CHAPTER VII
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Great treatises like *Tantra Samuchaya* of Chenas Narayan Namboothirupadu and *Sesha Samuchaya* of Chenas Sankaran Namboothiripadu have given a detailed account of instruments that is to be accompanied for a temple ritual. In the ritual manual *Tantra Samuchaya* we get references of the different musical instruments used for a ritual specially percussion instruments. The importance of drum beatings and the Panchavadya (playing of 5 instruments) are clearly mentioned in this treatise. Another encyclopedic treatise called *Tantrapadhathi* showcases the significance of Timila as a ritual accompaniment.

There are certain specific percussion ensembles which have to accompany certain rituals, for example Pani and Idakka Kooru. Some Tantric experts opine that there are certain Mudras of priest that has to be supported by particular rhythms to be played by the musician. But none of the ritual manuals has mentioned to which Mudra, what rhythm has to be played. At present these informations are known only to the members of Marar or Puduvai community about the instruments, items and in which rhythm they have to perform a ritual.

Generally speaking there is a profusion of percussion instruments than other varieties in Kerala. It seems that people of Kerala have a special affinity towards instruments of percussion variety which is evidently seen during temple festivals of Kerala. Ensembles like Panchavadyam and Tayambaka usually draws a huge crowd.
Some of the instruments used for accompanying a ritual are Idakka, Timila, Maddalam, Maram, Chenda, Kombu, Kuzhal, Chengila, Ilathalam, Sankhu etc. All these instruments are handled with great care and divinity. Another important instrument used to accompany the temple art forms like Koothu and Koodiyattam is Mizhavu. There are stringed instruments which belong to the folk-ritual variety like Nandurni, Onavillu, Pulluvaveena and vina. The studies of these instruments are done extensively in this chapter by categorising them to four.

1. Drums or Avanadha Vadyam – Idaikka, Timila, Maddalam, Mizhavu, Maram and Chenda.
2. Gongs – chengila, ilatalam and kuzhitalam
3. Wind instruments or Sushira Vadyam – Sankhu, kurumkuzhal and Kombu.
4. Stringed instruments or Tata Vadyam- Nandurni, Onavillu and Pulluvavina.

The prominent ensembles are categorized into Anushtana Vadyas which are performed within the Naalambalam like Pani or Parusha Vadyam and Idakka Kooru and Aghosha Vadyam that performed within the outer wall, for instance Chenda Melam, Panchavadyam and Tayambaka etc.

Anushtana Vadyam is closely related to rituals performed in and around the Srikovil and always performed within the temple precinct. They are regarded ‘merely as applied music, only created to serve the function’ and ‘exclusively presented to the main Goddesses
and minor deities'. Improvisations and changes are not allowed in this genre. Where as Aghosha Vadyams are performed mainly with the aim of entertaining the devotees during festivals. Here the performers are allowed showcase their rhythmical genius throughout the performance.

Many classic instruments like Idakka, Timila, Maddalam, Mizhavu and Maram are handled with great care and divinity. An interesting fact is that all these instruments are used only in arts associated with temple like Koodiyattam, Koothu or in some specific rituals performed in temples like Sreebhoothabali, Utsavabali etc. These instruments used for temple rituals are as according to the great treatise Thanthra Samuchaya, Shesha Samuchaya etc.
Idakka

Idakka is a Deva vadyam and is an indispensable instrument used in Kerala temple rituals. Sarangdeva in his Sangita Ratnakara has mentioned three instruments such as Huduka, the Dakka and Mandi Damma which are considered as predecessor of Idakka. The name Idakka is also believed to have been derived from Dakka. Idakka is revered as the most sacred percussion instrument and it symbolizes Vedas, Sasthras and Kalas (art forms).

An important factor to be noticed is that Idakka is never kept on the ground. It is invariably hung from a peg or rafter in the temple. There is an old tale related to it. Idakka was Lord Vishnu’s favorite instrument. Once one of the Sivaganas stole it. They played Idakka to the accompaniment of Lord Siva’s dance. Seeing this Lord Siva admonished them and ordered them to return it back to Vishnu.
Sivaganas approached Vishnu to give it back. But Vishnu cursed them saying that if ever they place it down; the whole ground around it would explode.¹

Sangeeta Ratnakara of Sarangadeva mentions that Dakka is the instrument of Vindya Vasini ie, Bhagavathy so it is used during her worship as an accompaniment to render ritualistic songs.

