CHAPTER V

MUSIC OF RITUALS
PERFORMED IN THE
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Any ritual has a psycho-religious, social and aesthetic component. The main function of a ritual practice is to establish a bond between human and divine. In Kerala rituals are given a conducted for various reasons. They act as an aid to perceive the divine power or Sakti. People appease divinities like Goddess Bhadrakali through these rituals and seek her blessings. Likewise serpent or Naga gods and goddesses are approached for a good harvest or child fertility. Rituals are constantly done in a house in order to enhance solidarity of the family.

Nagaradhana or serpent worship is very prominent in Kerala which we don't find in any other states. Each and every temple and house or taravadu has a shrine or Sarpa Kavu attached to them. The nature of serpent worship, rituals associated with it and music accompanied for these rituals like Sarpan Thullal and Sarpam Paattu features in this chapter.

Another deity that dealt within this chapter is Lord Ayyappa or Shastavu. Shastha cult is very prominent in Kerala and is abundant with numerous temples or Ayyappan Kavus. Sabarimala is a famous Ayyappa temple where devotees visit the place during the Mandalamasam that is from middle of November till the last week of December. A ritual called Ayyappan Vilakku is held during this season. This is a unique ritual conducted in Valluvanadu in South Malabar. Ayyappan Vilakku ritual is opened to all irrespective of caste and creed.
Kerala is blessed with 108 Kavus or temples of Ayyappa. Most prominent Kavus which is situated towards the northern part of Kerala are Thiruvullakavu and Mulankunnathu Kavu in Thrissur district, Chamravattam in Malappuram district, Ayyappan Kavu of Bilathikkulam in Calicut district, kolappurathu Kavu, Nirakathakotta of Kadalundi, Trikaikunnakavu of Vadakara, Cheruthazham of Kannur district and Kizhurkavu of Payyannur. An important ritual conducted in all these Kavus is the Theeyattu Paattu. This ritual is conducted in the same manner like the Bhagavathy Paattu and Vettekkaran Paattu by drawing the Kalam of Ayyappa to the accompaniment of songs and drumming. A wide description of Theeyattu Paattu ceremony is given in this chapter.

Another deity worshipped in Kerala is Lord Subrahmaniah. But when compared to the state of Tamilnadu, the importance given to the deity is less by the people of Kerala. Yet Subrahmania is very much revered by Keralites especially in the northern area. Shashti day is believed to be auspicious and devotees observe fasting and conduct Poojas to attain a good life. The study is restricted to Subrahmania temple of Payyannur as rituals are lesser compared to those of other deities.
Origin and evolution of Nagaradhana

Nagaradhana has been existed in Kerala since ancient times. The nagaradhana is conducted generally by the community called pulluvars in Kerala. It is said that in ancient days Tamil provinces were divided into Kurunji, Mullai, Marutha, Neithal and Palai. This geographical classification was called ayinthina. According to the great Malayalam poet Ulloor S.Parameswara Iyer, the people who lived in the Palai region were called Pulluvar there after. So we can infer that Pulluvars were originally Tamil Dravidians. Pulluvars were actually meant for curing the ailment of women those who are pregnant. They also cured small children who were affected by the disease called Pulluerru, Pullu means an ominous bird and Erru means ailment. Thus they got the name pulluvar.

Pulluvars are also called as Pullor or Pullvar and the ladies are called Pulluvathy also called as Pullothy. In Pulluvar community, there are two sections, Nagampadi and Prethampadi. Nagampaadis are the serpent worshippers. Prethampaadis are the Pulluva sect of Northern Malabar. Pretham literally means corpse or soul. We get a picture about the history of Pulluvars from the song called Karmasasthram Paattu sung by them. Most of the Pulluvan Paattu is of ritualistic
There are also songs related to agriculture. They also sing songs based on Puranas and legends.

