

a trident when he appears on the performance. Shiva also wears *rudraksha* chain on his neck.

The stage of this performance is the paddy field adjacent to the Bhagavathi shrine. The performance is based on the Kali-Dharika war. The naartive of the performance is follows:

Dharika made penance to Brahma. Naradan inform all the activities of Dharika to Shiva. Shiva became furious and creates Bhadrakali from his third eye. Kali goes in search of Dhraika and ends up in a never-ending fight. During the fight Narada appear and ask Kali and Dharika to engage in dice to resolve the fight. As per the condition the one who wins in the third round match of dice will be felicitated by the whole world. Dharika won the first two rounds and Dharika became more egoistic. Kali won the third round of the dice and Dharika became so furious and resumed the fight against kali with a roar. War continued till Kali cut the head of Dharika.

Table No 6.13: Structure of Thottam song

SN	Episode	Native Name	Content
1	Praise of Kali	Kalisthuthi	Praise the god Ganapathi and other god/goddesses; Kali and Bhagavathi of the *kavu*
2	Description of war	Yudhavarnana	Narrate the war preparation, war between Kali and Dharika
3	Post war	Yudhanantharam	Kali's return to Kailasam
4	Praise of Kali	Kalisthuthi	Praise the activities of Kali and war

The *thottam* (song) of the performance is sung in three stages. The first is the praise of Ganapathi and other god, goddess includes Kali; second is the song before the very beginning of war, and the third stage song narrates the war. The lead singer sings with the accompaniment of musical instruments and all the songs except before the very moment of war will not have any chorus accompaniment. *Kelikotu* (overture on drums) is performed at the place of performance.

After the praising of god and goddess of the singers, Dharika enters the ground with waves of mace in a special body movement. Next is the entrance of Dharika. The drummers begin to play slow rhythm and reach complex. Dharika enters from the

audience with his costumes. After saluting the instrumensts, drums, he moves from side to side.

Then he shows his attacks of *devas*. Dharika dances around the stage waving the mace in his right hand up and down. Then the drummers become more intense to the rhythm. Dharika keeps circling the stage; his eyes open wide with a fierce expression. Drumming speed seems to indicate intensity of emotion. The expression of his face shows anger against devas.

The Narada enters to the stage and advice Dharika. He also asks Dharika to stop all his activities. Dharika avoids the advice of Narada. He threatens Narada with his mace (*gada*) and challenges all the gods/goddess. Narada and Dharika leave the stage. Shiva enters to the stage and Narada informs the cruel activities of Darika to Shiva. Shiva became furious. Shiva act to express and create kali from his third eye and leave the stage.

Only now the stage is ready for the main event of the performance, the appearance of Kali. The actor who plays the role of Kali comes to the stage with the rapid rhythm of *chenda*. Kali's face becomes to shake, eyes full to bursting and tongue projecting. She shakes the sword in one hand and threatens, pointing Dharika. Then Kali reach on the stage. Each performer has special movements and they have separate rhythm of instruments. Kali quarrels with Darika. Dharika ridiculed her feminity and raged with his mace. During their querall, Narada enters to the stage and ask them to engage in dice. He says that if any one wins the third round of mace, he/she would be more powerful. As per the advice of Narada, they begin the dice. Dharika wins the first two rounds. But he fails in the third round. After the defeat of Dharika in dice, he becomes angry and fights Kali. Kali challenges Dharika to wage war. There are some gestures; Dharika says I will offer your head to Shiva, so that *Kailasam* will shake. She responded that she will take out his head and give his blood to Vethalam to quench thirst. They keep threatening each other and go round the stage in front of the audience. Dharika starts to fight and runs in front of the audience (symbolically it is the battleground). When he feels that he is going to lose the war, he runs in between the performers. Kali chases him wildly around the people.

Finally they again reach on the stage. The drum gets more and more frenzied. Kali begins to shouting and screaming. Then, Kali shows gestures to cut the head of

Darika. The rhythm would be very speedy, known as *kalaasham*, to mark the end of the performance. The decapitated Dharika is shown by lying down on the ground. Kali becomes more furious, the drummers beat the chenda with very speed rhythm, and it slowly goes back to slow rhythm. By the time Kali become cooled down with her anger. With this act, the performance comes to an end in the paddy field. After the death of Dharika, the singers praise Bhagavathi to protect them from all the calamities. They praise that,

Njagal kaatil ninu mulayum mattum shekharikaan vanathanu.

(We are the people collect bamboo and other materials from the forest).

They will perform this ritual in the kavu in every year without any interruption. Kali would stand in the field and the people gather close around Kali with folded hands to receive blessings. Kali waves her hand to people. There is no dialogue for performers. They all have different gestures and postures throughout the performance. Sometimes performers make some roars.

Once the performance is over, all perfomers go in front of the shrine (out side) and pray. They offer Kali's umbrella and install it in the eastern corner of the shrine. Then, they visit their ancestral *thara* which is situated in their settlement and the priest conducts *gururthi* (sacrifice) as a mix of turmeric and lime for Kali. It represents the blood of Dharika to Kali.

At the ending of the Dharikavadham perofmance, the Pulaya community of the *thattaka* reaches to the shrine with big decorated ox. They start at afternoon from their houses after the puja in their ancestral shrine by carrying ox on the shoulders. The time which they have entered to the shrine premises has decided by the organizing committee of the shrine.

VI. *Kalavela* (Ox Procession)

Ox is the vehicle of lord Shiva and this ox is used for the preparation of land for cultivation. The Pulaya (Mulaya) community builds the chariot and ox effigy and with the help of instruments they make procession to the shrine. The effigy is constructed with the material of bamboo. The people dance with the happy thought of getting more harvest in the field and they also want to appease the Devi in the shrine to protect them in the coming days.

They are agricultural labourers and and hence, incorporate many agricultural elements in their ritual. This caste is arguing that they are the actual owners of the land and Shiva has given axe and other instruments to them and asked to deforest the land and start agriculture. They have been carrying effigy of the oxes on behalf of the landlord at the *pooram* festival to the shrine and dance with them. Through this ritual act, the Bhagavathi will protect their oxes from disease and other troubles. The participants should have respect to Bhagavthi. Now days, they make big ox with wood and arrange electrical lights on the ox. The performers bow in front of the shrine with dance and return to their homes after this.

After the end of ox dance, the priest of the shrine conducts *puja* in the sanctum sanctorum of the shrine. Through the different ritual performances in front of the shrine, each community in the territory of Bhagavathi seeks blessings and departs to their home. As a continuation, Bhagavathi visit to her territory by putting her image on the decorated elephant with the accompaniment of musical instruments.

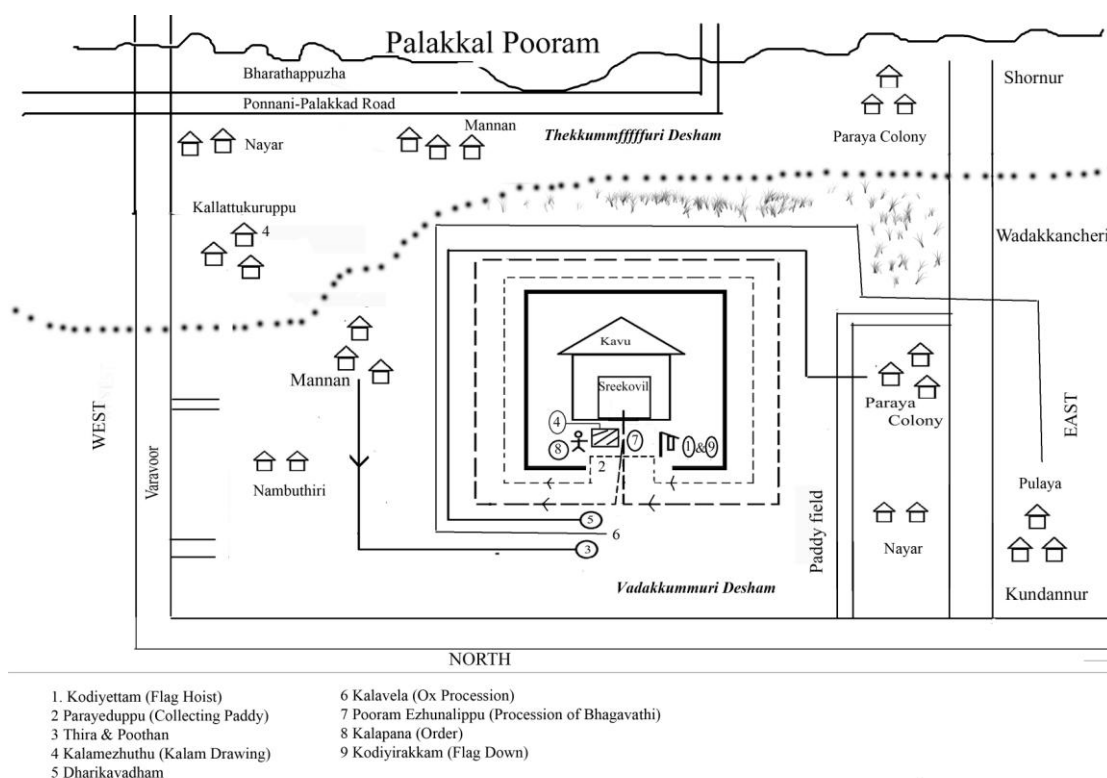## VII. *Pooram Ezhunallippu* (Procession of Bhagavathi)

In the *kavu* (shrine), the images of Bhagavathi are uncarved stone and this is the immovable image (*moola murthi*) of the Bhagavathi housed in the shrine. Movable images (festival image) of Bhagavathi are usually made in bronze/gold and used in the procession. The movable images are man made artifacts, the priest invokes Bhagavathi to the artifact through *pujas*, and it becomes sacred object. Every day by four o' clock in the evening, the images of the Bhagavathi with all attractive belongings are taken in procession round the shrine on elephants with a grand display of drum beating and other musical instruments. On the night in the later part of the *pooram* ritual day, a golden image of the Bhagavathi placed on the back of a decorated elephant by the priest, oracle and the secretary of the the shrine. The sub priest of the shrine and one of the representatives of the shrine committee, who should belongs to the Nambuthiri Brahmin community sit on the elephant by carrying the images of Bhagavathi. Amidst the beating of drums and the firing of crackers this image is taken out in procession. The elephant with the goddess is supported on each side by elephants whose numbers vary according to the means of the villagers. The elephants in the image on Bhagavathi returns in procession to the shrine and the images are made to resume its usual seat. The oracle waits on the door of the *srikovil* and the priest sprinkle some water (*tirtam*) after the *puja* on the oracle. This *tirtam*

transfers the power of Bhagavathi to *velichapadu*. The *velichapadu* being possessed with the spirit and asks whether the Bhagavathi is happy with the festival conducted in her honour or not.[39] The flag is then hoisted down by the priest of the shrine with the presence of secratery of the shrine and oracle. The priest hand over the flag to the secretary and the secretary return the flag to the priest. He keeps this flag in the sanctum sanctorum of the shrine. The *pooram* festival is then brought to a close.[40] The flag is kept in the sanctum sanctorum of the shrine after the *puja* by the priest for the annual festival of the next year.

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[39] The astrologer has a key role to decide what would be the atonement ritual if the Bhagavathi is not happy with the annual festival of the shrine. The remedy of the disatsifaction of Bhagavathi done by conducting a *prasna* (astrological calculation or answer to any question or problem).The *prasna* commences when the administrator of the shrine approaches the astrologer for the *prasna*. Generally the prasna conducts in the presence of main priest, oracle and administer of the shrine in the shrine. Based on the indication of the *grahas* (planets) in each bhava the astrologer predicts the reason of the dissatisfaction of Bhagavathi. Most of the dissatisfaction relate to the condition of the shrine, improper usage of incantations by the priest, quality of *dravyas* (items of puja), impurities are revealed. Based on the suugestion, they conduct expiatory rites such as *ashta-bandha-kalasa, dravya kalasa*, sacrifice (guruthi) and so on systematically.

[40] In most of the cases Bhagavathi expresses her happiness through the proclamation of *velichapadu*. Some times the *velichapadu* repeatedly make an attempt to get the answer as a revelation. In case, the Bhagavathi express her dissatisfaction through the velicapadu, it will proceed to a *prasna* with the headship of a *thanthri* (main priest and one who designated to look into the astrological affairs of the deity and the shrine) to know the reasons and the resolution. The prasna reveals the reasons and put forward a set of rituals and offerings to resolve the cause of the displeasure of Bhagavathi.

Grpah No 6.2: Palakkal Pooram

Palakkal Pooram

1. Kodiyettam (Flag Hoist)
2 Parayeduppu (Collecting Paddy)
3 Thira & Poothan
4 Kalamezhuthu (Kalam Drawing)
5 Dharikavadham

6 Kalavela (Ox Procession)
7 Pooram Ezhunalippu (Procession of Bhagavathi)
8 Kalapana (Order)
9 Kodiyirakkam (Flag Down)

The above is the praphic depiction of pooram ritual observed in Palakkal kavu which is situalted in the Varavoor, Thrishur district (Middle part of Bharathappuzha) which is on the main river course of the banks of Bharathappuzha.

The *pooram* festival start after the flag hoist in the shrine and which would lead to the ritual performance of Mannan community. They are the first community to enter to the shrine with their ritual performance after the beginning of *pooram*. Different communities are accommodating in the festival of *pooram* and the *pooram* end up with the ritual procession of Pulaya community by their ox.

Table No 6.14: Linear arrangement of events in Middle part

Kodiye ttam (flag hoisting)	*Parayed uppu* (collecting paddy)	*Thira and Poothan*	*Dharikav adham*	*Kala mezh uthu*	*Kalavela*	*Pooram ezhunal ippu* (procession of Bhagav	*Kalpan a* (Order of Oracle)	*Kodiyirak kam* (flag Hoisting down)

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						(Bhagav athi)		
Denoting the event of ritual of Bhagavathi	Blessing the villager	Enactment of Bhadrakali by Mannan community	Enactment of Kali Dharika war	Drawings of the form of Bhadrakali	Seeks blessing of Bhagavathi	Bhagavathi Visiting the village with her form	Dance with Narrative	End of the event of ritual of Bhagavathi

From the above table it can be seen that the enactment of the narrative of Bhadrakali's war with Dharika becomes the focal theme of the performance. In the middle part as observes above, there is narrative tradition associated with the ritual but takes the secondary position. In other words, the myth of Bhadrakali becomes vibrant and manifests as an enactment of the myth. The enactment is visible in two forms: the one as *Dharikavadham* where the charecters of the myth are enacted as performative play, the other as floral drawing (*kalam*) where the figure of Bhadrakali is drawn and later destroyed in the process of narration (*thottam*). It is interesting to note here that myth as narrative and the enactment of myth as ritual co-exist thereby, reinforces faith of the folk on the concept of Bhadrakali as Bhagavathi. In the beginning part there is a clear ambiguity between myth and ritual whereas in the middle part the ambiguity is nullified by combining both narrative and ritual. In the epistemology of myth-ritual, one school of thought argued that myth and religious doctrines are the resultant of rituals. This is known as the primacy of ritual hypothesis. The 19th century anthropologists W. Robertson Smith[41], James Frazer[42], Jane Ellen Harrison[43] and S. H. Hooke[44] emphasizes the primacy of ritual hypothesis, which claimed that every myth is derived from a particular ritual and that myth is a reproduction of the succession of a ritual act. The migrated myth of Bhadrakali is totally incorporated and owned as their own by the folk of Kerala in the middle part. Enactments as part of ritual by different communities become the core element of worship of Bhagavathi.

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[41] William Robertson Smith, *Lectures on the Religion of the Semites*, Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, (1889)1995.

[42] Sir James George Frazer, *The Golden Bough-A Study in Magic and Religion*, New York: Macmillan, 1922.

[43] Jane Ellen Harrison, *Ancient Art and Ritual*, London: Forgotten Books, (1913) 1948

[44] S.H Hooke, *The Myth and Ritual Pattern of the Ancient East* in S.H Hooke (ed), Myth and Ritual, London: Oxford University Press, 1933:1-14

(C). Ritual Performances: End Part of Bharathappuzha

The *thalapoli* is a ritual conducted in *Bhagavathi kavu* (shrine) on the end part of Bharathappuzha once in a year. *Thalam* means plate and *poli* denote prosperity. In the *thottampaatu* (songs) of Kali, it says, 'I need *thalam* (metaphorical meaning is offering) and I will provide *poli* (prosperity)'. *Thalapoli* is a ritual offering to Bhagavathi to fulfill the wishes of devotees and to seek protection from the attack of spirits. Women are the main participators of this ritual.

Table No 6.15: Family and *kavu*

SN	Family	Deity	Name of the *kavu*	Village
1	*Thirumansherikota raja*	Stone	Kandakurumba	Eshwaramanagalam
2	*Thekepatu Nayar*	Stone and vaalkannadi	Bhadramkulangara	Eshwaramangalam
3	*Pallivalappu*	Vaalkannadi	Pallivalappu	Ponnani
4	*Kuttikattil*	Stone and vaalkannadi	Kuttikad	Ponnani
5	*Zamothiri*	Stone and vaalkannadi	Thrikkavu	Ponnani
6	*Avathan veetil*	Wood	Avemkotta	Ponnani
7	*Vellayilmana*	Stone	Pappinikavu	Havanoor
8	*Madhusheri*	Stone and vaalkannadi	Nottanalkal	Kuttipuram
9	*Vettathumupil*	Stone and vaalkannadi	Bhayamkavu	Purathoor
10	*Purathuraven*	Stone	Muttanoorkotta	Purathoor
11	*Padannavalappil*	Stone and vaalkannadi	Pulooni	Thripangodu
12	*Valyarakal*	Stone	Valyarakal	Athavanadu
13	*Maravancheri*	Stone and vaalkannadi	Chandahnakavu	Athavanadu
14	*Palliyathiri*	Stone and vaalkannadi	Vairamkodu	Thirunavaya
15	*Peruvannan*	Stone and vaalkannadi	Budhakulangara	Niramaruthor

Apart from the above mentioned families, several other families who worship in the *kavus* also participating in the ritual. Presently, the women from thiyaa community are also offering *thalapoli* to Bhagavathi.