Idakka comprises a wooden barrel to which are attached two pieces of thin bide fixed on two wooden rings, these being held tight with cotton rope. At the bottom are inserted four pegs in between the ropes to keep them in proper position. The wood to manufacture Idakka will be either of Karungali (Acacia catechee), or Rakta Chandana or Jack wood. The wooden barrel of Idakka is about 8 to 8½ inches long and the diameter of face is 4 to 4 ½ inches. The thickness of wood is about ½ inch. The diameter is thinner at the middle of the barrel and it is wider towards the ends. The two rings of diameter that is of 8 to 8 ½ inches are cut out from one inch thick jack wood plank and are molded to give a smooth and proper shape. The thin hide of the internal stomach walls of a cow is pasted tight on the rings with gum and 6 holes are drilled into the rings. The two hide covered rings are fixed on either end of the barrel with cotton ropes, the twist of the rope being important to give proper tension and case of handling. Two small copper nails are attached to the end of the barrel. Those are fixed diametrically opposite each other, total four on each end. Two Palmyra fibers are tied to these across the face of the barrel on each side. When the rings are tightened, the fibers will get touched by the hide. This gives a vibrating sound when the face is struck. Four wooden pegs are turned in lathe which will provide them an ornamental design. The pegs are about 7 inches in length and of one inch
diameter. These decorative pegs called jeeva-kol are inserted between the ropes holding the rings. These 16 multi coloured woolen ballstassels-are hung from each jeeva-kol. It may be assumed that 64 such balls represent 64 arts.

Idakka is played by a thin stick made out of Tamarind wood or chappangam. Some times even horn is used for playing. The instrument is hung from the left shoulder by means of straps and it is played only in a standing posture. While the instrument is played with the stick held in the right hand, the left hand holds the barrel by a strap wound round the barrel and pushes it up and down. The downward movement increases the tension and an upward one decreases it. This produces a wide variation in the tone. Idakka is one of the rare instrument in which the barrel is moved for altering the tension of the hides to provide tonal variations.

Idakka is usually played by Marars, a community dedicated to play ritualistic percussion instruments in Kerala temples. In Northern Kerala, the instrument is some times played by Poduvals.

The main function of Idakka is for playing the temple for rituals and also for daily Pooja performed. When the sanctorum is closed for
Amain Poojas like Athazha Pooja, Deeparadhan Idakka is played while singing Thyanis and Ashtapadis. This is the main custom followed in every temples of Kerala. Idakka is particularly important in one of the circumambulations called Idakka Pradakshinam.

A student of Idakka begins his learning procedure by playing on a dummy ie, a small rectangular piece of wood covered with leather and stuffed piece called Kaiyatha is held in the palm by the thumb and the little finger, the cotton stuffed side being next to the palm. A 6 inch long, thick stick shaped like a club is held in the right hand the first almost touching the thigh. Some 2 or 3 learner’s lessons are practiced in four speeds. Takati, Tarikita etc. these lessons are then practiced on the Idakka, the left hand manipulating the barrel so as to produce the different tones as per mnemonics. A set piece known as Ganapatikkai is learnt. This is first played whenever a player starts to play the Idakka as an offering to Lord Ganapati to remove all obstacles. The student then practices different types of set patterns of playing called “Kooru” which are to be played for various Poojas- Different sets being played according to the time of the day, just as different ragas are prescribed for different periods of a day.

Idakka is also used in ritualistic Sanskrit Drama of Kerala- the Koodiyattom where it is only a secondary instrument the main one being Mizhavu. In Kathakali also some time Idakka is used for female characters. Now a day Idakka is extensively used for Mohiyattom a Keralite dance form.
During the time of Pooja, when sanctum sanctorum is closed it is the right of Marar to sing songs to the accompaniment of Idakka by standing near the steps leading to the sanctum sanctorum. If there is more than one singer then Chengila is used. While starting the Tristhana sa-pa-sa is sounded. Then they will sing song in Natta raga or it is played on the Idakka. The invocatory songs called Tyanis are sung. First song will be in praise of the presiding deity of the temple. The next place is for some Kirtanas or Ashtapadi of Jayadeva. In between the stanzas of the songs, a final or Mukthayippu or played on Idakka.

Idakka is very rich in its tonal variations ie nearly two octaves. It is possible to play varnas and Kirtanas on Idakka. Now a day many experts have also attempted it. There is a vast scope for developing the playing standards on Idakka. That is why Idakka is aptly called as Sruti Tala Vadya, capable of producing Sruti or Sangeetham as well as Laya or rhythm.
Timila is an important percussion instrument used in Kerala temple rituals. This instrument is in the shape of hour glass, a slightly longer one. We get references of Timila in great Tamil classic work <i>Silappadikaram</i>. But somehow now this Vadya is only used in kerala. The word Timila is considered to have been evolved out of the word Timi (fish). Timilas body structure resembles that of a fish.

There is an interesting story behind the origin of this instrument Timila. Once Soorapadma an Asura, also a devotee of Siva was watching Lord Siva’s Pradosh Sandhya Thandava meanwhile he asked for the Damaru-Sivas drum to keep tala for the dance. Siva refused to give his Damaru instead he ordered him to get an instrument made by himself. On Siva’s advice, the Asura made a drum which was much bigger and a longer one. The new instrument failed to produce proper sound. Again he met Siva with utter disappointment. Then Lord Siva pointed out the absence of hole in the middle of the instrument. Lord with his own left little finger drove a hole in the middle thus making an outlet for air in the hollow wooden piece. After that skins were again fixed and played. The sound was perfect Omkara. Soorapadma was overjoyed by this. He prostrated before the Lord shouting in ecstasy “Mruthyunjaya Hara Hara Shambho”. Lord was pleased and told him
‘Let the tala of your chant be the tala for playing the instrument. Lord Siva allowed Soorapadma to join Nandi (the Bull) who plays Maddalam for his dance.