In Kerala the Pulluva community is assigned to conduct serpent worship by drawing artistic picture of the holy serpants. The ritual is also known as Pampin Kalam. Divine serpants are invoked and Pooja will be offered. To conduct a Sarpam Paattu ritual Pulluvars take fasting for 41 days and they conduct the ritual with true spirit and devotion. In the Brahmanical temples of Northern Kerala the Sarpam Paattu is usually conducted by the community called ‘Theyyam Paadikal’. A ritual called Kurunthini Paattu is performed in the areas of Northern Malabar by drawing the picture of serpent. This ritual is conducted by the Vannan community. The songs sung in this ritual also are the praises of serpants in order to propitiate them. This is more or less similar to the Sarpam Paattu conducted by the Pulluvars.

In Theyyam also serpants are praised in a special performance called Nagatheyyam. For that they will be dressed like serpants and dances too. In almost all the prominent shrines of Northern Malabar, Nagatheyyam is staged.

In the Poorakkali also traces of serpent worship is seen. Poorakkali consists of an item called Pambattam which is highly attractive. Poorakkali is usually performed by the folk communities called Maniyamani, Theeyan, Chaliyan, Asari and Moyon.
General procedure of Sarpam paattu ritual

In almost all the ancestral houses of Kerala there will be special space to invoke the divine Serpents called Sarpakkavu. The stone carvings of serpent will be installed in those shrines. Usually the women of the house lights the oil lamp daily during the hours of dusk. Even in the temples we can find a separate platform for Serpents.

During the Karkataka month that is in the month of July and August the Pulluvars usually goes from house to house from singing the praises of serpents. For the Pampin Kalam a suitable place is selected in the house courtyard and a Pantal will be erected. First thing to be done is the purification of the floor where the pooja is going to perform. This is done by applying cowdung. We get references to how to erect a panthal from a famous song of pulluvars;

“Thekku vadakku kayarezhu paavittu
Melappu kondu vithanam cheythu
Eezhathu rajavu nattu nanachulla
Chenthengu thannude koompu vetti
Chillum puzhukuthumullathu nikkittu
Nallola cheenthiyarangumittu
Thechiyum pichakam chemanthi chembakam
Thamarayambalarandumittu
Bhangi varuthiya panthal”

A picture depicting intertwined serpents are drawn with their hoods spread at middle of the four sides of the square. In some places a Bhootha Kalam or Nagayakshi Kalam is also drawn. Nagayakshi represents Kadru, mother of serpents. The Panthal is decorated with tender coconut leaves, mango leaves, and garlands and sometimes with hanging lamps. On the Kalam rice, coconuts, arecanuts, jaggery,
betel leaves, lighted lamps, mirror or Valkannadi and a winnow or Muram are kept.

The Kalam is drawn with 5 natural colours as in all other Kalam rituals. The five colours are white, yellow, red, green and black. Some decorative works are also done depending upon the calibure of the artist. While drawing the Kalam, the Pujari requests Garuda, enemy of serpents not to come to the place where Kalam is drawn. This is because the serpents should not be afraid to enter the Kalam. Then all the members of the family along with the Pulluva go to sarpakkavu with small girls holding Talapoli. They perform Pooja and request the serpents to take their seat. Special Poojas wil be done for Brahma, Vishnu, and Maheswara as well as to the Ashtavasus. Rites and offering is done for several non-poisonous snakes that lost all the power due to a curse from their own mother for disobeying her.

When pooja is done, it is the duty of the Pulluva to carry a bunch of burning wicks held inside the plantain stem cuttings by dancing around the Kalam. This dance is performed to the accompaniment of cymbals. This is known as Tiriuzhichil.

Usually songs are sung by Pulluvan and Pulluvathy together. The songs will be in praise of holy serpents like Ananthan, Vasuki, Mahapadman, Sankhuvalan, Nahushan, Kalian, Airavatan, Pingalan, Hemaguhan, Manimudgaran and Dadhimukhan. At this a small group of young girls are made to sit upon the Kalam. They have to undergo some purification process like bathing and should wear traditional dress. They usually hold a bunch of areca flowers in hand. The girls have to untie their hair so as to make it loose.
The tempo and the volume of songs are increased gradually. Soon after this the girls will fall into trance. The idea behind this is that they are getting possessed by the holy serpents. The girls start dragging themselves on the Kalam. At this stage the Pulluvan asks some questions to them. The first one would be about their identity. For that the girls reply by swaying their heads. Most probably the answer would be Maninaga, Karinaga or Nagayakshi.