Table No 6.16: Structure of *Thalapoli*

S.No	Ritual	Community
I	*Kodiyettam* (Flag hoisting)	Priest and Patron of the shrine
II	*Parayeduppu* (Collecting paddy)	Shrine authority/committee
III	Procession of Bhagavathi infront of *kavu* and return with *thalam* of womens	*Velichapdu* (Oracle) and Women
IV	*Guruthi* (Sacrifice)	Priest and *Velichapadu*
V	*Kalpana* (Order)	*Velichapadu*
VI	*Kodiyirakkam* (Flag hoisting down)	Priest and Patron of the shrine

The *thalapoli* is a one-day ritual performance. After the *puja* in the sanctum sanctorum, the priest takes the flag and handovers to the patron of the shrine. Most of the shrines in the end part of Bharathappuzha are under the patronship of certain families. They have a major role in the annual festival of the shrine. The shrine is under the patronship of the family and for the celebration of annual festival, the villagers constitute one festival committee with the consent of the patron of the shrine. The patron hoists the flag in front of the shrine in the presence of oracle and the priest. The priest decides the auspicious time for the flag hoist. After the flag hoist, the oracle, members of the shrine committee visit the houses surrounding the shrine with the accompaniment of musical instruments. They collect paddy from the houses till the *uchapuja* (mid-day) of the shrine.

The myth of *thalapoli* ritual is that after the death of Dharika, Bhadrakali became so furious. Women carry *thalam* to pacify her anger. In earlier times the Nair community women carried the *thalam* and now days other communities' women also do this performance for the fulfilment of some wishes such as marriage, children and so on. Before evening women arrange *thalam* in the paddy fields in front of the *kavu* (shrine).

The *thalapoli* ritual is conducted on Tuesdays and Fridays. During the daytime of *thalapoli* ritual, they have *kelikottu*. Priest of the shrine handover the sword, *thiruudayada* (red colour cloth) of Bhagavathi and lamp to the *velichapadu*[45] after the

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[45] Once the *velichapadu* (oracle) of the *kavu* (shrine) is dead, the authority can not appoint a new *velichapadu* in the *kavu*. The member of the community should possessed with sudden feeling or enlightenment and roar in some occasions related to the *kavu*. Then the villagers decide that the presence of Bhagavathi entered to his body. After the consultation with astrologer, they appointed the

puja in the *srikovil* (sanctum/sanctonum) in the presence of the patron of the shrine. Now it is time to take Bhagavathi in procession to a tree about half kilometer from the *kavu*. While going to the banyan tree the the drummers make slow beat of *chenda* (drum).

The procession passes round by east at the entrance of the enclosure and leaves the enclosure proceeds to a certain banyan tree under which is a high raised platform built up with earth and stones. Preceding the procession at a distance of fifty yards are the crowd of the women, each one carrying a plate (*thalam*), on which rice, coconut shell lamps, areca flowers and coloured flowers, are placed. The plate and contents as offering is called *thalapoli*. Women stand outside the shrine under a banyan tree (Ficus Benghalensis). The women should follow fasting. The women stand in two rows and the oracle lit the lamp of *thalam* from his lamp which was lited from *srikovil* (sanctum sanctorum) of Bhagavathi. The women hold the plate and are ready to go to the shrine with the oracle. Then the oracle, womens and instrumentalists round the banyan tree (Ficus benghalensis) and soon returns to the shrine, the women following, carrying their *thalapoli*.

After rounding the banyan tree and lighting the *thalam* of women, the procession returns to shrine with drummers in its front side, women with *thalam* and finally *velichapadu* with the sword, *thirudayada* (red colour cloth) of Bhagavathi and the patrons of the shrine. Then the womens round the sanctum sanctorum by carrying the thalam. As each women completes her third round, she stands for a moment at the western side, facing east and throws the contents of the plate into the pit, then goes to the western gate of the enclosure and puts down her plate for an instant while she makes profound farewell to the goddess. The procession preceeds to the shrine and the sword, *thiruudayada* and lamp is taken inside the shrine by the Nambuthiri priest.

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possessed man as *velichapadu* in front of *kavu* by hand over the sword of Bhagavathi from the priest and patron. Once the man appointed as *velichapadu*, all his debt should clear up by the kavu and people consider him in higher social position. He has to lead simple life, good behavior, shave his hair and wear ear ring and put ashes to his body parts. The *velichapadu* performs as separate part from that of the possessed performer who plays the role of Bhadrakali during the ritual performance. The *velichapadu* is permanently attached to the *kavu*. The *velichapadu* has special relationship to the Bhagavthi and sharing her substance, functioning as her represnatative. Bhagavathi shows her power and presence through the tongue and right hand of *velichapadu*. Bhagavathi enter to the body of *velichapadu* and he dance in the *kavu*. The *velichapadu* would not bow in any palce of *kavu* with his sword while his performance.

In olden days, thalapolly was the ritual performances of Nayar womens. Now days, womens from other community also participate and carry the *thalam* in the ritual performance.

Guruthi

After the *thalapoli*, the ritual place shifts to the northern side of the shrine where *guruthi/kuruthi* (blood sacrifice) is about to take place. The final act before the conclusion of *thalapoli* is the offering of blood sascrifice, *guruthi*. This blood sacrifice is required to appease Bhadrakali by offering blood peace can once again be restored.

The *guruthi* (*gurusi/kuruthi*) comes from the Tamil word *guruhti/kuruthi*, meaning 'blood'. The *guruthi* is made from turmeric and calcified lime turns into a brilliant red colour when mixed with water. Originally used by Nambuthiri Brahmins as a blood substitute in some ancestor scarifices, turmeric lime *guruthi* is now integral to nearly all shrine rituals in Kerala. The *guruthi* is an offering to Kali, people were used to offer goat and cock to deity, and now they are offering *guruthi* in the form of color and vegetables. They have constructed small *peedam* (stool) for this ritual in the northern part of shrine and the ritual known as *vadakan vaathil*. The ritual is also known as *kaliyambali* which originate from the word *kalibali* (blood offering to Kali). Now-a-days Brahmin priests are making *guruthi* by using turmeric and other material. There are two doors in the shrine. The front side has main door and the north side has a small door. All the *pujas* are done in the front side and guruthi is done through the northern door.[46] They put *pantham* (rag torch), *kuruthola* (coconut leaf) and *vazhapola* (stem of the plantain tree) near to the *vadakan vaathil* (northern door).

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[46] In most of the *kavu* (shrine), there are some stone can see in the vicinity of tamarind tree with their faces towards the *kavu*. In front of the tree, a slightly elevated flat surface made of earth, on which the offerings to their Bhagavathi are given. This is the place for other communities such as Paraya/Mannan to conduct their *guruthi* (sacrifice) in the ritual day. A small pandal is also put up on festive occasions. Bloodly sacrifice and dances of oracle are the essential items of the ceremonies of these people and the oracle offiaiciate such ritual is either of their own caste or the Nayars. The animals were sacrificed on such occasions are smeared with turmeric and adorned with flowers. The head is severed at one blow and is held up over the altar. The sacrificed animal is distributed to those present there, who cook and eat it. In some times the oracle drinks its blood. After the sacrifice, oracle appears like possessed. He jumps and rushed in the place and strikes his forhead with his sword until he is covered with blood. This was the practices of *guruthi* and this kind of *guruthi* riral is gradually going down in many parts. Vegetables substitute for blood and there is no animal sacrifice is still practiced. At present days they cut pumpkin and red powder rubbed into the pulp to stimulate blood in their *guruthi* to Kali. In olden days, male goats, chickens were frequently sacrificed. The general method of killing of animal is decapitation with a sword in a single stroke. This *guruthi* is for pleasing the Bhagavathi.

The *pantham* is lit and the priest sprinkle *kunthiorikapodi* (frankincense powder) on it to block the arrivals of demons in the *guruthi* place. The vessel is kept in overturned position under a *darbha* grass (grass *poa cynosuroides*). The priest opens the vessel and start *puja* in the vessel. The priest has to follow forty one days fasting. They mix twelve and half-kilogram turmeric in twelve and half-kilogram rice powder with lime (calcium carbonate), *thetchi* flower (ixora coccinea), *malar* (parched rice) and the colour will be red with the rhythmic background of *panchavadhyam* (a musical ensemble consists of five instruments)[47]. The priest prepares *guruthi* in a vessel and offers it to Bahagavathi. The priest throws the *guruthi* water with his two hands in front of Bhagavathi. While performing *guruthi tharpanam* (sprinkle), the rhythm of instruments would gain speed and after that the rhythm would go down. It represents the time of killing of Dharika and after the cooling of Kali. The rhythm is almost same while killing of Darika in the performance and *guruthi tharpanam*. This is *guruthi tharpanam*. Once they conduct this ritual the northern side of the shrine becomes red.
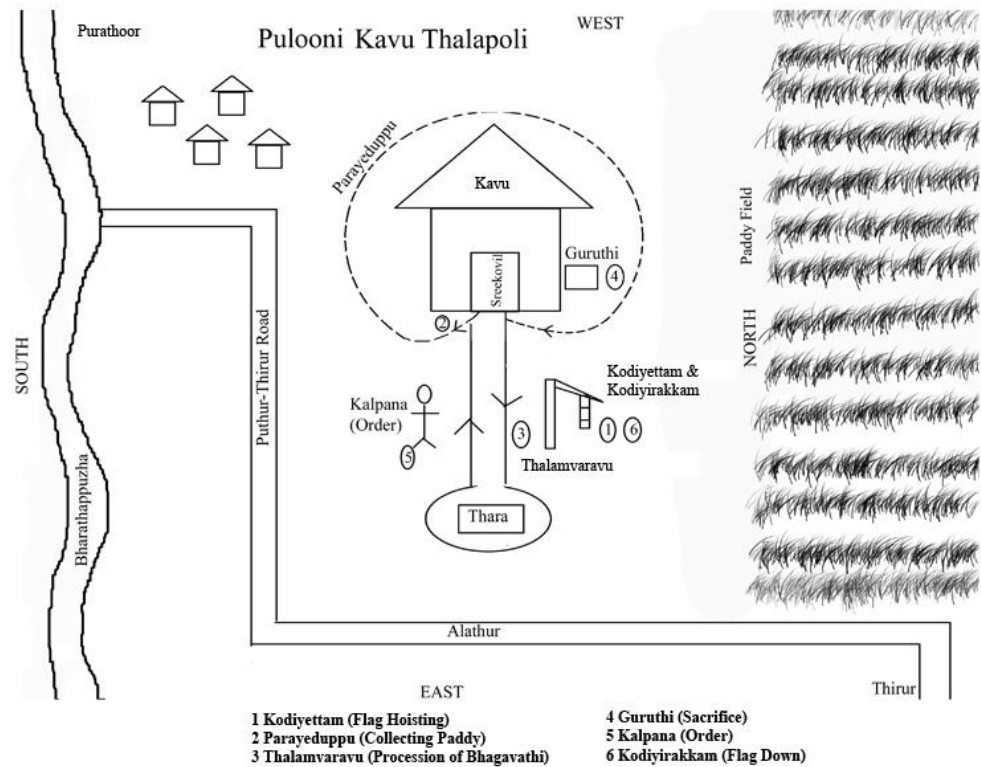
The *velichapadu* (oracle) stand on the door of the northern side and the priest sprinkle *guruthi* water on *velichapdu's* body. This fluid made sacred by having been used for anointing the image of the goddess. The oracle then shakes sword with the rhytm of *chenda* for fifteen minutes and dance in the *guruthi* water which has been offered to Bhagavathi. After this, the oracle, say *kalpana* (order), whether the Bhagavathi has been pleased with the festival in her honour or not. The patron of the shrine hoist down the flag with the conscent of priest and which would signify the end of the thalapolly festival.

All the villagers participate in the ritual. It is performed for protection from all diseases and prosperity in life. The shrine ritual performance is over after the *guruthi* by early morning and people return to home. After the *guruthi*, the Nambuthiri priest visit shrine next morning, sprinkle *punyaham* water (holy water that has been sanctified by mantras), and clean the shrine premises. The Nambuthiri priest will enter, bearing with them *shudhikalasham* (purification with water). The *kalasam* (purge) is made of the five products of the cow that is *panchagavyam* together with some water, a few leaves of the banyan tree (Ficus benghalensis) and *darbha* grass

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[47] The five instruments are *timila* (hourglass shaped double faced drum), *madalam* (bigger drum), *ilathalam* (cymbal), *idaka* (small drums) and *kombu* (horn).

(grass *poa cynosuroides*), all in one vessel. Before being brought to the shrine, *mantrams* (chants) will be said over it. The content of the vessel will be sprinkled all over the shrine. The priest will then perform the usual morning *puja*.

Grpah No 6.3: Pulooni Kavu Thalapoli

Pulooni Kavu Thalapoli

1 Kodiyettam (Flag Hoisting)
2 Parayeduppu (Collecting Paddy)
3 Thalamvaravu (Procession of Bhagavathi)
4 Guruthi (Sacrifice)
5 Kalpana (Order)
6 Kodiyirakkam (Flag Down)

The above is the graphic depiction of Thalapol ritual observed in Pulooni Kavu which is situated in the Tirur area, Malappuram district (end part of Bharathappuzha) which is on the shore of Arabian Sea.

Table No 6.17: Linear arrangement of events in End Part

Kodiyettam (flag hoisting)	*Parayed uppu* (collecting paddy)	Thalam Ezhunallippu	*Guruthi* (Sacrifice)	*Kalpana* (Order of Oracle)	*Kodiyirakkam* (flag Hoisting down)
Denoting the event of ritual of Bhagavathi	Blessing the villagers	Procession of Bhagavathi in front of *kavu* and return with *thalam* of womens	Oracle of the *kavu*	Dance with Narrative	End of the event of ritual of Bhagavathi

In the end part of Bharathappuzha, the ritual is performed neither as enactment nor as narrative. It is a simple offering to seek the blessings of Bhagavathi. One interesting feature is that woman participation is overtly visible and the ritual appears as more of domestic ritual than a public. The goddess Bhadrakali image as Kali is totally undermined and an image of 'mother' is attributed to Bhagavathi. As a result, no vibrancy is found in the ritual. Moreover, both narrative and enactment of the myth being accomplished in the beginning and middle part of Bharathappuzha, the ritual in the end part appears like 'mangalam' which means happy ending of an event. As described in the myth of the Bhadrakali, she returns to earth as directed by Shiva and for the act of killing the demon, she is venerated as goddess. As goddess she blesses the devotees and remain as deity which besowes peace and prosperity.

In all the rituals of the three parts of Bharathappuzha, one can find sacrifice (*guruthi*) as an integral element of the ritual performance. However, the sacrifices to Bhagavathi are interpreted in three different ways by the folk of the particular region as given below:

**Table No 6.18: river course and Nature of Performances**

S.No	River Course	Ritual	Nature of Offerings	Nature of Activities	Nature of worship
1	Origin	Vela	Sacrifice	Communities in one Village	Protection of the village
2	Middle	Pooram	Sacrifice	Different Communities in different villages to a *kavu*	Sacrifice for pacification
3	End	Thalapoli	Sacrifice	Womens procession and sacrifice	Sacrifice for seeking blessing

In the beginning part, sacrifice is given for the protection of the region; in the middle part, it is for pacifying the deity and to ward off the wrath of the deity; and in the end par it is to seek blessings.

To surmise from the discussion, the ritual performances of Bhagavathi on the banks of Bharathappuzha reveal that there is a pattern that emerges in the worship of

Bhagavathi. Following the course of the Bharathappuza if one study the performances of Bhagavathi in the *kavus* in a linear/horizontal manner, a complete story of Bhadrakali emerge having the beginning and progressing then culminating with an end thus making it as a comprehensive story. The plot structure of Kali story as narrated in the myth is of pentapartite i.e., five parts: (1) Interdiction or Exposition (2) Progression or Rise (3) Climax (4) Return or fall (5) Catastrophe (Freytag 1968:121).

Diagram No 6.4. Plot Structure of the myth

Plot Structure of the Myth of Bhadrakali
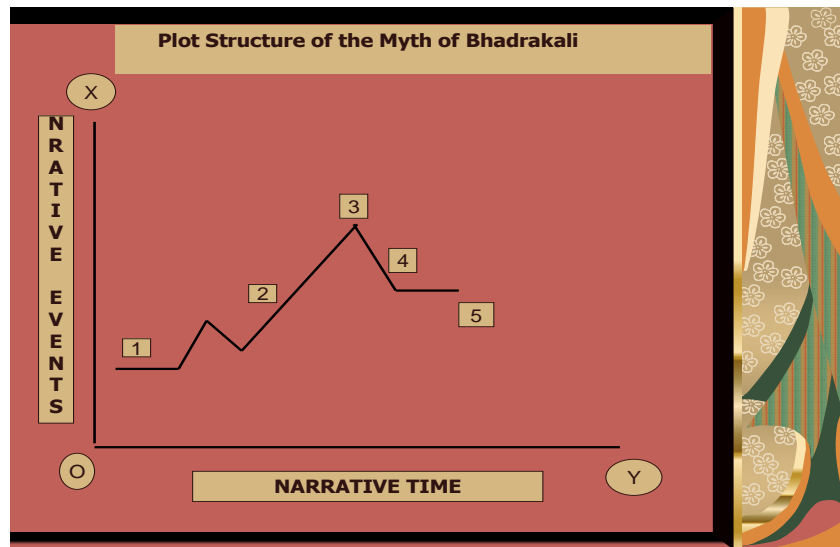
The above structure shows unilinear progression of the story of Bhadrakali. The story has a clear beginning, wherein she is created to kill Dharika and resore peace. Accordingly, she accomplishes the task and thereby becomes the deity. The five partraite plot mentioned above represent the worldview of the folk who venerate and worship Bhadrakali. Only when the performances of the three parts of Bharathappuzha are studied together, the story as narrated in the myth of Bhadrakali can be understood in a meaningful sequence. The following diagram representation shows the navigation of myth and ritual performances of Bhadrakali.