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Mru    Thyum   Jaya   Hara   Hara   Sham   Bho
Thri   Kita    Ta     Thari  Kita   Thaka  Tom
1       2        3       4       5       6       7
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May be for this reason Timila is played along with Maddala for Panchavadyam.

Timila’s body is made out of Jack wood. The length is about 2 feet and the diameter is 5 inches at the mouth. The leather of a cow calf is fixed to cane rings thus covering two ends. Twisted cow hide straps are used as tension string. The drum is suspended over the shoulders and the playing is done with both the bare palms. Only one side of Timila is played. Mainly two tones are produced- Tha and Thom. All Jati varieties are sounded by quick beat of the palms. The most peculiar aspect of Timila is that while playing both hands has equal importance and has to be equally adept. It is to be noted that individual fingers are not used at all.

Timila is one of Tala Vadyam which is primarily associated with Temple rituals of Kerala. It is also the most important instrument of the Panchavadya specially Kriyanga Panchavadya that is played in connection with temple rituals known as Seeveli or Sribali, Srubhutabali, Utsavabali, Idakka Pradakshinam etc. It is used again in Sevanga Panchavadyam where there is ample scope for individual improvisations especially for a Timila artist. Timila is well developed only in the central part of Kerala.
Maddalam

Maddalam also known as Suddha Maddalam is another percussion instrument used extensively in Temples of Kerala. The original name of this instrument is Mardala. The antiquity of the instrument can be known from the fact that it is mentioned even in Mahabharatha.

The shape of Maddalam is similar to that of Mridangam. But there are significant differences in their playing and construction. Generally three types of Maddalam are found and used in Kerala namely Toppi Maddalam, Vira Maddalam and Suddha Maddalam. All the three types of Maddalam are tied round the waist for playing. Maddalam belongs to Alingya type classified by Bharata in his Natyasastra as it is kept in an embracing position.

Maddala is considered as a Deva Vadya because it is associated with the cosmic dance of Siva. It is Nandikeshwara (one of Siva's disciple) who made Maddala out of a broken pillar by shaping it.
Toppi Maddalam is closer to Mridanga in size and construction and is normally used for rituals namely Kriyanga Panchavadyam inside the temple. It is also used in art forms like Ottam Thullal and Kurathi Attom.²

Vira Maddala as its name suggest is of very royal type. Vira Maddala is played in each and every ritual and function connected with the Maharajas of Cochin. The instrument played during Athachamayam procession and also during military marches and campaigns. Vira Maddalam is also used in the elephant processin of Triprayar Thevar, Lord Srirama and the famous Arattupuzha Pooram. In Southern part of Kerala, Vira Maddalam was used by Panas, a community of Professional singers who sang Thukilunarthumpaattu.

Normal size of Maddala is about 27 inches long and the diameter at the two ends is about 11 and 10 inches. A ridge about ¾ to 1 inch protrudes outside round the middle of barrel. Normally jack wood is used to make the battle, but Konna (Cassssia fistula) and Venga (Pterocatpu Marsupium) are also used. The right face which is black coloured bigger face is covered with ox-hides and the left face is covered with water buffalo hide. This faces are fixed tight with buffalo-hide circular caps which are then tightened with buffalo hide straps.

The tightening of the straps and the tuning of Maddalam is a rigorous task. The first thing to do it is to soak the hides in water for several hours. At least three persons, heavy hammers and pegs are required to bring them to proper tension. One Maddalam requires almost all the hide from a buffalo. A paste made from carbon obtained by burning Aracanut palm fronds and Purnanakitta (Iron slag) and cooked raw rice is applied in a thick circular layer in the right end and
the juice of raw betel nut is rubbed on to make the paste adhere better. On the left face of the instrument nothing is applied. Formerly there used to be 16 holes on each end cap for tightening the straps but now 17 or 18 holes are made.

The most significant feature of Maddalam is that it is not possible to adjust the Sruti in the middle of a performance. But once the Sruti is set it does not alter easily. The Maddalam is tied round the waist with a long piece of cloth passed through hide rings fixed to the ends of the drum. The drum is kept in a horizontal position and played with both the hands. Fingers particularly the right hand ones sound. Fingering techniques are much lesser in Maddalam. Beats are done in a forceful manner and it is used in open space. The average weight of the instrument is 37 lbs. so it is a strenuous activity for an artist not only to play for hours together with the instrument tied to his waist but also in walking with it in processions. Maddalam gives a deeper and resonant sound maybe because of its bigger size and of the large quantity of the black paste applied on it.