The next question is whether they are satisfied with the Pooja or not. The answer will be positive in most of the cases. If they are not satisfied with the worship, the head of the house has to fulfill their demands. Followed by this the girls swoon and will be removed from there. They will recover after sometime. A Kalam is made again and the Pulluvan sings songs of the stories taken from Mahabharatha. They normally sing the songs till day-break. If the possessed girls express any dissatisfaction, then whole ritual has to be repeated again next day, even the day after.

The Sarpam Paattu is also conducted in some temples. In temples the devotees will do offering to the lady who is engaged in dancing. They also do Abhishekam with milk, ghee, coconut milk etc in course of the ritual. The ladies dance vigorously which is called as Sarpam Thullal. Here they also perform the role of Velichappadu as in the other Kalam Paattu rituals. Finally it is the girl or lady who is destined to erase the Kalam. The Sarpam Paattu ceremony ends when the possessed girl goes into trance.
SARPPAMPAATTU BY PULLUVARS
Theme of Sarpam Paattu

The Sarpam Paattu is indeed very dramatic and entertaining. It is usually based on the life stories of divine Serpants. Some stories are taken from the famous epic Mahabharatha. The story of the origin of Ashtanagas, khanda Dahanam and Kaliyamardanam are also told through the songs. The story of rivalry between Kadru and Vinatha, wives of sage Kasyapa is the most important story among them. Kadru give birth to 1008 snake sons. There happens a bet between Kadru and Vinata in which Kadru will win by treachery. Thus Vinatha becomes maid of Kadru. Two sons will be born to Vinata; Aruna and Garuda. Garuda will take revenge for this by demolishing the snakes.

Another story sung is that of Takshaka. The story of the death of Parikshith by the bite of Takshaka is also dealt with. Story of Kaliyamardanam is also taken for the songs. The penance of Anantha is the story portrayed in songs. But nobody is aware about the authorship of the songs. Some opines that Panikkalathor Kannan Nair has penned all the songs. Portions from Mahabharatham kilippaattu of Thunchathu Ezhuthacchan is also used as songs. Most of the compositions are in Kilippaattu style.

There is an interesting song which conveys the story of the origin of Pulluvans. During Khandava Dahana, a snake escaped from the forest half burnt. A girl who was fetching water saw this snake. She rescued the snake by extinguishing the fire. She kept the pot made out of mud which she was holding on the ground. The snake slowly entered the pot by sliding. After this incident the girl started offering
Pooja to the snake everyday. Gradually the pot turned out into an anthill which is actually the shelter of snakes. The snake was very much pleased with girl who worshipped him daily and blessed her with a boon that her family and the successors would continue to worship snakes. Again the snake said that when ever the girl and any one of her successor invoke them by singing their praise to the accompaniment of the pot or Pulluva Kudam, they will surely make their presence. So the Pulluvans are believed to be the next generation of the girl and the pot used by them gradually came to be called as Pulluvan Kudam.

The Sarpam Paattu is also conducted in Kshetrams or Brahmanical temples by Kallattu Kuruppu. The Nagakalam which they prepare is also known as Kettu. The meaning of Kettu is knot and the Kalam is drawn as if two serpents tied with each other. They are known as Ganapathy Kettu, Saraswathy Kettu, Shadkon Kettu, Kamazhthi Peetam Kettu, Malarthy Peetam Kettu, Kavathum Piri Kettu, Picha Kettu, Aalavattam Kettu, Thoni Kettu, Navakhandam Kettu, Kolam Kettu, Valampiri Kettu, Tamara Kettu, Naalkona Kettu, Valiya Ganapathy Kettu, Ashtanaga Kettu, Paravathani Kettu, Pathaya Kettu, Kappal Kettu, Pavithra Kettu and Ashtakon Kettu.