Diagram No 6.5. Sequence of navigation of the myth of Bhadrakali
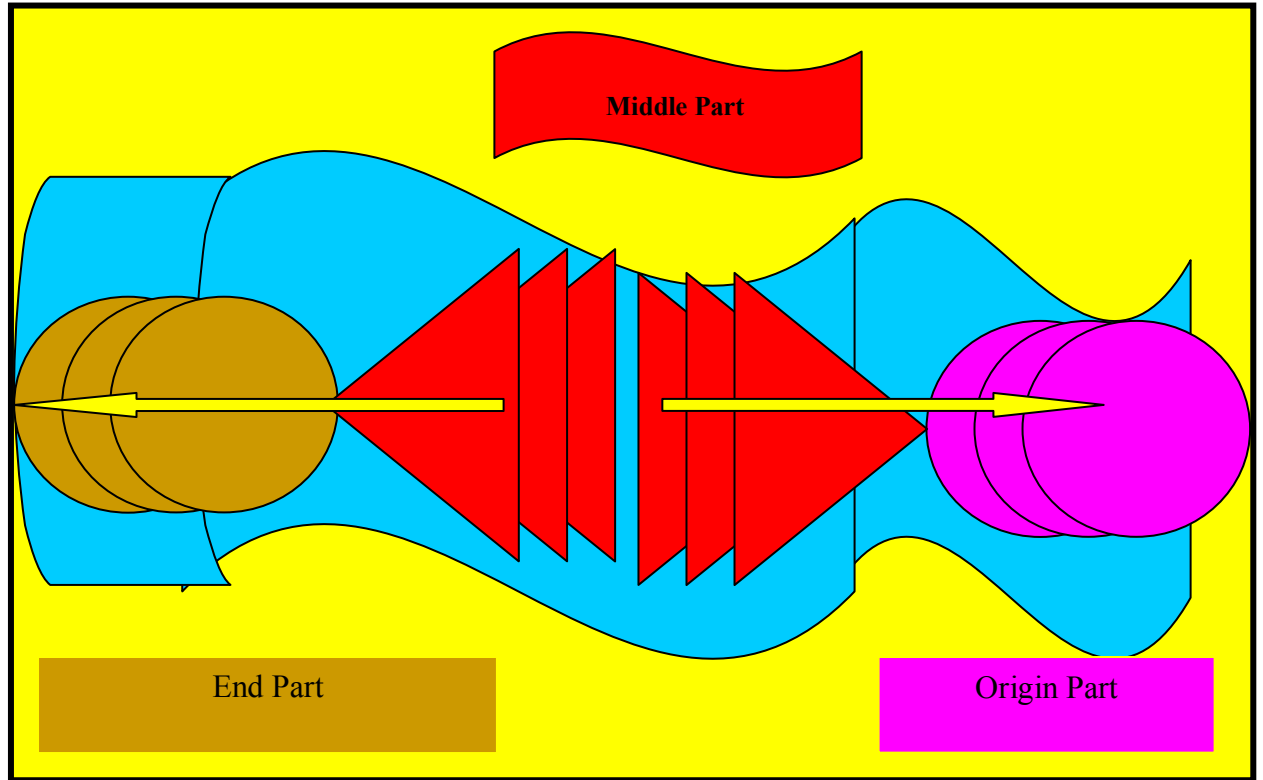
Origin Part: Myth as Narrative
Middle Part: Myth as Narrative and Enactment
End Part: Myth as Ritual Offering

From the above discussion it can be surmised that the Bhadrakali myth and ritual is deep rooted in the middle part as here the myth of Bhadrakali in the form *kalamezhuthu* (floral drawing) is narrated and as *thira* (ritual enactment of Bhadrakali) Bhadrakali story is presented as a cultural performance. This forms the epicenter of the ritual of Bhadrakali. Towards right i.e., the beginning part as stated already, the concept of Bhadarakali is in the formative stage and variedly depicted in the myths of *kannyarkali* and *pavakoothu*. Neither of them is directly connected with Bhadarakali. Towards left direction i.e., in the end part, the ritual *thalapoli* is performed to seek the blessings of the deity. Neither myth is narrated nor enacted in this part. Hence to understand the ritual of Bhagavathi one has to study the epicenter

as it is in the middle part the myth of Bhadrakali is proportionately connected with the enactment. In the ritual performances of the middle part, visual enactment in the form of floral drawings and in the performative enactment as play is crystalysed and even supported by the narrative in the form of *thottam*. Both narrative (myth) and enactment (ritual) reinforced the concept of Bhadrakali as a goddess. Thus the story of Bhadrakali is represenated in its totality as the story of Bhagavathi.

Chapter- VII
CONCLUSION

The present study focused on how different communities spread in different regions on the banks of Bharathappuzha in relation to the celebration of their respective belief system and allied congregational annual festivals. The river in the thesis is interpreted not only as a natural landscape that served sustenance of people and shaped their life style patterns but also as a cultural landscape that has been modeled (scaped) by communities associated with it to suit to their socio-economic, politico-cultural and religious needs. The symbiotic relationships existing between nature and culture connected with river system is explained by depicting the Bharathappuzha river as a cultural construct of the people whose lore and life are well converged. In the process, each community articulate itself as being a part of the larger community and express overtly through the actions, objects, performances, ideologies etc., their own identity as well as live in solidarity with the other communities. Among the rivers in Kerala, Bharathappuzha is the biggest river in Kerala. It is also known as '*nila*'(means 'long') and '*peraru*' (big river). The river originates from the *'trimurthi sangam'* of Anamalai hills in Western Ghats and flows through the three district of Kerala (Palakkad, Thrishur and Malappuram). The three districts have many villages on the riverbanks and different communities live on these banks.

The study on Bharathappuzha is significant for two reasons: Firstly, The river divides the state flows through the central part and thereby divides into Northern and Southern regions. Incidentally, this part of Kerala is known as Cultural Capital. There are many shrines and worshiping places especially dedicated to Bhagavathi on the banks which eventually become the basis for the existence of different folklore forms. Secondly, the river Bharathappuzha is dying due to various natural and human interventions. With the onslaught of changes that have occurred in the geography on the river banks and due to modernisation and commercialisation, there is a transformation in the worldview and consciousness of various communities sustaining on its banks. The river is being regarded as a commodity for some communities. The process and

purpose of ritual festivals performed by people on the river banks are in the dimension of rigorous change.

In order to have a good understanding on the concept of river, the literature survey is done by looking at some of the works and then organised the literature survey in to four types. The first type of literature gives an understanding on the issues related to 'nature/culture' dichotomy and how humans have negotiated it through the ages by incorporating 'nature' with the sacral behaviour and religious ideology. The second type furnishes studies on rivers and their natural landscapes which constitute physical features of river courses and the human intervention against the river and how it affects the natural course of the river. The third type of literature provides a critical insight into the concept of sacred and secular notions of different cultures and how humans constructed their 'worldview' with regard to water resources which are the basic elements of sustenance. The fourth type of literature is to construct a folkloric approach to understand rivers and their lore.

The literature survey revealed certain gaps in the studies on rivers in general and the life on the banks in particular. Firstly, all the studies mentioned above viewed various aspects of cultural life associated with rivers, origin myths, and sacral behaviour associated with the rivers. No individual river is taken for a comprehensive study. As a result, cultural life associated with a (individual) river is absent in all the studies. In this thesis an attempt is being made to fill this gap by studying a river known as Bharathappuzha and cultural life constructed around it. Secondly, Bharathappuzha River has not been subjected to any serious academic enquiry. The limited works produced on this river were either confined to the literal aspects of river or have been less explanatory about the cultural specificities of the community or locality. Thirdly, in the academic researches, the dynamics of folklore/ oral traditions of the communities connected with the river in different regions through out its course of flow were not considered as a serious matter of study and are being neglected as an authentic source of study. Such abeyance towards folklore blindfolded the people's perspective, an important factor in hermeneutic studies. Thus Folkloric approach which brings out the

perceptions and the worldview of the folk, by the folk and for the folk that had been overlooked in the previous researches is well pursued in the present study.

To carry out of this task, three fold methods are followed; the observation method is primarily employed. This warrants for watching the performances of the folk communities in their performative context living on the banks to understand their practices and the belief system and later an intensive ethnography and discourse methodology techniques are used for the collection, analysis and interpretation of data to bring out the folk perspectives.

In the thesis, the life and lore of the communities living on the bank of river Bharathappuzha is studied in three zones of its course, (i) origin   (ii) middle   and (iii) ending part of the river, to understand the symbiotic relationship existing between the river and the people associated with it.   It is found from the preliminary survey and reading of the secondary sources, the methodology adopted in the earlier studies is a vertical type wherein the ritual performances are studied from North Kerala (South Canara) to South Kerala (Trivandrum) and it is hypothesised that the ritual performances originated in the north with the influences from Tulu land (*bhootha* worship) and percolated to South in the form of *theyyam*, *thira*, *mudiyettu* and *padayani*. The study postulates that the ritual performances connected with the river and the temple goddess Bhagavathi got originated on the banks of the middle part of the river Bharathappuzha. Thus the mid region emerged as an axis for dissemination of ritual performances. This alternate model has developed by changing the very methodology from vertical to linear (or horizontal) and studying the ritual performances by juxtaposing them in order to find out the co-existence of myth and ritual on one hand, and on the other, its relationship with communities.

As such river and water resource are culturally constructed by all cultures in order to consume them as cultural product. There are two qualities of water that accentuate its central place in cultures and faiths. Firstly, water is a primary element of life. Water is depicted both as a savior and a destroyer. Hence in all most all creation myths flood and water are referred. Life is said to have been emerged from waters. Secondly, water is the purifier that cleanses pollution. The communities on riverbanks

attribute these two meanings to river through their various cultural expressions both verbal and non-verbal. The communities living on banks of the rivers are connected to it directly or indirectly thus, the river becomes integral to the belief system of the people associated with it. This could be the reason for the existence of plenty of folklore about any river. The cultural construction of river has revealed the existence of various beliefs, rituals etc. Water has a significant role in Hinduism because of its life sustaining properties and its use in various rituals. Purification is an internal to Hinduism. It is believed that, a devotee can purify sin by taking a sacred bath in a river. Since ritual bath is mandatory to visit the temples the ancient temples were constructed on the banks of the rivers or in the vicinity of the waters. Many temples and pilgrim centre are situated on the banks of rivers. The running water of rivers is used for purification. Thus river and religious visits were made complementary. The Hindu ritual tradition makes it clear that purification must not be conducted in stagnated water, but it should be done in flowing water. The ritual power of running water can be seen in various cultures.

There exist religious beliefs around the world in the mythologies such as Greek, Egyptian, Chinese etc., water is associated with sexuality. The Greek notion is that the heavens send rain, like seed, to the earth in an enormous outburst. In certain cultures, river attains either male or female qualities. In Greece, Rivers are strongly masculine. In the Egyptian mythology, the river Hep or Hapi, the god of Nile River, is always depicted in the form of a man, but his breasts are those of a woman. They are indicative of the powers of fertility and of nourishment possessed by the god. In the Chinese mythology, a man named He Bo tied heavy rocks to his back and jumped into the water as a supreme sacrifice to stop the flood of the Yellow river. Plunging into the river, he thus gained immortality. For his pains he was granted immortality and promoted to the status of the god of the Yellow River. He spotted with a red moustache, dressed in white robes and wears a black crown. He rode a white horse and had twelve boy attendants. He Bo, the god of the Yellow river is the combination of 'He' literally means river and Bo means master or god. Thus, around the world, the cultures transformed the natural object, the river to cultural object and revered as god/goddess.

There are many myths about the origin of rivers even in India. These narratives give an overview of the sacredness of the rivers and their association to ritual

enactment. The origin myths of major Indian rivers such as Ganga, Brahmaputra, Indus, Godavari etc., with versions and variations are given in the thesis to understand the significance of cultural construction rivers. From the description of myths in brief one can find that some of the rivers in India are born out of body parts of the divine beings. Likewise, Ganges is formed out of the plaited hair of Siva according to one version whereas the other version states that the Ganges is created out of the feet of Vishnu. The river Narmada is born out of the sweat of Siva-Parvathi as per one version and as per another it is created out of Siva's genital organ. The river Godavari is believed to have been formed out of Siva's head. In the analysis of the myths, it is also found that some of the rivers in India are formed owing to the verbal expressions of the gods/goddesses. In the popular belief it is considered that the divine beings are bestowed with powerful tongues whose curse or blessings results in the creation of the rivers in India. In the case of Sarasvati, the co-wife of Hari, Ganga cursed Sarasvati to be born as river on earth leaving Kailasa, the abode of Hari (Siva). The lord Brahma blessed his son to grow as Brahmaputra. The river Krishna is born as the result of the curse of Savitri, the wife of Brahma. The origin of river Kaveri is attributed to the blessings of the lord Brahma who happens to be her father.

The river is personified around the world as god/goddess. Each culture has depicted the river in iconic form or in figural form of human or super human being. The depictions are quite interesting to observe as in most cases the river is endowed with royalty, virginity, or motherhood. For example the river Sindh (Indus) is depicted as a royal person with crown. Like wise the goddess Ganges is also attributed with a crown, whereas the goddess Kaveri is depicted as a virgin (young bride). Generally, in India, rivers are considered to be feminine (river names are attributed to daughters). The names of rivers are almost all grammatically feminine (except Indus, Brahmaputra, and Bhrathappuzha) and they are used freely as the names of girls and women.

From the mythologies of the Indian rivers, some of the rivers are born as old, whereas some others are born as young or infant stage of human life. It is interesting to note from the above table that Ganga and Godavari are shown as grown-up ladies having the status of mother due to their perennial and lengthy flows of water cutting across different states. In the case of Brahmaputra, though is perennial and long, it is

depicted as a child and masculine. When it is feminine they are shown as mothers whereas when it is masculine it is shown as child. This dichotomy is interesting to note in the world-view connected with the gender perception in India.

The banks of rivers are loci for almsgiving, ancestor rites, sacrifices and pilgrimage. It could be that the sacrifice, almsgiving and *sradha* are acts of feeding. Through sacrifice one feeds the gods, as in *sradha* in which one feeds one's ancestors and as in almsgiving in which one feeds ascetics, Brahmans or other worthy humans. Because rivers are important sources of food, they are appropriate sites for conducting such rites of feeding. The sacrifices observed on riverbanks bless the devotees with long life, good health, victory, sons, wealth, and realize their legitimate desiresThe custom of pilgrimage is widely prevalent among Indians. In Indian tradition, *tirtha* is sacred. There are hierarchies among the *tirthas* and many *tirthas* is often related to god Siva. Bathing ghats in *tirtha* (river) is known as upa-thirtha. Bathing at sacred places is not simply an act of physical purification; it is an act of symbolic purification of the soul. This could be seen in case of Ganga river. Ganga river is physically polluted even though the devotees are bathing without considering the physical condition of the river. It also means that hygiene and ritual purification by bathing are two entirely different concepts.

In the natural phenomenon of river course in South India in general one can find river in three forms based on seasons. During the monsoon the river flows with full vigour wherefore appears with life. Antithetical to this phenomenon, during the summer seasons, the river almost dries-up denoting the death of the river. In between these two seasons, river is also found in stagnant stage wherein the water never flows but remains in small pockets of low lying beds of the river indicating the state of 'onto' which means being or in existence. In the 'Rivus Triangle' it is shown that the natural phenomenon of river depends on the presence or absence of water in the river. Flowing with water represents life and without water represents dry/death. In between, the river is also found in stagnate form (Onto form). From stagnate form river can come to life with flow of water or evaporation of water can cause dry/death of the river. Therefore, flow and dry are oppositional and this symbolically equational to life and death as binary. In the natural phenomenon of the river, the first stage is two opposite's i.e. flow

and dry without any mediation which is the core of the structural feature of the river. The next process is that this binary is replaced by a triad of two opposite poles i.e. flow and dry and mediation as stagnate. In the next stage one pole and the mediation are replaced by another triad i.e. life and death which comprises two opposites and its mediation is 'onto' (or being or in existence). Thus, there are very many mediators; mediators of the first order second order and so on. The river can be found in three different forms or in combination of these three forms. Through the analysis one can go from the different order of triads into the deep structure where the core of the binary system that regulates the whole human knowledge system can be found. The same binary structural feature is reinforced even in the cultural phenomenon of the river. The 'Rivus Triangle' exemplifies this phenomenon. The cultural phenomenon of the river reveals human attitude towards rivers in India. The belief related to rivers show that the rivers are revered as they have ability to deliver the soul from sin and rebirth. This idea pervaded in almost all religions in India and people therefore use river or river waters for purification. Dipping in the water would attain purification which eventually would lead to *moksha* and binary to this act would result in pollution causing rebirth. Pollution can be caused by drowning one own self in the river (suicide/accidental death) thereby the belief is that the soul gets polluted and wander as demon (evil spirit). If the cultural phenomenon of 'rivus triangle structure' is superimposed over the natural phenomenon of 'rivus triangle structure' the following emerges.