Maddalam is also used in Krishnanattam play and Kathakali. A student of Maddalam is first taught preliminary exercises which are practiced in a dummy instrument called Sravana Palaka. After that teacher teaches playing of Keli which are two types. One is Sandhya keli performed in temples after the evening Deeparadhana. This is a part of festival rituals known as Vilakkacharam. Another type of Keli is performed during Kathakali before the play starts.
One of the most important uses of Maddalam is in the Panchavadya ensemble of Kerala. Maddalam is used in Kriyanga Panchavadyam where the Toppi Maddala is used. It is also used in Sevanga Panchavadyam, the one used for Temple processions.

About fifty years ago, Maddalam was not having prominence as it now has in Panchavadyam. It is used to be played only on one side in vertical position. It was Sri Venketachala Iyer of Tiruvilvamala and his disciple Madhava warrier who brought a revolution by playing the Maddalam in horizontal position for Panchavadyam.

The most important role of Maddalam is in Kathakali. This is played for 4 important items like Keli, Arangukeli, Melappada and as an accompaniment to the music and dance of Kathakali. Though Suddha Maddala is not normally used in folk art but there evidences of usage of this instrument in some folk dramas mixed with Kathakali style called Minakshi Kalyanam in Palakkad district.

All these features show the splendor of this instrument and the fact that it deserves more popularity. It is undoubtedly a suitable accompaniment for out-door performances. There are a few training institutions in Kerala for Suddha Maddalam. The foremost of these is Kerala Kalamandalam in Cheruthuruthy Shornur.
Mizhavu

Mizhavu is a unique percussion instrument used only in Kerala. This instrument is used exclusively for Koothu and Koodiyattom in Temples. Mizhavu is not supposed to use for any other purpose and is considered as a Deva Vadyam and is of great antiquity.

The shape of its body is something like an egg- the broader end up. There is a small hemispherical projection at the bottom end. The top of the body has a cylindrical neck and the parchment is stretched over its mouth. A hole is made in the side of the body to get proper resonance.
Koodiyatam in Kerala has a tradition of more than a thousand years and so Mizhavu also has that much tradition behind it. There is similarity in Panchamukha Vadyam of Tamilnadu and Mizhavu in shape. Both of them are pot shaped. But former has five necks. In Silapathikaram we get references of an instrument called Muzha. This instrument is considered same as Mizhavu.

![Mizhavu](image)

**PANCHAMUKHAVADHYAM**

Formerly the Mizhavu used to be made of clay. Now a day it is made of copper sheets. Instrument made of clay have a softer tone but the copper instruments are more resonant. Mizhavu is also considered to be a “Svayambhu” or self manifested one.

Rituals- the most significant peculiarity of Mizhavu is that it has to undergo certain ceremonies like Jaatakarmam and Upanayanam. This is because of the fact it is the main accompanying instrument of Koodiattam. Koodiattam is considered a ‘chakshush yagna’- a visual sacrifice. Hence all important materials connected with this yagna have
to be consecrated. Even the Chakyar who performs Koodiyattom has to undergo a purifactory ceremony before he makes his debut as an actor. In a similar way the Mzhav is also subjected to a long initiation ceremony.

The rituals conducted thus are following- The Mzhavu is first kept on a ritual seating (over a swastika design, grains are spread and Darbha grass kept on top) Ganesha is first propitiated then Punyaha water is sprinkled (Consecration with holy water). Naandi (Pre-ritual prayers) is done, then Bhuta visodhana (Symbolic purification of five elements of the material of which the Mzhavu is made) is done and Nandikeswara is invoked in it. Nandikeswara is offered symbolic bath and other items of welcome. The Mzhavu is draped with a cloth (dress offering). Then a Homa is performed and eight of 16 Samskara, (Garbhadana, Pumsavana, Seemantonayana, Jatakarma, Namakarma, Annaprasa, Choula, Vidyarambham, Upanayana, Samavarthanam, Vivaham, Garhyapathyam, Vanaprasatham, Sanyasam and Anthyeshti) are performed. It is adorned with sacred thread black buck skin and stick of Palasa wood etc. Pooja prayer, Naivedya etc are done and then offering made with burning camphor then the priest initiates the playing and then the Nambiar ties the skin and play it. Only members of the Nambiar community have the traditional right to play on the Mzhavu.

The whole idea behind these rituals is that Nandikeswara is invoked to take his divine residence in the Mzhavu permanently. Normally Mzhavu is not taken outside the temple. If a Mzhavu get broken or becomes unusable elaborate rituals are prescribed for its Samshara- after purification and propitiation the Chaitanya of Nandikeswara is transferred from the old Mzhavu to a Kalasa (Pot of
holy water) and the water after necessary Poojas and Homas is poured in the sanctum sanctorum to unite symbolically the Chaitanya with the presiding deity.

Having the status of Parivara Devata of the temple the size and dimensions of the Mizhavu is governed by the principles of temple architecture and iconography. Mizhavu is usually dept in a cage of wooden slats. The bottom of the instrument should not touch the ground. So it is supported by reapers kept across the cage. The place where Mizhavu is kept is called Kutapasthana.