The songs sung are in praise of Nagaraja who reaches the Nagalokam at the command of Brahma, Vishnu and Maheswara. For conducting Nagathan Paattu, they usually draw 2 Kalams a day. They sit facing towards the east direction after doing a Pradakshinam of the Kalam. First song will be in praise of Bhagavathy. The following songs will be in praise of Nagas. A number of songs are sung for the second Kalam also. A separate Kalam will be drawn for the Bhootham on the last day of the ceremony. Similies and metaphors are well included in
the songs, for instance;

“Bhoomiye Chutti Kidappu Samudram
Samudrathe chutti kidappu vimanam
Vimanathe munnu chutti valinmel thalayum vachu
Kidapporuthan vasukiyakunna mahanagathan.”³

This is the introductory verse of the holy serpent Vasuki. The name Kerala is very much featured in all these songs.

Some interesting songs of Sarpam paattu are given below:

“ Vellakkuthira poy mevi kondu
Ullathil chalave maravundennu
Ethumonnilennu vinuthayappol
Kallathaludan poyi kidannu kondu
Karkoda neeyente pon makane
Pillaykko inikkottu vidhiporanju
Dukhichu karayunna vinuthayappol”³

This song is about the rivalry between Kadru and Vinatha.

The accompaniments used for Sarpam Paattu are generally Pulluva Kudam and Pulluva Vina. Pulluva Vina is used both for the Sruthi and tala accompaniment. Pulluvankudam is mainly played as a tala Vadya. Some Pulluvans even play Taniavarthanam on the Kudam and they call it Tayambaka. Traces of some popular Ragas like Saurashtram, Sriragam, Madhyamavathy, Todi, Saveri, Punnagavarali, Chenchurutti, Kalyani and Yadukulakamboji can be seen in these songs. Talas used are Mutthalam of 5 Matras, Nalam talam of 4 Matras, Panchari of 5 Matras, Triputa of 7 Matras, Chempa of 10 Matras and Anchatantha of 16 Matras.
There are many temples, Kavus and even Tharavadus or ancestral houses which are famous for Sarpam Pooja. The most prominent among them is Pampinmekkaattu Mana situated in Thrissur district. Pethussery temple in Kannur district is also famous. The Kolapporathu Mana is another place where Sarpam Pooja is conducted in a grand manner. The Mannarasala temple of Alleppey district is considered as the main centre of serpent worship.
GIRLS SITTING ON NAGAKKALAM
Ayyappan Theeyattu

Theeyattu is an art form performed in the temples of Kerala as ritual. Theeyattu are of two types—one is Bhagavathy Theeyattu popular in the southern region of Kerala. Another one is the Ayyappan Theeyattu prevalent in the central and Northern Kerala. Theeyattu is performed by a community called Theeyadi Nambiar. This community is the smallest one found in Kerala. They live around the district of Thrissur, Palakkad and Malappuram. Ladies belonging to their community are called Maruvolamma.

Ayyappan Theeyattu is conducted in the temples of Sastha and in the Tharavadus of Brahmin and Kshatriya community. We see a blend of various arts like Geetha, Vadya, Nritha and fine arts like drawing and also acting in Theeyattu. Theeyattu is performed by drawing the picture of Sastha with five colours and done in Kalamezhuthu. Firstly the priest invokes the divinity of the preceding deity from Srikovil to the Kalam, which is called Avahana in Tantric
Afterwards numerous songs in praise of Lord Ayyappa are recited. Followed by this Koothu will be performed. The birth story of Ayyappa, motive of his birth etc. are acted through gestures. Now it's the time for velichappadu to make the entry. He dances around the Kalam. The dance of Velichappadu is rhythm bound and it is called “Kalathilattam”. As an end to the ritual he wipes out the Kalam.