At the ideational level both 'nature and culture' structures are congruous and infact not antithetical as viewed by Claude Levi-Strauss but reinforces the idea of binary structure prevalent in nature as well as in culture. The human mind understands nature through sensory organs by conceptually placing the phenomenon in binary oppositions and mediations. This forms the basis of human knowledge. What is true of human understanding is true of human creation i.e. culture. As the binary opposition and its mediation to understand nature is the basis of knowledge, all human creations also follow the same paradigm to construct culture. Binary opposition and mediation get different transformations and manifestations in culture resulting in complexity of culture. To get a clear understanding of culture one has to go deep into the process of finding out the basic binary opposition and its mediation. In both the triangles water

becomes an essential feature for demarcation. This signifies the role of water in not only in the physical realm but also in the cultural sphere. That is why it is found in different genres of the lore of the folk such as mythologies, tales, proverbs, beliefs, rituals and practices etc., as discussed in this chapter. Thus, the study on rivers as cultural phenomenon is as important as the study on the physical phenomenon for, it's sustains not only the life on earth but also the life that is emergent.

A close study about the river system and its people's life on the banks of Bharathappuzha give a new insight into the natural landscape and the cultural landscape of the river, Bharathappuzha. The natural landscape is a place under the current control of natural forces and free of the control of people for an extended period of time. As implied, a natural landscape may contain either the living or nonliving or both. A cultural landscape is a physical representation of how humans have related to, and transformed their environment; it highlights the significance in built form, natural features, and the interaction between the two. The main natural resources attributed to a region are landforms, soil, climate, vegetation, water etc., and they act as pivotal element in molding the culture of the people.

Kerala is situated on the southern part of Indian peninsula and is divided into three major natural divisions- highland, midland, low land. The land is rich in terms of availability of water and there are forty-four rivers flowing through the state, of which forty-one flows towards the West and the remaining three towards the east. It is interesting to note that the water streams in Kerala are known as '*puzha*'. The Malayalam word *puzha* means a small river/stream of water or water flows. Generally in India, the large natural stream of water known as *nadi*. The word *nadi* is derived from Sanskrit root word '*nad*' meaning channel, stream or flow. In the case of Kerala, almost all water streams are small comparing to other parts of India and the people name it as *puzha* (small water stream). Even though it is very small, it never denotes the English word river which is a large natural stream of water flowing into the sea.

Bharathappuzha River is also known as *Nila* (long/blue), *Perarua* (peru+aaru) and *Ponnanippuzha* (Ponnani+puzha). It is considered that, Bharathappuzha is originated from a small lake of Anamalai hills in Western Ghats. Each region attribute local name to the river that flows in their region. In India, most of the rivers are

considered as goddesses. But it is interesting to note that Bharathappuzha is not recognised as god or goddesses for the worldview of the folk of Kerala perceived it as a stream rather than as a river. This is because of the very geographical local of the State of Kerala. It is situated in a strip of territory between Western Ghats and the Arabian Sea, infested with thick vegetation obstructing the eyes from clear and long view of the water flows at any given point of space. In the neighbouring States the river flows are visible clearly for very long distances unlike in the State of Kerala. Perhaps due this very physical feature, the folk of Kerala considered the river as *puzha* or *aar* denoting stream.

The river culture of a particular area will be affected if there is any change in the availability of water on the riverbanks. There are no hills in the eastern part of the Bharathappuzha valley, and this is one of the distinguishing features of the Bharathappuzha river in Kerala flowing to the western area. In summer, it is very hot in Palakkad and the extreme eastern part of the Bharathappuzha (the plains of Coimbatore and Pollachi of Tamil Nadu). *Edavapathi* (south west monsoon) wind blows through these slopes throughout six months in a year (from May to October) and the remaining months have dried in eastern wind. As a result, a good amount of water loss occurs with evaporation. Moreover, the earth heats the geographical features of this land and the atmosphere heat is very high. The compression due to funnelling effect of this area and the receiving capacity of heat in the black soil in Chittoor cause high temperature. The increasing amount of paddy fields leads to the destruction of the density of the forest. The peculiar nature of this land gives a special pattern of river discharge. The river basin has a wide area of natural forests in two areas. They are the reserved forest on hilly tract of mountain belt in the side extremities of the river basin and the local forests of private parties in central part (plain land of river basin) of the basin area. The lower land and some area of the middle land are situated in Malappuram district which is on the coast of Arabian Sea. The river Bharathappuzha flows along the length of the 'Palakkad gap' and the wind which blows from the Bay of Bengal passes through this gap. The intensity of wind on the river basin is a peculiarity of the Bharathappuzha that causes more evaporation from the water surface of river and the land evaporation.

In the cultural landscape human intervention with nature is done to through the mediation of folklore such as myth, epic, legend, proverbs, songs etc., and transform the natural products into cultural products. In the process the non-verbal genres such as beliefs and practices exist to appropriate nature for social solidarity, economic organisation and politico-religious ideology. Generally folklore about water and its sources can be classified as verbal and non-verbal. Thus, the legends, myths, proverbs, songs, tales, beliefs and rituals knitted around water sources, rivers streams, as part of cultural landscaping on one hand enhanced the usage of water resources and on the other abused the same affecting the natural landscape. As a result the river Bharathappuzha is at the verge of decline.

Natural landscapes have been undergoing various transformations over the ages. The spatial and temporal changes in land cover and land use will be helpful to understand the environmental status of a region. Decay of rivers is a crucial concern discussed in different parts of the world and it is one among the major challenges that humans are facing. There are various reasons behind the decay of a river. Two issues arise out of this, namely; the environmental problems/reasons that lead to the damage of Bharthappuzha river system and what would happen to the culture on the banks of this river, if the river is dying. Human intervention and adaptation to natural environments inevitably led to cultural landscape. In order to exploit the natural resources like rivers and streams for their sustenance the folk communities habituated on the banks and made huge settlements. The constant interaction and activities of the communities with the water resources caused disruption to the course of the river flows. Nevertheless, the communities engaged in various forms using the water attributing sacrality especially with the construction activities of shrines and temples and thereby conducting rituals and ceremonies on timely intervals. To understand the ritual activities and the worldview behind these activities it is imperative to know about the communities living on the banks of Bharathappuzha.

To understand the emergence of different communities on the banks of Bharathappuzha one has to look for the historicity on the life on the banks of the river. During historical times, several political powers facilitated the settlements of different caste groups and communities for their sustenance. As a result, several social groups

with different occupations were encouraged by the rulers to settle on the banks for the expansion of agriculture, trade, commerce and industry for augmenting the resources. For this reason a brief account of history is traced from the first century A.D of Chera kingdom referred to in Sangam literature to the Advent of the Europeans and the supremacy of the British rule in Kerala. The banks of the river Barathappuzha is one of the places of early inhabitants of Kerala. On the whole, the migrations into the land of Kerala contributed to the development of history of the region. An overview of the time frame of the migrations of different religious and racial groups shows that all races and communal groups inhabited this region. The history of Kerala is the history of migrations which led to composite and complex social formation.

No formidable political processes which can create history were present prior to the Brahmin implantation. For this reason the oral tradition of Kerala created a myth on the Brahmin implantation which is quite popular even to this day. The myth is known as Parasurama myth in the Origin part of Bharathapuzha. The *Parayipetta Panthiru kulam*, literally meaning the 'twelve castes born from Paraya woman', is an important legend which highlights the evolution of the social structure on the middle banks of Bharathappuzha. The legend is centered on the village of Shoranur, Pattambi and Thrithala areas i.e., middle part of Bharathappuzha. According to this story, a Brahmin named Vararuchi married a lower caste woman without knowing her true identity and begot eleven communities which reside mostly in the middle part of Bhatatapulazha. Muslims in Kerala are densely populated in the Malabar area and are known as Mappilas. The Mappilas are found all over the banks of Bharathappuzha and they are densely populated in the ending part of Bharathappuzha, i.e Ponnani and Tirur. The non-Hindu migrants in Kerala are generally known as *Mappila.* Kerala Muslims are recognized as '*Jonaka Mappila',* Kerala Christians are called '*Nasrani Mappila',* and Kerala Jews are termed as '*Juta Mappila'*. The word mappila is a compound word *maha* (great) + *pillai* (child or son-in law) which denote honored status. As time progressed the ethnic composition of Kerala Jewish and Christian communities diversified and '*Mappila'* came to be used only to refer to the Muslims. It is evident that the banks of Bharathappuzha being fertile attracted all communities even from historical times to the present. However, the settlement pattern reveals that the tribals

and indigenous communities which are the inhabitants of the banks and hilly terrains of Bharathappuzha replaced or subdued by the process of 'Aryanisation' wherein the '*jatis*' (occupational ranking i.e. castes) of upper '*varna*' (ritual ranking) encouraged to immigrate into the Kerala soils and expand the settled agrarian economy. The 'Parasurama myth' and the 'Vararuchi myth' as explained above attest to this fact.

The communities of Kerala attribute different characteristics and conceptualize the presiding deity of the temple at Bharathappuzha as Bhadrakali. The Bhadrakali is one of the forms of supreme deity mentioned in the *Devi Mahatmyam*. The myth of Kali as narrated in the *Devibhagavatham*, the divine power of Kali is created by a combined effort of the gods. With all the gifts of gods, the female *Shakti* in the form of Kali makes a fierce battle with the demon Mahisasura and kills him thereby restores peace for which act she is venerated and worshiped in *bhooloka*.

The Kali concept in Kerala is the expansion of the *puranic* one, and is attached to the local environment of the land. The general Kali myth narrated in the *Devi Mahatmyam* forms the last part of *Sristikhanda* of *Markandeya Purana*. In Kerala, the Kali myth is explained in a narrative form and each community has their own version of this myth. Kali is the main Goddess concept inherent among the Kerala people. There may not have been any *kavu* or village without Kali. Most of the goddess idols are constructed in wood or *kadusarkara*. She carries a trident, head of Dharika, sword, *vattala* and *vethalam* is her vehicle. She has three eyes, four or eight hands. The appearance of Kali in Kerala is in sitting position. Kali originates from vision, which means eyes. People believe that there is a presence of Kali in the *kavu* and each house lights lamp in the *kavu* of their house. This light is *bhadra deepam* (*bhadra* means Bhagavathi Kali). The Bhagavathi/Kali visits the houses of her children in the annual ritual performances of the *kavu* and it is believed that Kali visits the houses of the people. In north India, Durga killed Mahisasura where as in Kerala Dharika (Dharuka) is killed by Kali. Dharika is a typical character in the Kali myth of Kerala and the subject of most of the Kerala ritual such as *theyyam, thira, mudiyettu, padayani* etc enacts the fight between Kali and Dharika. Bhadrakali is a popular form of Bhagavathi worship in Kerala.

The origin myth of Bhadrakali, is published in Malayalam and Sanskrit as *Bhadrakali Mahatmyam, Bhadrolpatti* and *Dharikavadham/Dharukavadham* (Death of Dharuka/Dharika). The myth is also alive and narrates well in oral tradition. The entire myth of Dharikavadham of Kerala does not appear in any of the Purana but appears to have its origin in oral tradition such as *thottampattu* (ritual song) in various versions.

Bhadrakali worship on the banks of Bharathappuzha is carried out on specific sacral spaces known as *kavus.* In the case of Kerala, there are no authentic survey accounts available about the number of sacred groves. In the local survey, the banks of Bharathappuzha was said to have nine hundred and seventy sacred groves. These sacred groves are the key to understand the cultural treasures of a region. The settlement pattern of the communities on the riverbanks and the intercommunity relations are based on the sacred grove. The Malayalam word *kavu* means a garden/the multitude of trees/consortium of trees and *kavu* is the sacred place where the Goddess resides. No structures were erected around the stone which is erected under the shade of a tree and it is considered as the image of goddess. Generally a platform is constructed around the goddess. Most of the *kavus* face to the north. The *kavus* place an important role in the socioeconomic life of the villagers. These provide a place for village gatherings during the festive occasion. The *thattakam* (jurisdiction) is a territory under a Goddess and each community of the *thattakam* is supposed to contribute money and paddy to the *kavu* during the festival period. The myth of Kali though prevalent as pan Indian phenomenon, when it is coming to the soils of Kerala it acquires a distinct and variant occurrence in the form of legend. In the *kavu* associated with the God/Goddess/ancestors in North Kerala, a ritual dance is performed known as *theyyam*, in central Kerala the performance is *vela/pooram/thalapoly* and in South Kerala, the ritual is known as *mudiyettu* and *padayani*.

Most of the *kavus* in the origin part of the river Bharathappuzha are under the control of the Nayars. They are the patron *ooraalar* (hereditary trustees) and the *kavus* are the basic element of Nayar domination. There are some *kavus* where the priests are Nayars They conduct forty-one days Nambuthiri *puja* in a year. In the Palakkad area mostly Nayars act as priests to the *kavus*. Later they have appointed Nambuthiri priests in the *kavu* and make decision on the matters of the *kavu*. The Nayars were the

landlords of the village and the base of all their activities was Bhagavathi. They conduct weekly rituals on Tuesday and Friday and offer *payasam* and *k(g)uruthi* to Bhagavathi. In middle part, *kavu* is the place where the village deity resides who is trusted to be protecting the village and its property from natural calamities and diseases. The villagers would regularly conduct annual ritual performances in the *kavu*. No one can change the rituals in the *kavu* because most of the *kavus* are under the control of *kavu* committee which include the members of different communities reside around the *kavu*. The *kavus* on the end part of Bharathappuzha are under the control of individual family. They consider the Bhagavathi as their familial deity. The members of the family are the executive committee members of the shrine and they have the right to decide all matters related to the shrine. As part of fieldwork, legends on Bhagavathi are collected from the three parts of the banks of Bharathappuzha starting from Palakkad area (origin part) to Ponnani area (end part). The total number of legends collected from the three parts is fifty. The dispersal of these legends is not uniform but in fact increases in the first and second part and decreases in the end part

The ritual performances on the banks of Bharathappuzha are attached to the annual ritual performance of the shrine and each community around the shrine has their own ritual enactment to perform in front of the shrine. The annual festival on the banks of Bharathappuzha is a congregation of many communities. The performances known under different names such as *thalapoli, pooram* and *vela* are ritual expressions of different communities on the banks of Bharathappuzha structured to articulate certain meanings. It is conducted after the harvest and for the protection of the community and region. The ritual performances are performed all over the banks of Bharathappuzha. The structure and performing communities vary from place to place. It is elaborated in a series of ideologies, sects, forms and meanings. This makes the major difference between the annual festivals in the other parts of Kerala comparing to Bharathappuzha. The ritual performances of Kerala such as *theyyam, thira, padayani* performed in the shrine of Bhagavathi as an offering during the annual festival of the shrine. The annual ritual performances except *thalapoli*, *pooram* and *vela* are ritual enactments by an individual community in a shrine and all other communities in and around the shrine do not perform any ritual enactment in the annual festival of the Bhagavathi shrine. These

performances are oriented to individual communities and it has been performing since time immemorial. Each community on the banks has their own identity and that is being expressed by participating through their ritual performance in the annual festival of the shrine.

As stated already the first part have the ritual performances known as *vela,* the second part have *pooram* and the third part have *thalapoli*. The number of performances from the first part to second part increases and at the third part it decreases. The trend of *vela, pooram* and *thalapoli* seem to be of caste, community and family respectively. The *vela* is dominated and represented by certain castes such as Nayar, Pannan and Paraya. In the middle part the *pooram* is incorporating several castes and appeared as a communal ritual spread over a wide geographical local. At the end part, the *thalapoli* is more confined to familial level than communal level. In a way, this is in accoradance with the flow of the river, i.e., Bharathappuzha. In the beginning part the river is in the formation stage wherein several tributaries flow into Bharathappuzha. Therefore, *velas* are predominantly connected with agrarian communities such as Nayars, Paraya etc. in the middle part the river is formed as a distinct feature and known as Bharathappuzha/Nila. The banks are clearly marked in the middle part of the river and inhabited by several communities and thereby, *pooram* becomes a congregational ritual having participation of wide spread social groups. At the end part, the river joins the Arabian Sea and thereby loses a clear demarcation of the banks. This feature is reflected in the *thalapoli* wherein the families engage in the worship of Bhagavatahi through ritual offering.

In all the rituals of the three parts of Bharathappuzha, one can find sacrifice (*guruthi*) as an integral element of the ritual performance. However, the sacrifices to Bhagavathi are interpreted in three different ways by the folk of the particular region. In the beginning part, sacrifice is given for the protection of the region; in the middle part, it is for pacifying the deity; and in the end par it is to seek blessings.

The plot structure of Kali story as narrated in the myth is of pentapartite i.e., five parts: (1) Interdiction or Exposition (2) Progression or Rise (3) Climax (4) Return or Fall and (5) Catastrophe. This structure shows unilinear progression of the story of Bhadrakali. The story has a clear beginning, wherein she is created to kill Dharika and

to restore peace. Accordingly, she accomplishes the task and thereby becomes the deity. The five partite plot mentioned above represent the worldview of the folk who venerate and worship Bhadrakali. Only when the performances of the three parts of Bharathappuzha are studied together, the story as narrated in the myth of Bhadrakali can be understood in a meaningful sequence.

Findings:

> ➢ In the analysis of the myths, it is found that some of the rivers in India are born out of body parts of the divine beings and some others are formed owing to the verbal expressions of the gods/goddesses.

> ➢ From the mythologies of the Indian rivers it is found that some of the rivers are born as old, whereas some others are born as young or infant stage of human life. Ganga and Godavari are shown as grown-up women having the status of mother but in the case of Brahmaputra it is depicted as a child and masculine. When it is feminine they are shown as mothers whereas when it is masculine it is shown as child.

> ➢ From the Study it is found that water-associated with pilgrim sites are 84 (59 %) and out of which 60 (42%) pilgrim sites are located on the banks of the river which means that flowing water is more important in Hinduism, especially for ritual bathing.

> ➢ Based on the study on the river it is found that in the 'Rivus Triangle' of both 'nature and culture' structures are congruous and in fact not antithetical as viewed by Claude Levi-Strauss but reinforces the idea of binary structure prevalent in nature as well as in culture. This forms the basis of human knowledge. As the binary opposition and its mediation to understand nature is the basis of knowledge, all human creations also follow the same paradigm to construct culture.

➢ In India, most of the rivers are considered as goddesses. But it is interesting to note that Bharathappuzha is not recognized as god or goddesses for the worldview of the folk of Kerala perceived it as a stream rather than as a river.