**Maram**

Maram is percussion instrument used for playing Panis. This is a crude form of Mridanga. It is 12 inches in length and 6 inches in diameter and is in cylindrical shape, a bit smaller than Mridanga. It is covered on both sided with cow hide with a black centre spot in its right end. It is played by the pals only, no fingering being done. It is considered a Daiva Vadyam. Pani is played for certain routine rituals inside the temples like Sri Bhoota Bali, Utsavabali, Jayabali etc. there are specific Pani for these rituals. Maram is kept in horizontal position as in Maddalam and played. The syllable ‘Tha’ is played in the right end face of Maram by right hand and in left end face ‘Thvam’ is played by left hand. Before playing Pani ‘Havis’ or material for sacrificial offering is applied on Maram to get variation in sound.
CHEDA
Chenda

Chenda is considered as the national instrument of Kerala. This is an indispensable in almost all activities connected with temples whether rituals or Utsavas. The instrument got its name probably from the sound it makes; Jham da. Chenda is a tall hollow cylinder covered on both sides with cow hide. The cylinder is made out of Jack wood. A ring made of heated bamboo piece which is bent to circle and it is covered with the leather. The ring is also provided at the bottom to hold the leather. The faces of a Chenda both on the top and bottom are covered by with cow hide. The tension strings are tied at the edge with a piece of leather. 12 holes are made to pass through the strings made of Vaka fiber. These are tightened by movable tightening loops that hold adjacent strings.

The Edamthala or left side has only a piece of leather while in the right end seven additional circular pieces of diminishing diameters are pasted on with a special gum. It is this pasting that gives Chenda its booming sound. This right end is played while accompanying Tantric rituals in temples. In Kathakali also when godly characters act, normally right end of the Chenda is played. The quotation "Pathinettu vadyavum Chendaykku thazhe" reveals the tonal significance and strength of this instrument.

Nowadays some modifications are applied on Chenda. Metal fastenings are used for maintaining the tension of Chenda. When performing for a Tayambaka the strings are tightened to get a higher Sruthi. But for Meloms accompanied with elephant procession, lower tension is required by loosening the strings. The instrument can
produce about 7 tones when played with left hand. Likewise when Chenda is played with flat palm Dhum and Dhom is heard. When Chenda is striked with the edge of the palm, the sounds Ta and Dhi are heard.

When struck with a stick holding in the right hand in the middle and edge, the sounds Dhu and Nam are heard respectively. More tonal variations are done by rubbing the leather with the stick or altering the tension on the leather with one hand while playing with the other. These variations are usually required when accompanying Kathakali. However no fingering technique is adopted while playing Chenda.

In Chenda also we find 3 varities Achan Chenda, Veekku Chenda and Uruttu Chenda. Achan Chenda is comparatively larger in size and it is used in the southern parts of Kerala. it gives a bigger sound also. A bigger size Chenda called Pataha Vadyam is used in the Annapoorneswari temple in Cherukunnu which is in Kannur district.

Vikku Chenda is used in the Kriyanga Panchavadyam performed to accompany temple rituals. The Kriyanga Panchavadyam is usually done for Abhisheka, Sri bhuta bali, Utsava Bali and Ashtabandana Kalasha. The Vikku Chenda is a cylindrical wooden drum about 2 ft long and about 10 inches in diameter covered on each side by a cap of thick leather fixed on a wooden ring. These 2 caps are held together by interlacing a thick cord between them. Veekku Chenda is suspended over the shoulder and played by beating on one face with a stick. Veekku in Malayalam means to beat, so probably this may be the reason for calling it Veekku Chenda because this is played by simply beating with stick to show the Angas of the tala.
The other variety of Chenda called Uruttu Chenda is commonly used for Kathakali. This type of Chenda has a thinner treated skin held in greater tension. This is played by rolling or rotating the sticks held in hand on its face. Here also it got its name from the Malayalam word Uruttuka which means to roll or rotate. This Uruttal or rolling is extensively utilized in Kathakali because the artist has to show different gestures as well as facial expressions while performing. The Uruttal of Chenda gives ample support to the artist to bring out his full potential and thus by making the performance outstanding.

Udukku

Udukku is an instrument in the shape of hour glass. It is played by beating on the one side with the fingers and at the same time the other hand holds the instrument and press the tension strings. These tension strings are used to produce good tonal variations. Both ends of the instruments is covered with skin and it is fixed to round hoops. Udukku is mainly used for Ayyappan Paatu, Mariyamman Paattu and also for the Thukilunartha Paattu.
Ilathalam

Ilathalam or Brahma talam in Sanskrit is a common instrument used in the temple rituals and arts of Kerala. It belongs to the Ghana category. Ilathalam comprises of a pair of small discs made of bell metal which is about 7 inches in diameter and has hemispherical depression in the middle of it. A string is entered through the hole provided in the centre portion of the Vadya. The other end of the string is tied to a knot so that it will not slip out. The player holds one disc each in both the hands and plays by clanging them together. Due to vibration produced by chiming the disc, a resonant effect is generated. This effect continues for sometime and is called Tarippu. The sound emanated from an Ilathalam can be mnemonically said as

“injanhiieee injanjhiiiii injhanjhanjhanjhiieee”.