The Kalam drawn of Ayyappan is of various type portraying vivid expressions. Since horse is the vehicle of Ayyappa the picture is drawn of Ayyappa as sitting on it. Sometimes picture is drawn on the basis of a story where Ayyappa defeats Indra in a contest and acquire Sarvajna Peetam. Then he marries Prabha and she gives birth to a son named Sathyakan. In rare the Artists draw the picture of all the three together.

**Proceedings of the ritual**

The first step of the ritual is the Kalam Pooja followed by the item called “Kottum Pattum. An instrument called Para similar to Chenda is used for this purpose. The main singer sings to the accompaniment of Para along with Ilathalam. The songs will be rendered in different tunes and talas. The style adopted here is that of Sopana Sangitha. On closer observations one could see traces of some Rakthi ragas such as Sankarabharanam, Sahana and Kedaram. Talas are those commonly used say Eka, Chempata, Panchari, Triputa and Atanta.
Songs of Ayyappan Paattu

Songs rendered in a Theeyattu ritual is classified into Cheriya pattukal, Valiya Paattukal and Thottam Paattukal. There are songs in praise of Ayyappa presiding in 108 Kavus of Kerala and it is called Kavennal. There are songs which describes the physical beauty of Ayyapa like “Karmegham Thozhum”, “Poorna Mathiyode Venna Thirumukham”. Lengthy songs like “Anantha Puram Pookkangine Iripporayyan” and “Mala nade poka venam makane kelu” comes under Valiya Paattukal. During Kalathilattam songs beginning with the words “Talavum melavum kettu rasichu sajanangal”, “Mavedam tiruvedam tirupadam tozhunnen”, “Kannakathiyum kattaravum pattum njorinju” are rendered to which Velichapadu dances in vigour.
Theeyattu songs are generally divided into 13 sections. Songs figuring in the first 11 section describes the story of Palazhy Mathanam. The next division called as Sankara Mohanam tells the birth story of Ayyappa. The contest between Ayyappa and Indra is the content of the last section.

Thottam songs are another peculiarity of Theeyattu Paattu. Here Thottam means revealed utterance. Thottam are in a question answer type as given below:

“Ayyappan ninthiruvadi arya maha sasthavu thiruvadi
Bhumikkum bhootalathinum mahamanushyarkkum kudi karma bhumiyingal ponningulavayittundavannulla hethuventhu.”

Next Thottam will be the answer for this. Thus the whole story is said through Thottam. This way of story telling is adopted from Koodiyattam, a traditional art form of Kerala.

Theeyattu Koothu

Another important feature of Theeyattu is the Koothu or pantomime. Great effort is required from the artist to enact the whole story through various gestures eye movements etc. the artist should possess fine body language and grace. He should have a proper control over his body.
UDAYASTHAMANA KOOTHU OR
THEEYATTU KOOTHU
The costumes and make up used in Theeyattu is similar to those used in Kathakali and Koodiyattam. The attire used for Koothu consists of Thalathuni, Chukanna Kuppayam, Kuralaram Manimala, Vala, Kadakam, Padiyaranjanam, Chevipoovu, Thoda, Pathikam and also an upper garment. The Koothu artist acts the role of Nandikeshwara who narrates the story to Ayyappa. Incident that paves way for this is narrated below.

Ayyappa by mistake make use of Ganapathy as his Vahana. Devi Parvathy is deeply hurt by this act. She tells this to Narada and seeks his advice. Narada convey an idea to suppress Ayyappa’s pride. Parvathy asks Ayyappa what will you call your mother’s wife. Ayyappa fails to answer this question. He approaches Lord Siva to get an answer to this question. Since the time was not appropriate to answer his question, Siva assigns the duty to Nandikeswara. Nandikeswara narrates the whole story through gestures. When he comes to know the real story, he appologises to Parvathy and he make a horse as his vehicle.

The koothu is performed as a part of Anchu Pooja in some temples. This Pooja is done to invoke Nandikeswara, Ganapathy, Saraswthi, Brahma, Vishnu and Maheswara. Ashtadigpalakas are also propitiated as part of this. For some occasions Sankara Mohanam alone is performed. This is called Katha Adal.