➢ The appellative derivation of Bharathappuzha and the tributaries comes from the very worldview of the folk. The naming of the river is almost akin to the physical appearance. Both in the case of Bharathappuzha and its tributaries the naming system of the folk is directly derived from the physical appearance of the water/river in a given geographical local therefore different names are found for the same river/tributary. This suggest that the worldview of the Kerala folk is related directly to their physical realm i.e., the natural surroundings and later to the metaphysical realm i.e., supernatural. Ritual and mythology in Kerala are prominently found as explanations for the unknown phenomena that are seen in the world of known.

➢ On the whole, the migrations into the land of Kerala contributed to the development of history of the region. An overview of the time frame of the migrations of different religious and racial groups shows that all races and communal groups inhabited this region. The history of Kerala is the history of migrations which led to composite and complex social formation.

➢ There are three kinds of settlements in the Bharathappuzha banks. The first one is that of the earliest inhabitants of the land from the hilly forest on the banks of Bharathappuzha such as velar, Kuravar, Ayavar who migrated from the deep forest and settled on the riverbanks. The second one is the Brahmins batch who reached Kerala in BC 3rd century, following the Buddhists and Jains (Jains and Budhists reached the banks through Karnataka and Sravanbalgola). The Brahmin settlements grossly contributed to the history of Kerala. The third one is in the beginning of Aryan invasion of north India wherein the Dravidians joined their kinsman such as the Nayars, Vellalars, Kammalars, and Ezhavas etc.

➢ It is evident that the banks of Bharathappuzha being fertile attracted all communities even from historical times to the present. However, the settlement

pattern reveals that the tribals and indigenous communities who are the inhabitants of the banks and hilly terrains of Bharathappuzha replaced or subdued by the process of 'Aryanisation' wherein the '*jatis*' (occupational ranking i.e. castes) of upper '*varna*' (ritual ranking) encouraged to immigrate into the Kerala soils and expand the settled agrarian economy. The 'Parasurama myth' and the 'Vararuchi myth' as explained attest to this fact.

➢ The Bharathappuzha banks are much used for acculturation of native communities into the 'Hindu fold' by attributing mythical origin and relationship between the 'Aryan *Varna* system and the native *jati* matrix'. As a result the social hierarchy emerged on one hand negating the 'Aryan *varna* system' and on the other incorporating it with the native hierarchical system. This paradox is quite visible in the ethno centric overtones of the lower strata of the society and often reflected as anti-barhminical attitude especially, against Nambuthiri-Nayar alliance.

➢ As the major land owning and ritual management communities which exercise control over the land and people are from immigrated castes, their mythologies and ritual practices connected with sacred complexes also show the migratory nature wherein ritual and belief is constructed with the ideologies of non-native communities. For instance, the myth and ritual of Bhagavathi on the banks of Bharathappuzha is borrowed from the northern India (Kali version) and Tamil Nadu (Kannaki version).

➢ The banks of the sacred rivers are considered as the abode of gods and goddesses and pilgrimage developed accordingly. In the shrines on the banks of Bharathappuzha, contrary to the belief of attaining *moksha*, i.e., for the benefit of the other world, rituals and worship is performed for the merit of this world and to bring prosperity to the life that is in existence. Instead of practicing ritual for liberation and other worldly merits, various communities on the banks of Bharathappuzha seek blessings of Bhagavathi for the protection and welfare of their life in this world. They need agricultural prosperity, protection of life from

all calamites like diseases, earthquake and so on. This is the main concern in the worship in the *kavu* (sacred grove).

➤ More number of temples for male deities (71%) is found on the banks of the major rivers in India. Only 29% of temples are dedicated to goddesses. Except Brahmaputra River, all the others are considered as feminine and host temples for male deities. This appears to be a pan-Indian phenomenon. However, in the state of Kerala more temples for goddesses are consecrated than to male deities on the banks of the rivers. For instance, on the banks of Bharathappuzha there exist 223 Bhagavathi shrines from its origin to ending part and 11 shrines are dedicated to male deities. Most of the temples on the banks of other Indian rivers are the seats of gods, whereas, the banks of Bharathappuzha are the land of goddess shrines. The goddess is worshipped as Bhadrakali and Bhagavathi.

➤ The myth of Kali as narrated in the *Devibhagavatham*, the divine power of Kali is created by a combined effort of the gods. The jewel and armory of the Devi is given by twelve divine powers and each one is bestowed with them by either their own penance or by the supreme deity and how these divine powers acquired by them is narrated in different myths enumerated in *Puranas* and Bhagavatha stories**.** The following attire and physical feature of Devi are also due to the combined creation of the gods. With all the gifts of gods, the female *Shakti* in the form of Kali makes a fierce battle with the demon Mahisasura and kills him thereby restores peace for which act she is venerated and worshiped in *bhooloka*.

➤ The myth of Kali that appear in the *Devibhagavatham* is made up of two myths; one, the myth of Mahisasura, the other the myth of Kali. Both the myths are sequentially narrated in a linear fashion and therefore logically constructed as a complete story. The absence of Mahisasura in the form of a son is 'lack' and being born conquering the worlds is liquidation of the first part of the myth. The second part is 'liquidation of liquidation' wherein the Kali is created to liquidate Mahisasura who himself is the source of 'liquidation' of peace.

- Bhadrakali is a popular form of Bhagavathi worship in Kerala. The origin myth of BhadraKali, is published in Malayalam and Sanskrit as *Bhadrakali Mahatmyam, Bhadrolpatti* and *Dharikavadham/Dharukavadham* (Death of Dharuka/Dharika). The myth is also alive and narrates well in oral tradition. The entire myth of Dharikavadham of Kerala does not appear in any of the Purana but appears to have its origin in oral tradition such as *thottampattu* (ritual song) in various versions.

- In the analysis of the three versions of the myth it is found that the myth is not appearing as a single entity but dispersed into at least three myths; the myth of Dharika; myth of Bhadrakali and Dharikavadham (killing) and Bhadarakalis return to earth and being worshiped as Bhagavathi; and the third myth wherein Bhadrakali with the face of small pox is enacted in the Northern and Southern part of Bharathappuzha (in the form of *theeyam* and *mudiyettu*) respectively.

- If one makes a comparative study of Kali myth in *Devibhagavatham* and *Dharikavadham* of Kerala versions, one can find out that the Kerala versions reflect the process of 'nativisation' and 'oico-typification' of the myth of Kali. In *Devibhagavatham*, the very Kali is created and bestowed with powers by gods. In the Kerala versions Kali is created by Shiva from his third eye and known as Bhadrakali, the daughter of Shiva. All the attire and weaponry of Bhadarakali is also described in the ethnic categories. In Kerala, trickery is used by Bhadrakali to kill Dharika by disguising herself as Brahmin old lady to learn the sacred and secret *manthra* (chant) from the wife of Dharika, Mandodhari. The Dharika's wife is depicted as pious and noble lady whereas in the northern version there is no mention of wife and her role in the killing episode of Mahisasura. In the third version of the myth, Bhadrakali is picturised as having faced with scarce due to small pox which was quite a common disease in the soils of Kerala. Therefore she is also worshipped for warding of small pox especially in the Northern and Southern parts of Kerala. However, on the banks of Bharathappuzha she is worshipped for prosperity and wellbeing by the folk.

➢ Two significant interpretations can be drawn from the analysis of the myth of *Dharikavadham*: Firstly, Bhadrakali disguising as a Brahmin lady and learning *manthra* from Mandodhari suggests the migration of Brahmins into the Kerala soils (even Parasurama myth attests to this) and killing Dharika with the knowledge (*manthra*) acquired from Mandodhari (insiders) implies the Brahmin superiority over the locals. Secondly, there is a gender perspective in the myth. The society of Kerala formerly is matriarchal and therefore the role of women is kept in a higher pedestal. Bhadrakali is shown in the myth as all powerful and invincible on one hand, and on the other, Mandodhari as the protector of Dharika (through her *manthra*) signifies the role of female in the Kerala society. After the war Bhadrakali is depicted as amorous and to quench her fury, Shiva lies down on the ground and Bhadarakali dances up on his naked body. This also suggests the dominant role of females in Kerala society.

➢ It is evident that more number of *kavus* is dedicated to local goddesses than to gods of anthropomorphic and zoomorphic. One interesting thing to observe is that the male gods and zoomorphic gods prevalent on the banks of Bharathappuzha are sustained due to mythological base whereas the Bhagavathi *kavus* are constructed based on local legends. Within the verbal genres of folklore myth has wider geographical sphere of influence than the legend. This phenomenon attests to the fact that myth has the inbuilt potential to migrate from elsewhere. The legend contrary to this acquires local character and remains as the belief of the locals. This is crucial to understand that the Bhagavathi/Kali legends manifest the local aspirations, idioms and ideologies thereby forming worldview of the locals. For this reason the myth of Kali though prevalent as pan Indian phenomenon, when it is coming to the soils of Kerala it acquires a distinct and variant occurrence in the form of legend.

➢ The *kavu* or the shrine got its name due to the local legends or the local origin myths of goddesses. Most of the *kavus* in the origin part of Bharathappuzha are under the control of the Nayars. They are the patron *ooraalar* (hereditary trustees) and the *kavus* are the basic element of Nayar domination. In middle

part, *kavu* is the place where the village deity resides who is trusted to be protecting the village and its property from natural calamities and diseases. The villagers would regularly conduct annual ritual performances in the *kavu*. The *kavus* on the end part of Bharathappuzha are under the control of individual family. They consider the Bhagavathi as their familial deity. The members of the family are the executive committee members of the shrine and they have the right to decide all matters related to the shrine.

➢ As part of fieldwork, legends on Bhagavathi are collected from the three parts of the banks of Bharathappuzha starting from Palakkad area (origin part) to Ponnani area (end part). The total number of legends collected from the three parts is fifty. The dispersal of these legends is not uniform but infact increases in the first and second part and decreases in the end part.

➢ From the legends that are found in the origin part the motif table above is arrived at. Motif is an important element in folklore to understand the 'type' and the type is an ethnic category for both motif and type originate due to tradition and remain as constant feature. Therefore in the study of motifs reveal the ways that the folk appropriate the narrative (for example: legend/myth/tale). Based on the above table a typology of motifs can be enumerated.

➢ In the origin part from the study of motifs one can notice that the Kali myth is migrated to Kerala soils from elsewhere. That is one of the reasons why Kannaki and old lady as Kali is found in the motifs of the Bhagavathi legends. The motifs, dream and human action (penance and consecration) form the foremost in perpetuating the Bhagavathi/Kali *kavus*. These two magic elements are very significant in not only consolidating but also perpetuating any religious belief. The Bhagavathi *kavus* are no exception to this. Both these motifs form 62 % which attest to the fact that in the process of appropriation of a myth such as Kali, the dream and penance form an integral part of religious beliefs to construct the ritual of Bhagavathi. It is also interesting to note that religion has capacity to transform natural objects such as stone, tree etc., into cultural objects. For this reason 16 % of the motifs in the legends of Bhagavathi are

associated with natural objects and thereby worshipped as religious objects. In the case of motif of 16 % associated with woman (Kannaki/old lady etc.) one can find that appropriation of one myth/legend into another myth/legend is visible. In any religious history the migratory myths are localized and consumed as part of the religious behaviour of that local.

➢ In the middle part the number of legends is increased to twenty-two from the origin part of eighteen. This reflects that once the myth is migrated and internalized, gets crystallized and appears as if it is native to the culture. Therefore, the versions of motifs also increase resulting in the increase of variations. However, it need not necessarily result in the increase of 'types'.

➢ In the middle part one can find four types of motifs. Out of which 40% are associated with cultural objects such as umbrella, iron spear, pot etc. in the middle part of the banks of Bharathappuzha as stated earlier, the myth of Kali got crystallized and therefore, the cultural objects are attributed with divine power and personified as Bhagavathi. In other words the presence of goddess Bhagavathi is seen in the cultural objects and therefore, attributed with the sacrality and worship through ritual performances. The next type of motif that is dominant (33%) in the middle part is connected with human actions such as bath, thirst, battle etc., reflects typically the 'oicotypification' of motif with localized environmental and cultural behaviours.

➢ In the middle part, the myth is performed and enacted as a ritual obligation and therefore the motifs of Kali are directly connected with the ritual manifestations.

➢ In the end part, the legends of Bhagavathi are decreased to ten from twenty-two of the middle part. It is not only the decrease in the legends but also the decrease in the types of motifs.

➢ It is interesting to note that *kavus* in the end part are built for Bhagavathis based on the belief of transfiguration from umbrella, plant, hen, spirit etc., to the goddess. It is found that 50% of *kavus* emerged out of the belief of

transfiguration. In any religion, the belief of transfiguration signifies the growth and dispersal of religious ideology.

➢ As observed, in the beginning part it is natural objects that are transformed into goddesses; in the middle part it is the cultural object which got transformed to goddesses and in the end part it is from transformation to transfiguration that makes the presence of goddesses possible. In other words, the concept of Kali is migrated from elsewhere into Kerala through Palakkad area (origin part of Bharathappuzha); crystallized as a cultural object in the middle part and in the end part it has acquired to form. So the process of natural objects via cultural objects to transfiguration can be seen from the legends of Bahgavathi on the banks of Bharathappuzha. If analysis is done on the legends, one can find the underlying formula at the deep structural level for the construction of the legend of Bhagavathi.

➢ From the legends reported one can observe that in the origin part of Bharathappuzha legends connected with Nayar (landlords/agrarian) community is dominant (i.e., 12 numbers; 66%). In the middle part the Nambuthiri (priestly) community (i.e., 14 numbers; 63%) and in the end part the backward/lower community such Thiyya and Paraya are dominantly (i.e., total 6 numbers; 60%) associated with the legends of Bhagavathi. It is interesting to note that along with Nambuthiri, the lower (Pulaya/Paraya) communities and the landlord community are also associated with the legends of Bhagavathi. This shows that the Nambuthiries acted as pacemakers in the incorporative process of Bhagavathi *kavu* and this is also reflected in the ritual performances of Bhagavathi *kavu*. The incorporation of different communities is done through the myth and worship of Bhagavathi on the banks of Bharathappuzha.

➢ The annual festival on the banks of Bharathappuzha is a congregation of many communities. The performances known under different names such as *thalapoli, pooram* and *vela* are ritual expressions of different communities on the banks of Bharathappuzha structured to articulate certain meanings.

➢ The trend of *vela, pooram* and *thalapoli* seem to be of caste, community and family respectively. The *vela* is dominated and represented by certain castes such as Nayar, Pannan and Paraya. In the middle part the *pooram* is incorporating several castes and appeared as a communal ritual spread over a wide geographical local. At the end part, the *thalapoli* is more confined to familial level than communal level.

➢ This is in accordance with the flow of the river, i.e., Bharathappuzha. In the beginning part the river is in the formation stage wherein several tributaries flow into Bharathappuzha. Therefore, *velas* are predominantly connected with agrarian communities such as Nayars, Paraya etc. in the middle part the river is formed as a distinct feature and known as Bharathappuzha/Nila. The banks are clearly marked in the middle part of the river and inhabited by several communities and thereby, *pooram* becomes a congregational ritual having participation of wide spread social groups. At the end part, the river joins the Arabian Sea and thereby loses a clear demarcation of the banks. This feature is reflected in the *thalapoli* wherein the families engage in the worship of Bhagavathi through ritual offering.

➢ It is interesting to note the linear arrangements of the events that are connected with *vela* ritual in the origin part; the *kanyarkali* performance precedes *pavakoothu* performance. These two are narrative centric wherein the stories of Kannaki and Ramayana are narrated. The story of Kannaki is basically migrated from Tamil Nadu and in the soils of Kerala; it is imported as the story of Bhagavathi. The search of missing anklet in the story of Kannaki is the major theme and when it was found, Kannaki burns the city of Madhura to avenge the killing of her husband. However, in the story of *kanyarkali*, the protagonist Kannaki is still searching for the lost anklet even to this day in the form of Bhagavathi. Since, the lost anklet is not found, the story remains in complete and warrants for recurring enactment. In the name of searching Bhagavathi visits the households and blesses them. In this myth, there is no mention of war with Dharika.

➢ The next major performance that follows *kanyarkali* is *pavakoothu* (shadow puppetry). The story of this performance is the story of Ramayana by a Tamil performing community known as Pulavar. Both *kanyarkali* performers (Nayars) and *pavakoothu* performers (Pulavar) are suppose to have migrated from Tamil Nadu and both communities figure in Sangam literature. It is believed that *pavakoothu* performance is meant for Bhadrakali who happened to have missed witnessing the war of Rama-Ravana as she herself was engaged in the war with Dharika. It is at the behest of Shiva's command that the Pulavar is enacting this performance. Therefore, this performance denotes that the *pavakoothu* is a post-war event of *Dharikavadhanam* (killing of Dharika by Bhadrakali). In the first performance (*kanyarkali*), there is no reference to war of Bhadrakali with Dharika whereas in the second performance (*pavakoothu*), there is a reference of war of Bhadrakali with Dharika as a foregone event and no description of whatsoever is connected with the war itself.

➢ The events (*Parayeduppu, Kathirvaravu, Paana, Pankali* etc,) that follow these two narratives denote the worship of the deity not as Kannaki nor as Bhadarakali but as Bhagavathi. In a way, myth is narrated and the ritual is performed. But there is no enactment of myth as such. Which means myth and ritual are in non-coexistence in the origin part of banks of tributaries of Bharathappuzha.