Care should be given while casting the bell metal. After casting, metal undergo heat treatment. It is this heat treatment that gives Ilathalam such vibratory effect. We get references to this heat treatment in the Sangitha Ratnakara of Saranga Deva.
Normally the role of an Ilathalam is to keep time in ensembles like Panchavadyam and Chenda Melom. But it greatly adds to the charm of the orchestra by playing suitable cross rhythms. According to scholar Sr. L.S. Rajagopal a combination of muting that is stopping the vibrations with the fingers and extended ringing or Tarrippu is used to give proper effect. Its position in the drum ensembles is only secondary but some artists of Ilathalam are even capable of performing Tayambaka or Taniavarthanam.

Proper attention should be given while selecting Ilatalams to be used in an ensemble, because they must be in uniform Sruti. Katavallur near Thrissur district is a centre for making Ilathalams. The north Indian instrument Kartal is similar to Ilathalam.

Chengila

Chengila is a Ghana Vadya used in temple rituals like Paanikkottal, Sopanasangeetham and temple arts forms like Kathakali and Krishananttam. This instrument is usually used for keeping time in an ensemble. It has a circular disc made of bell metal. It is thick in the middle and struck with a wooden stick. A hole is provided on the upper part of the disc. Usually the instrument is held by loops passing through the hole. The size of the Chengila is 6 inches to 9 inches diameter.
Kuzhitalam

Kuzhitalam is also a cymbal which is almost similar to ilathalam. This instrument is smaller in size and is deeply hollowed inwardly. Kuzhitalam is an indispensable instrument used in Brahmani paattu, Kalamezhuthu paattu and Kottipadiseva. For the performing art forms like Koothu and Koodiyattam also this instrument is used by the Nangiars.

Sankhu

Sankhu is an unavoidable instrument used in the temples of Kerala. Almost every ritual starts with the blowing of Sankhu. Sankhu is of two varieties, Valampiri and Itampiri. Of these Itampiri sankhu is used for the daily poojas. Sankhu belongs to the sushira vadyas or Wind family. It is usually blown from low pitch gradually increasing to a high pitch by taking full breath. The blowing of Sankhu should be done with great care that broken sounds should not be heard since it is considered inauspicious. Sankhu is used when Srikovil is opened, for different rituals like Sribhutabali, Utsavabali and Kalasas also it is blown. Sankhu plays a major role in percussipn ensembles like pani kottal and Panchavadyam.
Kurum Kuzhal

Kurum Kuzhal or Kuzhal is a Sushira Vadya used in the rituals of Kerala temples. In Malayalam the word Kuzhal literally means a tube. This instrument is referred in one of the earliest works in Malayalam literature, Ramakatha Pattu of Ayyappilla Asan written in the 14\textsuperscript{th} century. Kunchan Nambiar, the famous exponent of Thullal has also mentioned Kuzhal in his work. Kuzhal is also seen in Chilappadikaram.

The instrument is a double reeded pipe of 12 to 18 inches in length. Kuzhal is comprised of a conical wooden pipe also called Olavu. A bell bottom attachment made of metal called Kizh Anasu is also affixed to it. At the top also there is a small metal top attachment called Mel Anasu to which the reed Narukku is fixed. In some Kuzhals the top and bottom attachment will be made out from the same wood used for the instrument. The reed that is made after a long procedure is fixed to a small tube called Nelli. Nelli is inserted at the top of the pipe. During earlier times a circular metal disc called Kavulidikki used to be fixed at the end of the reed. But nowadays this fixation is not to be seen. Spare reeds are also provided along with a horn or ivory bodkin. The bodkin serves to clear the reeds. Both of them hung from a string
connecting the top and bottom attachments. The Kuzhal has 7 holes in one line. One more hole is provided at the top on the lower side which is closed with the left thumb while playing.

A different type of Kuzhal is used by Paraya community of Kerala. The reed is made out of palm leaf. The stem is made of wood and is conical in shape about 6 inches in length and 1 inch diameter at the bottom. A thin bell metal bell is attached to this. The bottom most hole is 2 inches away from the end of the wooden tube. There are 4 more holes other than this. A coconut shell disc called Kavilaati is fixed between the top hole and the reed. The bell is called Kuzhal Talam. The reed is attached to a small metal tube called Nelli and is fixed to the top with strings. They play this type of pipe in the functions like death ceremonies, attainment of puberty of girls. They also use this to accompany festivals like Kaalapottu (buffalo race), Mudiyattam and for Velichappadu Tullal in Bhagavathy Kavu. There is another type of pipe quite similar to this known as Eazhava vadyam. This is commonly seen in the Tenmalappuram area of Palghat district. This instrument is played by Eazhava community and is used for rituals and festivals in Kali temples.