In some temples Koothu is performed for whole day called as Udayasthamana Koothu. This Koothu is performed in 12 acts based on the story of Ayyappa. In the last section of this, Paramasiva advise Ayyappa to go to Malanadu or Kerala and reside in the 108 Kavus.
A dance called “Cheriyeri chavittal” performed in course of Udayasthamana Koothu deserves special mention. Nambiar dances facing towards western direction, keeping the mudra of Nataraja. The dance will be in slow tempo gradually moving to fast tempo. Great care is taken while performing “Cheriyeri chavittal” because a small error may lead to disaster. The Nambiar who performs this dance should observe fast from morning till the end of Koothu.

The other act of Koothu is carried over by Velichappadu. The special dance performed by the Komaram is called “Eedum koorum”. In some occasions they perform Kanalattam also. The Velichappadu is considered as the personification of Lord Ayyappa. He is received to Kalam with great respect.

The first item will be the Mullakkal Paattu performed to the accompaniment of Melam. This is followed by “Eedum koorum”. Then Velichappadu makes a Pradakshinam of Kalam. Theeyadi Nambiar dressed up in Veeralippattu and ornaments enter the Kalam holding divine sword. Chenda is mainly used for this and ability of a Chenda performer can be fully revealed here. The Marar has the freedom to perform varieties of tala which is a treat to the audience assembled there. Then Nambiar makes a Pradakshinam to the accompaniment of Tayambaka. The speed increases according to the movement of dancer. Atleast 9 Pradakshinams are done by Nambiar to which talas like Atanta, Chempa, Anchu, Ezhu and Onpathu are played on Chenda. Finally Eka talam is performed, the Jathi being “Dhikritha kritha”.
“Kalam maykkal” is the last phase of Udayasthamana Koothu. Rubbing the Kalam is done by dragging Peetom over it. Then a ritual called “Pantheerayiram” breaking of 12,000 coconuts is conducted. In some temples Pantheerayiram is not conducted. For Koothu where Pantheerayiram is performed, then 2 more songs are sung after that. After Pantheerayiram the face of diety is rubbed off by Theeyadi himself. The devotees present their will be blessed by him. Finally Koothu ends with the blowing of Sankhu.

Songs of Theeyattu are not in pure Malayalam. Influence of Tamil language is evident in some of the songs. Some songs are recited in the style of “Ottan Thullal”, for eg songs like “Idivettina” composed to Triputa tala. Ragas like Puranir and Padi are also used in some of the songs. The song “Nalodu nalu” which describes the procedure of Kalamezhuthu is sung in both Theeyattu and Bhagavathy Paattu.
VELICHAPPADU PERFORMING THEEYATTU KOOTHU
(EEDUM KOORUM)
Music accompanied in the rituals of Subrahmania temple

Subrahmanya is worshipped in Kerala but only few temples are dedicated to this deity. He is also called as Muruga and is a very popular deity of Tamilnadu. We often come across lot of Tamil Kirtanas in Tamil language. Muthuswamy Dikshithar has composed many krities in praise of Lord Subrahmanya. His first composition is Sri Nathadi Guruguho is about Subrahmmania composed after getting the lord’s blessings. Sri Svathithirunal Maharaja has composed yet another excellent composition worshipping subrahmania who is the presiding deity of Kumaranallur Kshethram, Sri Kumaranagaralaye in Atana ragam.

The tamil work Thiruppugazh of Arunagirinathar are verses composed to 108 talas and which is sung as accompaniment to the daily chores of a Muruga temple in Tamilnadu. But in Kerala we don’t have such Tyanis or any other sort of ritualistic songs in praise of Subrahmania. Yet we through the rites and Poojas and nature of music followed in a Subrahmania temple in northern Kerala, ie the Payyannur Subrahmania temple. Another important temple of Subrahmania is the temple situated in Haripadu. In this chapter we deal with Payyannur Subrahmania temple as it is situated in Northern Kerala.