➢ The *pooram* is the annual ritual festival on the central banks of Bharathappuzha. *Pooram* denote incorporative process of the ritual of Bhagavathi. In the origin part it is in the formative stage and in the middle part it not only got stabilized but also became incorporative thus manifested as community ritual cutting across several caste groups. The enactment of the narrative of Bhadrakali's war with Dharika becomes the focal theme of the performance. In the middle part there is a narrative tradition associated with the ritual but it takes the secondary position. In other words, the myth of Bhadrakali becomes vibrant and manifests as an enactment of the myth. The enactment is visible in two forms: the one as *Dharikavadham* where the characters of the myth are enacted as performative play, the other as floral drawing (*kalam*) where the figure of Bhadrakali is drawn

and later destroyed in the process of narration (*thottam*). It is interesting to note here that myth as narrative and the enactment of myth as ritual co-exist thereby, reinforces faith of the folk on the concept of Bhadrakali as Bhagavathi. In the beginning part there is a clear ambiguity between myth and ritual whereas, in the middle part the ambiguity is nullified by combining both narrative and ritual. In the epistemology of myth-ritual, one school of thought argued that myth and religious doctrines are the resultant of rituals. This is known as the primacy of ritual hypothesis which claims that every myth is derived from a particular ritual and that myth is a reproduction of the succession of a ritual act. The migrated myth of Bhadrakali is totally incorporated and owned as their own by the folk of Kerala in the middle part.

➢ The *thalapoli* is a ritual conducted in *Bhagavathi kavu* (shrine) on the end part of Bharathappuzha once in a year. Women are the main participators of this ritual. The myth of *thalapoli* ritual is that after the death of Dharika, Bhadrakali became so furious. Women carry *thalam* to pacify her anger.

➢ In the end part of Bharathappuzha, the ritual is performed neither as enactment nor as narrative. It is a simple offering to seek the blessings of Bhagavathi. One interesting feature is that woman participation is overtly visible and the ritual appears as more of domestic ritual than a public. The goddess Bhadrakali image as Kali is totally undermined and an image of 'mother' is attributed to Bhagavathi. As a result, no vibrancy is found in the ritual. Moreover, both narrative and enactment of the myth being accomplished in the beginning and middle part of Bharathappuzha, the ritual in the end part appears like 'mangalam' which means happy ending of an event.

➢ The ritual performances of Bhagavathi on the banks of Bharathappuzha reveal that there is a pattern that emerges in the worship of Bhagavathi. Following the course of the Bharathappuhza if one study the performances of Bhagavathi in the *kavus* in a linear/horizontal manner, a complete story of Bhadrakali emerge having the beginning and progressing then culminating with an end thus making it as a comprehensive story.

- In the beginning part as stated already, the concept of Bhadrakali is in the formative stage and variedly depicted in the myths of *kannyarkali* and *pavakoothu*. Neither of them is directly connected with Bhadarakali. In the middle part the myth of Bhadrakali is proportionately connected with the enactment. In the ritual performances of the middle part, visual enactment in the form of floral drawings and in the performative enactment as play is crystallized and even supported by the narrative in the form of *thottam*. Both narrative (myth) and enactment (ritual) reinforced the concept of Bhadrakali as a goddess. In the end part, the ritual *thalapoli* is performed to seek the blessings of the deity. Thus, the story of Bhadrakali is represented in its totality as the story of Bhagavathi.

Suggestions:

- The thesis is an attempt to study the cultures on the river banks by taking the entire river course for analysis and interpretation. However, an in-depth study on each site/division on the banks of the river would certainly yield a comprehensive understanding of the cultures of the banks with variations and versions.

- In this thesis the concentration is more towards understanding worship and ritual performances of Bhagavathi on the banks of the Bharathappuzha as this phenomena is vibrant an overtly visible. However, by following the same methodology one can study other forms of life and lore from a folkloric perspective.

- The methodology adopted in the thesis is based on the linear (horizontal) model of enquiry to understand the cultural performances of Kerala in general and on the banks of Bharathappuzha in particular. The previous studies followed the vertical model and hypothesized that the cultural influences on performing traditions of Kerala have largely come from the North i.e. Tulu and Karnataka regions. However, the Bhagavathi ritual which is mostly pervading the entire Kerala soils is found, in this thesis, to have come from the Tamil Nadu and other parts of India. Infact, Kerala State is having a common frontier with the State of

Tamil Nadu to a greater extent than with the State of Karnataka. Therefore, the linear model of study would be more appropriate to understand the cultural history of Kerala.

➢ The thesis has not attempted much on the contemporary issues such as the decay of the river and its impact on folklore. This would be an exclusive study which requires much attention to formulate a theoretical paradigm.

Thus, this thesis is a humble endeavor to understand the river and culture from a folkloric perspective which hopefully would add to the epistemology of river as cultural construct.

APPENDICES

Appendices

Appendix- 1

Names and Meanings of Some Rivers around the World

River name	Etymology
Brahmaputra	Bengali/Asamese/Hindi 'son of Brahma
Chang Jiang	Chinese 'long river'
Euphrates river	Avestan 'good to cross over'
Chuang He	Chinese 'yellow river'
Tigris river	Sumerian 'running water'/Greek 'tiger'
Thames	Latin 'Tamesis' from Brythonic meaning 'Dark River'
Hudson:	Named for Henry Hudson, an Englishman sailing for the Netherlands, who explored it in 1609.
Mississippi	Ojibwe *misi-ziibi*, 'big river'.
Missouri	Named for the Missouri Indians, who lived along the banks. Their name comes from the Illinois *mihsoori*, meaning 'dugout canoe' meaning'.
Ottawa	Named for the Ottawa people, a community of the Algonquian nation, who lived along the river until 1685.

Appendix-2

Map of Rivers of India
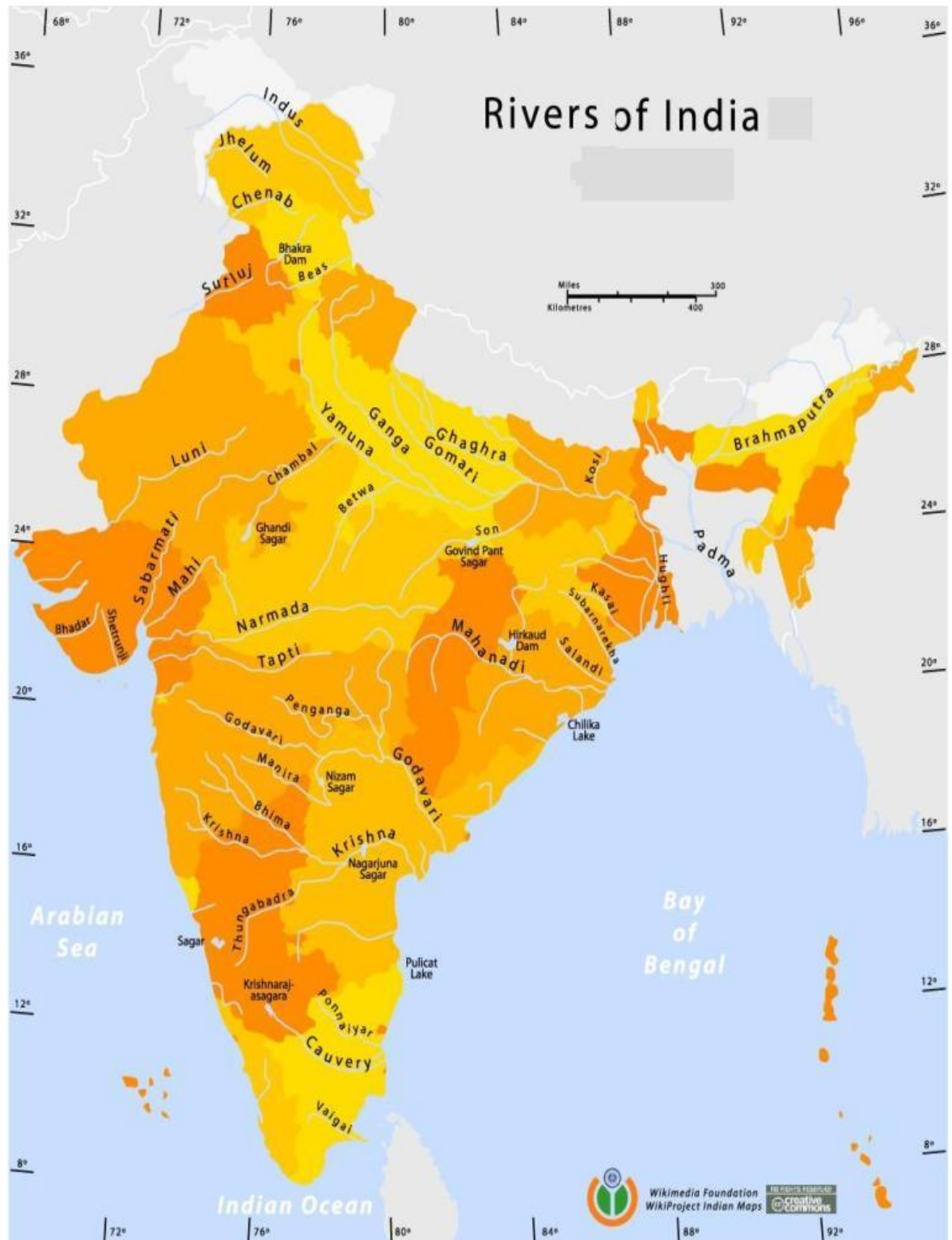
Appendix- 3

Major Rivers of India

SN	Name of the River	Origin	States Covered	Confluence	Major Tributaries	Length
1	Brahmaputhra	Kailas Range of Himalaya	Assam, West Bengal, Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Manipur, Tripura, Nagaland, Mizoram	Bay of Bengal	Subanshri, Kameng, Manas,Teesta, Torsa,Barak,Gornti,lohit,burhi,kameng,manas,sankosh,teesta	2880km
2	Ganga	Alaganand a in Himalaya	Utter Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal, Uttaranchal	Bay of Bengal	Ramganga,Yamuna,Sahibi,Chambal,Gomathi,Ghagra,Karamnasa,sone,pun pun kiul,Gandak	2,525km
3	Sindhu	Manasarovar in Tibat	Jammu Kashmir, Punjab, Himachal Pradesh, Haryana, Rajasthan	Arabian Sea	Jhelum, Chenab, Ravi, Beas, Sutlej,	2,880km
4	Narmada	Amarkandak in Madhya Pradesh	Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Bihar	Arabian sea(bay of Cambay)	Bamer, Banjer, Kiran, BarnaKundi, budanir, kolar,kundi, thava,chota thava	1,289km
5	Tapti	Betui near multai	Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Gujarat	Arabian Sea	Purna, Vadhurgima, Arunavati, Gornai	724km
6	Suvarna Rekha	Plateu Region of Ranchi	Jharkhand, West Bengal,	Bay of Bengal	Kandhi, Karkari,	395km
7	Mahanadi	Faresh village in chatisgarh	Orissa, Madhya Pradesh	Bay of Bengal	Shivanth, Katjuri, Birupa	851km
8	Godavari	Nasik District in Maharashtra	Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Orissa	Bay of Bengal	Darha, Kadwaparvara, Onula Purna, GAutami Godavari, Vasishta Godavari	1465km

9	Krishna	Mahabaleshwar hills in Western Ghats	Karnataka, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh	Bay of Bengal	Koyna, Meria, Ghatprabha, Bhima, Tungabadra	1400km
10	Cauvery	Brahmaghiri hills in Western Ghats	Karnataka, Tamil Nadu	Bay of Bengal	Harangi, hemavati, bhavani, vennar, kabana, shismsha, noyil, amaravati, kollidam	765km
11	Vaitarani	Mankamacha in Orissa	Orissa	Bay of Bengal	Salandi,mantai	335km
12	Brahmani	South koel in Jharkhand	Orissa, Jharkhand	Bay of Bengal	Karo,sankh	799km
13	Pennar	Chenna keshar hills I karnataka	Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh	Bay of Bengal	Kumundavalli,jaimangli,kunduru,papagni	597km
14	Yamuna	Yamunetri glacier in Himalaya	Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Delhi	Trivetni confluence in prayag	Karen,sangar,rind, Chambal, sindhu(not in Indus sindu), Betwa, Ken	1,376km
15	Chambal	Vindyachal hills in indore	Madhya Pradesh, Rajastan, Utter Pradesh,	Yamuna near sahan	Kali,sindh,kural, banar	960km
16	Tons	Kaimur hills in madhyapradesh	Uttarpradesh, Madhya Pradesh	Ganga	Belan	264km
17	Sone	Amarkantak plateu	Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh	Ganga	Johila,banas,gopath	487km
18	Kiul	Chotanagpur plateu	Manipur	Ganga near surajgarha	Horahar	111km
19	Gandak	Nepal-tibet border	Bihar, Uttar Pradesh	River ganga in patna	Mananyadi,bari trishuli	765km
20	Dwarika	Birbhum hills	West bengal	Bhagirati in west Bengal	mayurkshi	134km
21	Damodar	Palamu district in chotanagpur plateu	Bihar,Westbengal	Bay of Bengal	Barakar	592km
22	Luni	Pilwa village in Nagpur	Rajasthan	Disappears in ran of katch	Jawai	482km
23	Sabarmati	Aravali ranges in rajastan	Rajastan,Gujarath	Bay of cambay(Arabian sea)	Vakal,hathimathi	371km
24	Mahi	North	Madyapradesh,Raj	Bay of	Eru,	583km

		slopes of vindhya in Madhya Pradesh	astan,Gujarath	cambay	nori,chap,som jhakham,moran, anas,gomti,bhad ar	
25	Ulhas	Ulhas in Maharastra	Maharastra	Bay of Bengal	Matsai,kalu	122km
26	Kalinadi	Vidi village in Karnataka	Karnataka	Arabian sea	pandhari	153km
27	Cheliar	Iilambari hills in Kerala	Kozhikode,Malap uram district in kerala	Arabian sea	Cherupuzha,kur uvanpuzha,igrin gipuzha	169km
28	Bharatapuzha	Anamalai hills	Tamilnadu, Kerala	Arabian sea	Gayatripuzha,ka nnadipuzha,tuta puzha	251km
29	Tamirbarani	Periya pothigai hills in TamilNadu	Tamilnadu	Bay of Bengal (gulf of mannar)	Peyar,ullar,karai r,pambar,servala r,manimuthar,ga danariver	130km

Appendix-4

Etymology of the Indian Rivers

River Name	Root Word	Meaning
Brahmaputra	Brahma,putra,bhulam buthor, barambutut,baramputar,	'Brahma' means the god of creation and 'putra' means his son. River of bubbling water
Yamuna	Jamuna or jumna	Yama is the God of death and his sister Known as Yamuna.
Sindhu(Indus)	Sindh(urdu) Sindhu(Sanskrit)	The river flow on Sindh region of India And it commonly known as Sindhu. Sindhu means 'stream'.
Narmada	Narbada(Sanskrit), narma	It means comedy or tenderness
Godavari	God,go,da gautama	God means cows, go for cow and da for give or the best of the rivers giving cows. 'Cow giver' because the sage gautama Gautama is a sage in hindhu mythology.
krishna	Krsna(Sanskrit)	Krisna is a hindhu god
Kaveri (Cauvery)	Kavera	Kavera was a king of coorg region
Tapti	Multapi(Sanskrit)	Origin of tapi mata
sarasvati	Saram ,vaati, iti Saras-wn	Hindhu goddeses sarasvati.she flows towards the absolute is sarasvati She with many pools or in Sanskrit saras means pool, pond, saras means stagnant pool,swamp
Tamirabarani	Tamara,parani; tamiram ,varuni	Tamara means red and parani means parana (a tree which has leaves).so it means a tree with red leaves; in tamil, tamiram denotes copper andvaruni is stream.(the bed of the river is red soil and it gives copper appearance).
Sarayu	Sar	To flow. Sarayu means wir/wind that is streaming

Appendix- 5

Vedic and Current usages of River Names

Vedic Name	Current Usage
Kubha	Kophes
Vipasa	Beas
Devika	Deeeg
Venva	Varnasa/vena
Carmati	Chambal
Vetravati	Betwa
Ksipra	Sipra
Avarnti	Avarni
Sono	Sona
Mahanada	Mahanandi
Mandhakini	Mandhakin
Paisundi	Paisuni
Dasarna	Dhasan
Tamara	Tons
Kamanoda	Karamnasa
Pippalasroni	Paisuni,parsaroni
Sakuli	Sakri
Gogra	Sarayu
Vetravati	Betwa
Suktimati	Ken
Ravi	Parushni ,iravati
Tapati	Narmada
Sarasvati	Nanada
Poorna	Payosni
Venya,vena	Wain ganga
Vaitarani	Bytarni
Sini silavati	Selye
Kumudvati	Damudi
Kartoya/karaba	Cossye
Mahagauri	Brahmani
Bhimarati	Bhimarati,Bhima
Krsna	Kistna
Venya	Vena tungabadra
Tamirabarani	Chittar
Pitrsoma	Trisama
Choorni	Periyar
Vitasta	Zchalam
Narmada	Nerbudda
Viraja	Karona

Appendix-6

Puranic and Present name of Indian rivers

Puranic usage	Current usage
Tapi	Tapti
Payosni	Pain- ganga
Venya	Vanaganga
Vaitarni	Baitarni
Kumudvati	Suvarna rekha
Toya	Brahmani
Mahagauri	Damodar
Lauhitya	Brahmaputra
Krtamala	Vai-gai
Tamravarna	Oparni
Puspajati	Pambiar
Utpalavati	Periyar
Mandavahini	Mahanadi
Revanerbuda	Narmada
Nalini	Salween or the Mekong
Svarnarekha	Sonarekha
Jumna /kalindi	Yamuna
Vipasa	Beas
Bhadra	Yarkanda
Candrabhaga	Chenaba
Campa	Candan
Celaganga	Kaveri
Campavati	Chaul
Gomati	Gomal
Gandak	Gandaka
Ksema	Ksemavati
Alakananda/ Bhagirathi/ Jahnavi/ Bhimasu	Ganga
Iravati	Ravi
Bhadra	Yarkanda
Karona	Viraja