Coming over to Kurum Kuzhal, the instrument is normally played by Nair community of Kerala. The players are called Panicker. Earlier Kuzhal was used in the marching of the army. Kurum Kuzhal is nowadays used for Palli Unarthal, for Seeveli, for Chenda Melom during festivals and also for Koodiyattam. Palli Unarthal is during the early morning between 3 and 5 am. Kuzhal is also used for Seva which is performed in morning, noon, evening and night. It is also used for Deeparadhana. In many temples Kurum Kuzhal is used for Seeveli where the Utsava Vigraha is taken to circumambulate the temple three
times at morning, noon and night. Kuzhal is given special preference in some temples like Thiruvilwamala of Thrissur district. Here certain ragas are also played according to the time of the day. In some other temples Kuzhal is played for Nata Adachu Pooja where Pooja is done with the doors of Srikovil closed. During temple festivals, Kurum Kuzhal is an indispensable instrument for Vilakkacharam.

The vilakkacharam is as follows; and the presiding deity of the temple is brought from the Srikovil and kept in a convenient space. After this many instruments are played individually. A Thayambaka performance is done right after this. Then it is the turn of Maddalam by playing Keli. Followed by this will be Kombu Pattu and Kuzhal Pattu. Pattu is rendered by a single artist and he will be accompanied by a Sruti, Chenda and one Elathalam. Few sancharas of Natta is played initially. The main raga is elaborated after this. Usually Rakthi ragas like Kamboji, Kalyani, Sankarabharanam, Bhairavi, Anandabhairavi, Neelambari, Mukhari and Neelambari are taken as main item. Then they render Pattu in a proper manner.

Rhythm keepers also join them at this stage. First round of rendering is done in Vilamba kalam. Then they render it in faster tempo. Followed by this Tisra nadai is played which is called Kooru Vayikkal. The tala selected for Pattu is Chempata tala. After Kooru Vayikkal Surutti raga is played in a tala that constitutes 4 Matras. Finally Kalasam is played to Eka tala in Madhyamavathy raga. For Kalasam only Chengila is used. Kirtanas are rendered sometimes provided if there is enough time before the final Muthayippu which is done in Eka tala. For this Kuzhal will be accompanied by Toppi Maddalam.
Another important ritual where Kuzhal is used is Idakka Pradakshinam. The presiding deity is carried around the temple to the accompaniment of Idakka, Toppi Maddalam, Kombu, Timila and Kuzhal. In some temples special preference is given to Kuzhal. Here also Naatta is played first followed by ragas like Yadukulakamboji, Padi, Anandabhairavi and Kanakkurinji. The talam to which the ragas are rendered will be Triputa talam. Some times Sringara Padas featuring in Kathakali are also rendered after this.

Chenda melam will be followed after Idakka Pradakshinam. The main attraction of this is the elephant procession.

There are some ragas prescribed to be played by the Kuzhal artist for various Melams rendered in different talams. Bhairavi is mainly played for Pandi Melam. Sankarabharanam is for Panchari, Arabhi for Chempata and Saveri is for Chempa. Previously Kuzhal was used for Koodiyattam. But nowadays this practice is extinct.
Training

A student of Kurum Kuzhal should be first taught to keep talam with the cymbals. Then he starts playing Ottu for Sruthi. He learns the technique to breathe and blow at the same time. This procedure is called Svasam Murikkuka. First he practices this by blowing a bamboo tube. First vocal training is given by teaching those Saptasvarams, Varisas, Alankaram, Gitam, Varnam and Kirtanam. Then they learn to play ragas and Pattu.

The open holes of Kurum Kuzhal are set in Harikamboji raga which is the basic scale. Sharper and flatter notes are played by partially closing and opening the holes. It can also be done by adjusting the reeds with the lips. The last hole is tuned to the Shadja and the hole in the lower side is Nishada. The first hole at the top end is the Thara Shadja. So it is difficult for a Kuzhal player to go below the basic Shadja of Madhyasthayi.

Kurumkuzhal is very similar to the wind instrument Madhukari mentioned in the Sangitha Rathnakara. This instrument was used in the temple rituals of Orrissa. Kuzhal is made in several places of Kerala like Thrippunithura, Panamana and Thiruvilwamala and in some places of Tamilnadu.
Kompu

Though Kompu Vadyam belongs to the sphere of Sushira Vadyas, in Kerala it is regarded as Laya Vadya while accompanying the typical percussion ensembles like Panchavadyam, Chenda Melom etc. the word Kompu in Malayalam and Tamil literally means horn. The very idea of using the horns of animals as musical instruments in the primitive age may be the basis for this. As years passed by metals came to be used in the place of horn. Sringa is the name for Kompu in Sanskrit and it is mentioned in many Puranas also. In Mahabharatha Bhishma Parva there is a Sloka;

“tato bheryashcha pesyashcha krakacha govisanikah
Saha saivabhyananyanta tatah sabdo mahan abhut”.