Lord Subrahmanya is also known as Shanmukhan (with 6 faces), Murugan, Sri Kumaran, Guruguha, Sharavana Bhavan, Karthikeyan and Valli Devasena Pathi. He is the son of Lord Siva and the main chieftain of Devas. Most important festival connected with the Lord Subrahmania is the Taipoosam Kavadi. But it is celebrated mostly in
the Tamil regions that too in grand manner. People of Kerala observe Shashti Vratham with great devotion. Some temples even celebrate on this day which is considered to be auspicious.

There are only few temples in Kerala having Lord Subrahmanya as the presiding deity. But there are many temples where there is Subrahmanya as sub deity or Upadaivam. Even those temples observe all the festivals associated with Lord Subrahmanya.

**Musical aspects associated with Nithya Nidana Poojas of Payyannur Subrahmanya Kshethram.**

The Subrahmanya temple is situated in the place called Payyannur which is in Kannur district. As a part of Nithya Nidana Pooja the main priest perform the Palliunarthal Pooja means ritually waking up the deity. Sankhu is blown for this ritual. For Abhishekam the Valamtala of Chenda is played. There is a special Pooja called Netra Pooja for which Idaikka is indispensabley played. There will be performance on Iddaikka even for the Usha Pooja.

During Seeveli the first Pradakshinam is done with the accompaniment of the performance of Pani on Timila. The second Pradakshinam is accompanied by Melam which will be done outside the Srikovil. Another important Pooja is the Panthiradi Pooja for which Tyanis are sung. Mostly Devi Sthuthies are sung. This will be followed by Iddaikka Kooru. After this some songs from Jayadeva’s Geethagovindam popularly known as Ashtapadi is sung. For the ritual called Navaka Poojabhishekam the Valamtala of Chenda is played.
Uccha Pooja will be solemnized with Melam. The instruments for this are Chenda- Valamtala and Idamtala, Kurumkuzhal and Ilatalam. Again Timila Pani is performed for Uccha Siveli.

The rituals conducted during evening begin with the blowing of Sankhu. There will be performance of Kuzhal outside the Srikovil which is called Kuzhal Seva. Simultaneously Kottipadiseva will be done inside the Srikovil. Again Melam is performed for Athazha Pooja and Timila Pani for Seeveli.

The annual Utsavam is conducted in the month of Vrishchika which extends for 15 days. For the rituals performed in connection with the Utsavam like Sribhuthabali Pani is perfomed on Maram. Pani is also played on Timila with the accompaniment of Chenda, Kurumkuzhal and Ilathalam. For each and every Athazha Pooja conducted during Utsavam Kottipadiseva is performed. Keerthanams or Tyanis like Neelakanta Manohara and Mahishasura which is composed in Padi ragam are sung.

On the Attham day of the month of Medam there is a special ritual called Kalabham Aduka. For this Marapani is performed. Kalabham is taken to the Srikovil with the accompaniment of Marapani and then the Abhisheka is done. During Utsava season Nadasvaram is played outside the Srikovil with accompaniment of Tavil. This is the general picture of rituals conducted in payyannur Subrahmania temple.
Instruments are given a primary importance in this temple. We don’t come across songs sung in praise of Subrahmania though it is a temple where this is the presiding deity. Also the ritual prevalent in most of the temples of Northern Kerala called Thidambu Nrittham is absent here. Also procession of elephants which is a common feature of all temple festivals is not done in this temple.

Few lines of a Tyani which is in praise of Lord Subrahmania are given below:

“Taare sanjitha choodathmaja yuga
Taraka tanu madhana vibho jaya
Paaril puzechum pazhaniyil amarum
Narada sevaka velayudha jaya”

End Notes:
1. N.V. Vishnu Namboothiri Pullavapaattu Nagaradhanayum, Keli 1977-pp26
4. Rendered by Theeyadi Raman in a direct interview.
5. Rendered by late Aliparambu Sivarama Pothuval in direct interview.