Appendix- 7

Kerala Political Map

Kerala Political Map

Appendix- 8

Rural and Urban Population on the Banks of Bharathappuzha river

Origin part

Taluk	1971	1981	1991	2001
Palakkad	369001	447958	517211	572928
Rural	266181	329972	337178	375559
Urban	102820	117986	180033	197369
% of rural	73.00	74.00	65.00	66.00
% of urban	27.00	26.00	35.00	34.00

Middle part

Taluk	1971	1981	1991	2001
Talapally		466248	537560	592091
Rural		446819	509932	535233
Urban		19429	27628	56858
% of rural		96.00	95.00	90.00
% of urban		4.00	5.00	10.00

Taluk	1971	1981	1991	2001
Thrissur		667996		829362
Rural		370023		404883
Urban		297973		424479
% of rural		55.00		49.00
% of urban		45.00		51.00

Taluk	1971	1981	1991	2001
Ottapalam	522027	625820	749149	840970
Rural	464755	567544	665413	749699
Urban	57272	58276	83736	91271
% of rural	89.00	91.00	89.00	89.00
% of urban	11.00	9.00	11.00	11.00

End part

Taluk	1971	1981	1991	2001
Tirur	653793	842983	715978	834817
Rural	621521	802180	666525	781163
Urban	32272	40803	49453	53654
% of rural	95.00	95.00	93.00	94.00
% of urban	5.00	5.00	7.00	6.00

Taluk	1971	1981	1991	2001
Ponnani	213972	262676	320888	349473
Rural	178249	219450	269118	261978

Urban	35723	43226	51770	87495
% of rural	83.00	84.00	84.00	75.00
% of urban	17.00	16.00	16.00	25.00

Appendix- 9

Workers on the Banks of Bharathapuzha river

Origin part

Middle Part

Workers Category-Talappaly	1981	%	2001	%
Total workers	**138952**		**199150**	

Workers Category-Palakkad	1981	%	2001	%
Total workers	**144983**		**216422**	
Cultivators	15686	11%	13325	6%
Agriculture Labours	55575	38%	56641	26%
House Hold Industry Workers	6164	4%	7544	4%
Other Workers	67558	47%	138912	64%
Cultivators	17336	13%	19301	9%
Agriculture Labours	55657	40%	60219	31%
House Hold Industry Workers	5755	4%	5671	3%
Other Workers	60204	43%	113959	57%

Workers Category-Thrissur	1981	%	2001	%
Total workers	**184771**		**278481**	
Cultivators	14577	(8%)	16805	(6%)
Agriculture Labours	41795	(23%)	47678	(17%)
House Hold Industry Workers	7474	(4%)	6768	(3%)
Other Workers	120925	(65%)	207230	(74%)

Workers Category-Ottapalam	1981	%	2001	%
Total workers	**166230**		**248408**	
Cultivators	24148	15%	20710	8%
Agriculture Labours	71650	43%	62165	25%
House Hold Industry Workers	6441	4%	8331	4%
Other Workers	63991	38%	157202	63%

End Part

Workers Category-Tirur	1981	%	2001	%
Total workers	**162424**		**180878**	
Cultivators	17611	11%	8895	5%
Agriculture Labours	51145	31%	18295	11%
House Hold Industry Workers	4372	3%	3166	2%
Other Workers	89296	55%	150522	82%

Workers Category-Ponnani	1981	%	2001	%
Total workers	**56188**		**88659**	
Cultivators	5033	9%	4701	5%

Agriculture Labours	17659	31%	10934	12%
House Hold Industry Workers	2188	4%	2807	3%
Other Workers	31308	56%	70217	80%

Appendix- 10

Malayalam months and Corresponding English Months

SN	Malayalam Months	English Months
1	Chingam	August – September
2	Kanni	September – October
3	Thulam	October – November
4	Vrishchikam	November – December
5	Dhanu	December – January
6	Makaram	January – February
7	Kumbham	February – March
8	Meenam	March – April
9	Medam	April – May
10	Edavam	May – June
11	Midhunam	June – July
12	Karkidakam	July – August

Appendix- 11

Questionnaire for Bhagavathi *Kavu/*Temple and Festivals

*Bhagavathykavu/*Temple

1. Name:

2. Address:

3. Village, panchayat, taluk, district:

4. Appearance of the kavu/temple:

5. Idol and appearance (image-pleasant/fear):

6. Sub idols:

7. Priest:

8. Trustees:

9. Administrators:

10. Any relation between goddesses and agriculture:

11. Festivals related to *kavu/*Temple:

12. Name, time and month (English/Malayalam):

13. Different activities in the festival:

14. Offerings made:

15. Does it still exist as *kavu*? Explain

16. Is there any relation with the kavu/temple goddess of other place?

17. Is there any relation with a particular-caste, *taravaadu* (house)?

18. Origin story of the kavu/temple:

19. Origin story of *Bhagavathy*:

20. Why local name emerge about the kavu/temple?

21. Worshipping pattern:

22. Belief:

23. Physical features of that area:

24. Is there any connection between *Bhagavathy* and festivals?

25. Participation of different communities in the festival-how?, why?

26. Why people conduct performing arts in this temple?

27. Why they worshiping *Bhagavathy*?

28. Why different community looks the goddesses in different way?

29. Local version about the origin of *Bhagavathy* in each temple:

Appendix- xii Questionnaire for temple festival

1. Name of the festival:

2. Date, month, year, day and time:

3. Duration of the festival:

4. What is the peculiarity of the festival time?

5. Performing Place (*kavu*/temple/other places):

6. In which folklore genre:

7. Caste of the performer:

8. Other names of this festival:

9. Origin period of this festival-according to the performer, other informants, researcher:

10. Is that a part of ritual?

11. Detail of the ritual:

12. Is there any Myth, legend, belief about the festival?

13. Participating community:

14. General form of the performance:

15. Lamping:

16. Nature of miniature form:

17. How many versions of performance?

18. Why that variation occurs or where that variation occurs? (in community participation or formal way)

19. What are the chief characteristic features of these festivals?

20. Is there any historical connection in those festivals?

21. Is there any festival conducting on the leadership of a particular community? if yes, how many?, detail

22. Why the people conduct and celebrate festivals in *Bhagavathy* temple?

23. Her image:

24. Is there any sacrifice? (*guruthi*?)

25. Is all community participating in the festival?

26. Why people conduct this festival?(why is it happening as)

27. What does it mean to those involved?

28. What is the purpose of conducting this festival?

Personal details of the respondent

1. Name of the informer:

2. Age:

3. Place:

4. Occupation:

5. Cast

6. relation with temple :

7. relation with festival :

List of the people need to meet in the field

1. temple administrators (committee, *taravadu*)

2. priest

3. Festival committee members

4. oracle

5. performing community

6. performers

7. Devote (male/female/senior citizens)

8. Peasants

9. Local TV channels

PHOTOGRAHS

Ritual Performances on the Banks of Bharathappuzha – Origin Part

Paavakoothu

Parayeduppu

Kodiyettam

Paana

Kanyarkali

Kalpana

Ritual Performances on the Banks of Bharathappuzha – Middle Part

Thira

Pootham

Kalamezhuthu

Kalavela

pooram Ezhunalippu

Ritual Performances on the Banks of Bharathappuzha – End Part

Thalamvaravu

Guruthi

Bharathappuzha

Origin Part

Middle Part

End Part

Kavu

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(A) Informants

Name	Age	Village/Place	Period of Data Collection
Achuthan kutty (M)	67	Kallekulangara	February 2010; May 2011
Damodaran (M)	80	Thavanoor	May 2011
Nandhan (M)	41	Kuttipuram	May 2011
Venu (M)	38	Alathiyoor	June 2011
Satheesh Kumar (M)	39	Thirur	June 2011
Shashi (M)	30	Kodikunnu	June 2009
Vijayaraja Menon (M)	58	Vaileerikavu	February 2010; May 2011
Bhaskara Kuruppu (M)	59	Irimbiliyam	June 2009
Chandrashekar (M)	62	Viruttanam	July 2009
Bharathi Varasyar (F)	62	Poyilathu	July 2009
SVS Variyar (M)	73	Vavanoor	July 2009
Jithin (M)	22	Kottayam	June 2009
Rajan (M)	53	Thirukunnapalli	Feb 2010
Shankaran (M)	68	Puthusseri	Feb 2010
Ramesh Nambuthiri (M)	61	Allappey	Feb. 2010
Suresh Nambuthiri (M)	40	Chemarathoor	July 2009
Soman (M)	51	Kallekulangara	Feb. 2010
Suresh (M)	49	Chunnambuthara	Feb. 2010
V.Pangajakshan (M)	60	Puthur	Feb. 2010
Ramachandran (M)	60	Malambuzha	Feb. 2010
Dhandapanini (M)	67	Kulangara	Feb. 2010
Murali (M)	42	Kulangara	Feb. 2010
Gopalakrishnan (M)	63	Vallikodu	Feb. 2010
Balan (M)	67	Chinakathoor	June 2009
Ramachandran (M)	56	Manappulli	March 2010
Rameshan (M)	45	Rayamangalam	June 2009
Shivaraman (M)	58	Peringot	July 2009
Krishnan (M)	74	Aamakavu	June 2009
Pradeep (M)	25	Kootanadu	July 2009
Narayani Amma (F)	66	Kootanadu	July 2009
Venugopal (M)	54	Kodikunnu	July 2009
Murali (M)	47	Perumudiyoor	July 2009
Unnikrishnan (M)	41	Kodumunda	July 2009
Anil Kumar (M)	26	Kozhikottiri	July 2009
Sujith (M)	16	Mulayankavu	June 2009
Sharavanan (M)	30	Ullanoor	July 2009
Sheeba (F)	27	Ullanoor	July 2009
Venu (M)	55	Palakkal	July 2009
Suresh (M)	65	Varavoor	July 2009
Suresh (M)	38	Varavoor	July 2009
Dasan (M)	21	Deshamangalam	July 2009

Raju (M)	21	Aarangottukara	July 2009
Manikandan (M)	45	Kuttipuram	June 2011
Sulochana (F)	36	Thichur	June 2009
Mohanan (M)	41	Erumapetty	June 2009
Ittyali (M)	33	Arangotukara	June 2009
Koratiyam Kunnu (M)	52	Kanjirakode	June 2009
Parukutty (M)	61	Kanjirakode	June 2009
Kunjumon (M)	38	Kanjirakode	June 2009
Shrini (M)	38	Kanjirakode	June 2009
Kocha (M)	56	Kanjirakode	June 2009
Sudheesh (M)	31	Pariyanampetta	June 2009
Bharathi (F)	53	Nellikattiri	July 2009
Chandran (M)	60	Nellikattiri	August 2009
Sudheesh (M)	16	Mulayankavu	August 2009
Kutty Shankaran (M)	58	Varavoor	August 2009
Devaki (F)	54	Varavoor	August 2009
Shivashankaran (M)	45	Palakkal	August 2009
Govindan (M)	53	AArangotukara	August 2009
Susheela (F)	54	Vavanoor	August 2009
Anil Kumar (M)	35	Vaavanoor	August 2009
Janaradhanan (M)	60	Chandanakavu	May 2011
Rajamani (M)	45	Palakkad	March 2010
Karappan (M)	67	Kottathara	March 2010
Kunjikuttan Choppan (M)	69	Kuttippuram	May 2011
Vijayan Kurumban (M)	53	Chandhanakavu	May 2011
Subrahmaniyan (M)	55	Vellarakkad	March 2010
Velayudhan (M)	65	Varavoor	March 2010
Unni (M)	42	Varavoo	March 2010
Dillep (M)	24	Varavoor	March 2010
Paarutty (F)	53	Varavoor	March 2010
Appu Thonukara (M)	60	Thonukara	March 2010
Shankaran (M)	45	Erumapetty	March 2010
Chandran (M)	49	Erumapetty	April 2010
Madhavan (M)	20	Mulayankavu	April 2010
Shankaran (M)	55	Maruningal	April 2010
Kunjan (M)	75	Painkulam	April 2010
Rajan (M)	38	Varavoor	April 2010
Kamala (F)	57	Bhadramkulam	April 2010
Gopalan (M)	51	Ezhumangad	April 2010
Rajan (M)	46	Pallam	April 2010
Ammini (F)	48	Ezhumangad	April 2010
Krishnankutty (M)	53	Ezhumangad	April 2010
Narayanan Embranthiri (M)	48	Rayamangalam	July 2009
Chandrasekhar (M)	40	Virutanam	June 2009.
Dinesh Kumar (M)	47	Athaniparambu	April 2010
Subheesh (M)	31	Kodungaloor	May 2011
Krishnankutty (M)	70	Ponnani	May 2011

Sunilkumar (M)	24	Ponnani	May 2011
Shivanandhan (M)	53	Thrikkavu	May 2011
Ramchandran (M)	75	Ponnani	May 2011
Kadungan Krishnan (M)	51	Purathoor	May 2011
Balan (M)	59	Pulooni	June 2011
Raman (Apootan) (M)	73	Pathamkulathi	June 2011
Balan (M)	71	Thavanoor	June 2011
Pradeepan (M)	35	Thavanoor	June 2011
Velayudhan (M)	66	Ponnani	May 2011
Padmanabhan (M)	58	Ponnani	June 2011
Mohanan (M)	41	Pallivalappu	June 2011

(B) Performances and Events

Name	Village/Place	Period of Data Collection
Thonikadavu Pooram	Rayamangalam	Feb 2010
Ponnuniyar Pooram	Cherippooru	Feb 2010
Aamakavu Pooram i	Kootanadu	Feb. 2010
Koyam Pooram	Kootanadu	July 2009
Paruthoor Bhagavathi	Paruthoor	Feb. 2010
Muthashiyaar Pooram	Perumudiyoor	Feb. 2010
Mulayankavu Pooram	Ottapalam	Feb. 2010
Virutaanam Pooram	Arangotukara	Feb. 2010
Palakkal Pooram	Varavoor	Feb. 2010
Mullakkal Pooram	Arangotukara	Feb. 2010
Kudapparra Pooram	Deshamangalam	Feb. 2010
Vazhalikavu Pooram	Paikulam	June 2009
Chandhana Bhagavathi	Palakkad	July 2009
Chathankulangara Bhagavathi	Palakkad	July 2009
Malampuzha Hemambika	Malampuzha	July 2009
Hemambika Kaipathi	Athaniparambu	June 2009
Kottam Kulathi vela	Shekharipuram	June 2010
Kaarakaattu parambu vela	Shekharipuram	June 2010
Puthoor Thirupuraikal vela	Puthoor	June 2010
Ezhakadu thirukunnapally	Ezhakadu	June 2010

vela		
Mundoor Palakeez vela	Mundoor	May 2010
Vallikodu Valayapulli vela	Vallikodu	June 2010
Manappullikavu vela	Yakkara	June 2010
Kandakurumba Thalapoli	Chamravattam	May 2011
Bhadram Kulangara Thalapoli	Eshwaramangalam	May 2011

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RIVER AS A CULTURAL CONSTRUCT: MYTH AND RITUAL ON THE BANKS OF BHARATHAPPUZHA

A Synopsis of the Thesis Submitted

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In

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RIVER AS A CULTURAL CONSTRUCT: MYTH AND RITUAL ON THE BANKS OF BHARATHAPPUZHA

A Synopsis of Ph.D Thesis

Kerala state is situated on the South Western part of the Indian peninsula. The land is rich in the availability of water and there are forty four rivers flowing throughout the state, out of which forty one are flowing towards west and the rest towards the east. Several places of politico-historical and cultural importance are located on the banks of these rivers. Such rich heritage reveals how the rivers of Kerala influenced different realms of the lives of the people. The water streams in Kerala are known as '*puzha*'. The Malayalam word *puzha* means a small river/stream of water or water flows. Generally in India, the large natural stream of water known as *nadi*. The word *nadi* is derived from Sanskrit root word '*nad*' meaning channel, stream or flow. In the case of Kerala, almost all water streams are small comparing to other parts of India and the people name it as *puzha* (small water stream).

The Bharathappuzha is the biggest of all rivers in Kerala. It is also known as '*nila*'(means 'long') and '*peraru*' (big river). The river originates from the '*trimurthi sangam*' of Anamalai hills in Western Ghats and flows through the three district of Kerala (Palakkad, Thrishur and Malappuram). The river is located in the central part of the state and divides it into Northern and Southern area. Finally, the river joins with the Arabian Sea at Ponnani. The three districts have many villages on the river banks which are inhabited by different cultural communities. All the communities have their own worldview and perceptions of the river. Thus the river is considered not only as a material object, but also, as a symbol of their entire life of the people living in and around it.

Significance of the Study

The study on Bharathappuzha is significant for two reasons: Firstly, The River Bharathappuzha divides the state into Northern and Southern regions and flows through the central part of the state. Incidentally, this part of Kerala is known as Cultural Capital. Like any other river in India, Bharathappuzha has its own role in

molding knowledge, beliefs, customs, practices, material and culture of various communities which reside on its banks. The river has four major tributaries. They are *thoothappuzha, gayathrippuzha*, *kalpathippuzha* and *kannadippuzha*. All the folklore on the river banks are transmitted from one generation to another verbally and non-verbally. There are many shrines and worshiping places especially dedicated to Bhagavathi on the banks which eventually become the basis for the existence of different folklore forms. The first six months in a year is the time of festivals such as *vela* in the origin part of the river, *pooram* in middle banks and *thalapoli* on the end part of Bharathappuzha in the *kavu* (village shrine). A rich tradition is embedded in the folklore forms performed by the people belonging to different communities. Therefore it constitutes a vital source material for the folkloric study which points out how they construct, represent and view their own selves in relation to the river. Hence, folklore is the expression of the folk that speaks about their own understanding of their lifestyle patterns. It means they view the world around them in a particular way. It can be called as the 'worldview' of their community. Worldview is the fundamental cognitive orientation of an individual or society encompassing the entirety of the individual or society's knowledge and perspective including natural philosophy; fundamental, existential, and normative postulates; or themes, values, emotions, and ethics[1]. Different communities understand and interpret the river as per their worldview and call it by different names. It is a part of the cultural identity.

Secondly, Bharathappuzha is dying due to various natural and human interventions. The decreases of rain, sand mining, deforestation have been accelerating the death. The river is the sources of water to the villagers and agricultural activities on the banks. The life and lore of the people living on the banks depend on Bharathappuzha itself. Naturally, the changes which occurred in the flow and course of river may affect the life and culture of the people. Bharathappuzha is a centre of discussion both in the academic and the non-academic spheres of Kerala. The decay of river will affect the folk culture of different communities on the banks. With the onslaught of changes that have occurred in the geography on the river banks and due to modernisation and commercialisation, there

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[1] Gary B. Palmer, *Toward A Theory of Cultural Linguistics*, Texas: University of Texas Press, 1996, Pp. 114.

is a transformation even in the consciousness of various communities living there. Thus, the river is regarded as a commodity since the ritual festivals performed on the banks have been changing in the course of time and space.

Nature and Scope of the Study

The Nature of present study is based on folkloric approach which focuses on the construction of various notions about an individual river and how they are expressed in the folklore of different communities in different ways. In India, rivers are centrifugal, centripetal and centrifocal forces that draw several communities to perform several rituals, sacred and secular not only on the banks but also in the places in and around their course. However, it is interesting to note that there are many Bhagavathi shrines that are situated on the banks of Bharathappuzha from its origin to end part and the folk communities conceive Bharathappuzha in their day to day life through the concept and ritual practices associated with the mother goddess, Bhagavathi. Each community looks at the river in relation to congregational annual festivals that are conducted on the banks of Bharathappuzha. In the process, each community articulate itself as being a part of the larger community and express overtly through the actions, objects, performance, ideologies etc., their own identity as well live in solidarity with the other communities.

Thus far not many studies have focussed on the 'lore' on the banks of the rivers connecting the physical landscape with cultural landscape and therefore, the scope of the present study can be extended to other such studies on rivers as cultural construct.

Area of the Study

To pursue the study in a meaningful way, after conducting several preliminary surveys, the area of study is fixed after considering convenience and feasibility. Bharathappuzha flows through three districts namely Palakkad, Thrishur and Malappuram. The river originates from the Western Ghats and enters Palakkad district. Then flows through Thrishur district and finally culminates into the Arabian Sea. The banks of Bharathappuzha are taken as the larger area of study. Within the banks of the river, the geographical area is categorised into three broad regions: one is the Palakkad area (origin part) and the second one is Thrishur part (middle part); and the third is found in Malappuram district (end part).

Review of Literature

The present study will comprise various literatures that discuss the concept of river in general and this will give a comprehensive idea to the research questions. In order to have a good understanding on the concept of river, the literature survey is done by looking at some of the works and then organised the literature survey in the following manner:

  i.   Literature related to theoretical and conceptual frame.
  ii. Literature pertaining to river as natural landscape.
  iii. Literature pertaining to river as cultural landscape
  iv. Literature related to cultural life of the folk of Kerala especially, on the banks of the river Bharathappuzha.

The first type of literature gives an understanding on the issues related to 'nature/culture' dichotomy and how humans have negotiated with it through the ages by incorporating it with the sacral behaviour and religious ideology. The second type furnishes studies on rivers and their natural landscapes which constitute physical features of river courses and the human intervention against the river and how it affects the natural course of the river. The third type of literature provides a critical insight into the concept of sacred and secular notions of different cultures and how humans constructed their worldview on water which is a basic element of sustenance. The fourth type of literature is to construct a folkloric approach to understand rivers and their lore.

The literature survey gives different conceptual understanding about human, nature and culture. This literature survey helped in developing an outline of the river and cultural life associated with it in India. The outline looks at various concepts related to Indian rivers and the fairs and festivals on the river banks in India.

Lacunae in the existing literature:

The literature survey revealed certain gaps in the studies on rivers in general and the life on the banks in particular. Firstly, all the studies mentioned above viewed various aspects of cultural life associated with rivers, origin myths, and sacral behaviour associated with the rivers. No individual river is taken for a comprehensive study. As a result, cultural life associated with a (individual) river is absent in all the studies. In this thesis an attempt is being made to fill this gap by

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studying a river known as Bharathappuzha and cultural life constructed around it. Secondly, Bharathappuzha has not been subjected to any serious academic enquiry. The limited works produced on this river were either confined to the literal aspects of river or have been less explanatory about the cultural specificities of the community or locality. Thirdly, inadequate scholarly attention paid to the dynamic nature of folklore among the various communities on the river banks is felt to be an omission in these academic inquiries. Folkloric approach which brings out the perceptions and the worldview of the folk, by the folk and for the folk is thus far not attempted by the studies mentioned above in the literature survey.

Hypothesis

After careful analysis of the data and the secondary sources from the preliminary survey it can be hypothesised that the cultural history of Kerala is knitted around the ritual performances of mother goddess, Bhagavathi. The prominent ritual performances are *theyyam* in the northern part, *mudiyettu* and *padyani* in the southern part and *thira* in the Central part of Kerala. The banks of Bharathappuzha seem to be epicentre (core region) for the ritual of Bhagavathi in Kerala and manifested as different cultural performances imbibing local versions and variations in other parts of the State. The process of dispersal can be found by studying the banks of Bharathappuzha form its origin in Palakkad ghats to the end of the river in Ponnani region where it joins the Arabian Sea. The myth of Bhagavathi in the form of narratives and the enactment of the myth in form of cultural performances coexist and densely concentric on the banks and hence, this hypothesis is arrived at. Perhaps due to this phenomenal prevalence of Bhagavathi worship the Central Kerala especially, the banks of Bharathappuzha acquired the status of 'Cultural Capital'.

Aims and Objectives of the Study:

1. To study the river as a cultural construct of the, by the and for the communities living on the river banks.
2. To study the socio-economic formations on the banks of Bharathappuzha river from a historical perspective.
3. To study the role of river on the life and lore of the people and to probe into the mutual relationship between the people and the river.

4. To study various folklore on the river bank and to understand the worship of Bhagavathi on the banks of the river from a folkloric perspective.

5. To study the changing concept of Bharathappuzha river and the cultural life of the communities in the new socio-economic, cultural and political milieu.

In short, the study will cover various representations of the river through the life of the people, who live on the banks. It also concentrates on the issue of why the communities look at the river in different ways and how they use the river as a part of their life cycle ceremonies. From birth to death, the river takes a vital role in their life. A close study about the river system and its people's life give a new insight into the representation of river in different forms. Moreover, the study tries to explore the changing pattern of nature in relation to the changing condition of human life in the present context.

Methodology:

As the thesis aims at studying the myth and ritual of Bhagavathi on the banks of Bharathappuzha, a systematic approach has to be developed and hence, in this thesis an intensive ethnography and social reflective research methodology is deployed. Research methods may be understood as all those methods or techniques that are used for conducting a research. It is a scientific enquiry and a systematic process which is adopted to follow. To distinguish from other academic disciplines, in folklore studies, the folk is understood as a group that talk about themselves through their lore. It means that, rather than imposing a theory or philosophical assumption, the folk have to be studied through their lore. In this research, discourse methodology technique is used for the data collection to bring out the folk perspectives.

Basically three methods are employed in the collection, analysis and interpretation of the data. Since the theme is on the river lore, it is imperative to understand the process of construction of the lore and its significant role in the life engagements of the communities living on the banks. For this reason, **observation method** is primarily employed. This warrants for watching the performances of the folk communities in their performance context living on the banks to understand their practices and the belief system. After observing, another method is employed

which may be called as **ethnographic method** to understand the communities' images and their conceptual understanding of the river. To achieve this goal using **discourse method**, unstructured interviews are conducted with the communities with regard to their ritual performances in general and the verbal performances in specific. This method further leads to the analysis of myths, which forms the basis of their images on gods and goddesses. This constitutes most in translating the images of those in the performance. Their attitude towards river and its ritual symbolism is also collected through discussions with the members of the community.

   Tripartite method: As such, the flowing path of the river is divided into three parts: the upper, middle, and the lower parts. In the upper part, it flows through the hilly tract of the Western Ghats and falls into Aliyar dam, constructed at 300 metres above Mean Sea Level in Tamil Nadu. In the middle part, it is travelling with average gradient from the dam to the Moolathara regulatory in Kerala-Tamil Nadu border. From the regulator, it flows in to Kerala with a variable gradient and falls in the Arabian Sea at Ponnani. For the sake of study in this thesis the river Bharathappuzha is observed following the course of the river and it is divided into three parts which is called as the tripartite method; (i) origin part of the river, (ii) middle part of the river and (iii) ending part of the river- based on the flow of the river to understand the relationship between the communities and the river. It is found from the preliminary survey and reading of the secondary sources, the methodology adopted in the earlier studies is a vertical type wherein the ritual performances are studied from North Kerala (South Canara) to South Kerala (Trivandrum) and it is hypothesised that the ritual performances originated in the north with the influences from Tulu land (*bhootha* worship) and percolated to south in the form of *theyyam, thira, mudiyettu* and *padayani*. However, in this thesis the study of the ritual performances on the banks of Bharathappuzha postulate that the ritual performances originated in the middle part having Bharathappuzha banks as axis and dispersed to other regions of Kerala. This alternate model has developed by changing the very methodology from vertical to linear (or horizontal) and studying the ritual performances by juxtaposing them in order to find out the co-existence of myth and ritual on one hand, and on the other, its relationship with communities. Through this method it is found that the middle parts of the river banks have myth and performances in a co-existing manner and thus reinforces the ritual of

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Bhagavathi. From the middle part which is considered as epicentre due to its intensity and density of the prevalence of the myth and ritual of Bhagavathi one can find the version and variations of the same in the beginning and end part.

Sources of Study:

The data is collected from the **primary** and the **secondary** sources.

Primary sources

A thick corpus of data is being collected during the fieldwork since field is the primary site of source for the study. The life and lore of the people and communities in and around the river banks along its course in different regions from its birth till it reaches the sea get expressed in their verbal and non-verbal expressive genres. The audio-visually recorded genres-myths, legends, tales, ballads, songs, proverbs, riddles, tales, personal narratives of the people from different culture groups, ritual observances, practices, performances, yelling, folk speech etc., - are best primary resources of the study because the text, texture and context of the utterances and performances reflects the dynamics of the worldview and culture of the communities associated with the river through the ages. The material culture associated with folk life and worship patterns with regard to river constituted the primary source material.

The secondary sources

The secondary sources constitute all published and unpublished written data viz: manuscripts, Journals, Gazetteers, District Manuals, Census Reports, and Scholarly articles and books. The literature survey in the above pages delineated the status of knowledge and represent secondary source on the issue under study. Some other secondary sources used in research are given below:

- *Literatures related to Bharathappuzha*- There are many fictions dealing with the natural beauty of this river and the life surrounding on this river. The literary fictions and poetry of the prominent Malayalam writers like V.K.N, Radhakrshnan, Idashery, Aattoor, P.Kunjiraman Nayar, M.T Vasudevan Nayar are some of them.

- *Cinemas that were scripted /shot on the river banks*- The nostalgic memory of Kerala people are clearly mentioned through the films that are created on the river banks. Most of the film narrates the life of the communities on the river banks. It means that, they considered the banks as the cultural region of

Kerala people. The films *Aaraam Thampuraan*, *Narasimham*, *Naghashathangal*, *Naalukettu*, *Naatturajavu*, *Devasuram*, *Vadakkum Nadhan* etc., are few among them.

- *Website related to Bharathappuzha-* There is some websites that disseminate the life and lore on the banks of Bharathappuzha such as www.nilarivers.com, www.theblueyonder.com, www.nilafounadation.org are some of them.

- In addition to it, Kerala Institute of Local Administration (KILA, Trivandrum) conducts various seminars and workshops to spread awareness among the Keralities about the death of Bharathappuzha due to the unnatural activities happening on the river banks like sand mining and the increase in concrete buildings on the river banks. Likewise the NGO's such as Nilavu, Vayali Folklore Group and The Bharathappuzha Protection Committee has also worked for the conservation of the different cultures on the river banks through travelling on the banks, documentation of community life and making awareness among the public through different media.

Brief Chapterisation:

The thesis is divided into **Seven** Chapters.

Chapter I: Introduction deals with a general introduction to river and lore in India. Apart from the basic concepts, significance of the study, nature and scope of the study, area of the study, review of literature, gaps found in the existing literature, hypothesis, aims and objectives of the study, methodology, sources of study and chapterisation are also enumerated in this Chapter.

Chapter II: River and Cultural Life - A Conceptual Frame is divided into two sections; the first section discusses the general notion of river in different parts of the world and India in particular. The expressive behaviour associated with water and river has also been subjected to discussion. The second section, discusses the origin myth of Indian rivers and how river is represented in these myths. There are two qualities of water that accentuate its central place in cultures and faiths. Firstly, water is a primary element of life. Without water there is no life; yet water has the power to destroy as well as to create. In all most all creation myths one can find that life is created out of water. Secondly, water is depicted as purifying object in rituals. It means that water washes away impurities and pollutants and makes an object look as good as new. The communities on river banks attribute these two meanings to river through various cultural expressions both verbal and non-verbal.

Through analysis of myths connected with river one can understand the role of river in people's culture.

Chapter III: Natural and Cultural Landscape of Bharathappuzha introduces the general notion of river in India and explains the geographical and topographical features of the banks of Bharathappuzha. At one level, this chapter discusses the natural settings on the river banks and at another level, it attempts to illustrate how the above natural settings create a cultural landscape on the banks of Bharathappuzha. In the cultural landscape human intervention with nature is done to through the mediation of folklore such as myth, epic, legend, proverbs, songs etc., and transform the natural products into cultural products. On one hand it has enhanced the usage of water resources and on the other, abused the same affecting the natural landscape. As a result the river Bharathappuzha is at the verge of decline. Nevertheless, the communities engaged in various forms using the water attributing sacrality especially with the construction activities of shrines and temples and thereby conducting rituals and ceremonies on timely intervals.

Chapter IV: Folk Communities on the Banks of Bharathappuzha examines different folk communities living on the banks and how they engaged with the river in their day-to-day life. On the whole, the migrations into the land of Kerala contributed to the development of history of the region. An overview of the time frame of the migrations of different religious and racial groups shows that all races and communal groups inhabited this region. The history of Kerala is the history of migrations which led to composite and complex social formation. However, the settlement pattern reveals that the tribals and indigenous communities which are the inhabitants of the banks and hilly terrains of Bharathappuzha replaced or subdued by the process of 'Aryanisation' wherein the '*jatis*' (occupational ranking i.e. castes) of upper '*varna*' (ritual ranking) encouraged to immigrate into the Kerala soils and expand the settled agrarian economy. The 'Parasurama myth' and the 'Vararuchi myth' as explained in the chapter attest to this fact. The Bharathappuzha banks are much used for acculturation of native communities into the 'Hindu fold' by attributing mythical origin and relationship between the 'Aryan *Varna* system and the native *jati* matrix'. As a result the social hierarchy emerged on one hand, negating the 'Aryan *varna* system' and on the other, incorporating it with the native hierarchical system.

Chapter V: Bhagavathi: Myth and Worship discusses the myth and worship of Bhagavathi. The myth of Kali seems to have migrated from the Northern and Southern parts of India into the land of Kerala and formed as Bhadrakali myth/Dharikavadham and worshipped as Bhagavathi in sacred groves. In the process of incorporation of the myth several ethnic categories in the form of legends are deployed in 'oico-typification' of the entire worship Bhagavathi. The native cultural landscape has even affected the 'mythification' process of Bhadrakali. As a result, it is not only the incorporation of narratives but also the communities were brought under one umbrella through the worship of Bhagavathi. Ritual spaces are created to engage each and every community in the worship of Bhagavathi.

Chapter VI: Ritual Performances on the Banks - Towards Identity Formation elaborates the ritual practices on the banks of Bharathappuzha. It also examines the *vela*, *pooram* and *thalapoli* from the origin, middle and ending part of the banks respectively as case studies and looks how each community identifies themselves from the other communities in connection with the sacred space and ritual practices. The ritual performances of Bhagavathi on the banks of Bharathappuzha reveal that there is a pattern that emerges in the worship of Bhagavathi. Following the course of the Bharathappuza if one study the performances of Bhagavathi in the *kavus* in a linear/horizontal manner, a complete story of Bhadrakali emerge having the beginning and progressing then culminating with an end thus making it as a comprehensive story. Only when the performances of the three parts of Bharathappuzha are studied together, the story as narrated in the myth of Bhadrakali can be understood in a meaningful sequence. In the beginning part as stated already, the concept of Bhadrakali is in the formative stage and variedly depicted in the myths of *kannyarkali* and *pavakoothu*. Neither of them is directly connected with Bhadrakali. In the middle part the myth of Bhadrakali is proportionately connected with the enactment. In the ritual performances of the middle part, visual enactment in the form of floral drawings and in the performative enactment as play is crystallized and even supported by the narrative in the form of *thottam*. Both narrative (myth) and enactment (ritual) reinforced the concept of Bhadrakali as a goddess. In the end part, the ritual *thalapoli* is performed to seek the blessings of the deity. Thus the story of Bhadrakali is represented in its totality as the story of Bhagavathi.

Chapter VII-Conclusion gives a brief summary of all the chapters along with findings and suggestions. The major finding is that the Bharathappuzha played a central role in the culture of Kerala especially, the rituals and enactments connected with Bhagavathi. Kerala is known for art and culture associated with performing traditions and even some of them are used as national identity. The performing arts such as *theyyam, thira, mudiyettu* and *padayani* having colourful costume and make up influenced the classical genres such as *kathakali, krishnattam, koodiyattam* etc., the basis for such eruption of performing art tradition in Kerala, as found in the thesis, can be attributed to the epicentre which is on the banks of Bharathappuzha.

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