In which instruments made of horn is referred as Govisanika means made out of the horn of the cow. In Tunchathu Ezhuthachan’s Mahabharatham Kilipattu also we get references of the instrument Sringa being used in Mahabharatha war.
The Kompu used now days is a semi circular or C shaped instrument. It is made out of bell metal and is conical in shape. It is comprised of 3 pieces. Kompu has two varieties Timiri and Bari. Of these the former is the smaller one and latter bigger one. There is also a special Kompu which is medium sized called as Eta Bari.

Timiri has a curvature at the outer end which is turned inside. The pieces of the instrument are attached by putting one end of a piece into end of another piece. The fixation is tightened by inserting a piece of cloth. Each one of Timiri will be about 15 inches. The pitch of the instrument is usually 7 or 8 Kattais.

Coming over to Bari, the curve of the instrument is larger than a semicircle. In Bari fixation is done in a different manner. Here a stud is locked into a groove in the other piece. A string is tied from one piece to the other and the player holds this while playing is done. The blowing end is about three by four inch in diameter and it is in a shape of cup. Blowing is done by pressing the lips against this. Production of notes and tones are controlled by lips and tongue. It also depends on the force of blowing. The outer end called Ummathumuri is carved into a bell mouth which is 3 inches in diameter. The three pieces of the instrument are made by casting bell metal in the clay moulds by the process known as lost wax process. Each piece of Bari is about 19 inches long and 26 inches in diameter. The pieces are fixed and polished after casting. But sometimes pitch variations will be found between instruments. The sections of the tube are either shortened by cutting a piece and brazing or lengthened by increasing the length by casting in situ. Blowing orifice is sometimes widened by filling. If it is too wide then the size is reduced by pushing a tight metal tube. Sruti of Bari will be about 4 or 5 Kattai and the weight is about 3 lbs.
Bari is of recent origin when compared to Timiri. Earlier Timiri was commonly used in temples. It is because of the effort of Venkichan Swamy a maestro that Bari came into prominence. He revived Panchavadyam and included Bari in place of Timiri. At present Timiri is popular among Harijan community and the folk festivals conducted by them. But in central areas of Kerala only Nair community plays this in temples.

**Kompu in temple rituals**

Kompu is essentially used in daily Poojas and Seeveli of almost all the prominent temples. This instrument is used in all temple festivals or Utsavas. It is played in the ensembles for Sribhutabali, Vilakkacharam, Kompu Pattu, Chenda melom, Idakka Pradakshinam and Panchavadyam. It is also used in the rituals like Vettekkorumakan Pattu, Pana, Teyyam and Mutiyettu. Even Syrian Christians of Kerala use Kompu for some of their processions but playing is usually done by Harijans. In Kerala there was a tradition of army march for which Kompu was used. This martial tradition is still maintained as it is played in the famous Atthachamayam procession in Thrippunithura of Ernakulam district. Atthachamayam came to be conducted in commemoration of a victory of Cochi Maharaja.

Since there are no holes or stops in Kompu for producing various notes, it is used as a Laya Vadya or tala Vadya in Kerala. Kompu is an indispensable instrument in Chenda Melom. The other instruments used are Ilathalam, Kuzhal and of course Chenda. A number of Kompus are used in Melom in which they play together for
each and every Kalasam played at the end of a group of Talavattoms. All Kompu will get ready to be played before Kalasam by blowing the lower note. Right after Kalasam also Kompu is played for one more Talavattom.

Layavinyasa on Kompu is known as Kompu Pattu. There is a tradition of taking around the idol or Utsava Vigraha after bringing the idol to the courtyard of temple. Instruments like Kompu, Kuzhal and Maddalam are brought in front of the idol and are played individually. This demonstration in above said instruments is called “Pattu vayikkuka”. Duration of a Kompu Pattu will be an hour. However it depends on the ability of the artist and the time available.

Kompu is also an important instrument in the Panchavayam ensemble. Kompu is played during the Kalasams of Panchavadyam.

A student of Kombu is first taught to produce sounds properly with the instrument. The lips have to be kept rounded to blow properly. Normal blowing will give the basic Shadja and harder blowing gives its higher octave. By controlled blowing it is possible to get pa and its octave. Tonal variations are made by applying strength to the blowing. After this the student is taught to play Jatis in Chempata tala. The mnemonics for the first lesson are They, Tha tha, Thai, That tha, They, tha tha, they, tha tha, thai, dhey dhey. Nine verities of this are then taught. Followed by this they learn to play different Jatis for 4 Talavattoms. The third lesson is the Kalasam also called as Mutthayippu or Mora. After expertising these preliminary lessons they are initiated into play Kompu for Chenta Melam.
In Bhagavathy temple of Thiruvanikkavu of Machat near Vadakkancheri, Kompu Vadya is given a special preference. Kompu is used for the Para ceremony where paddy offerings are collected from people staying in the nearby houses of the temple. A very huge sized Kompu is used in a temple at Maruthoor near Guruvayur. But nowadays only the last piece is used in Diparadhana because it sounds like Sankhu.

**Nandurni or nanduni**

Nandurni or Nanduni is a stringed instrument used to accompany ritualistic music of Kerala. This instrument is used for Kalam Pattu rituals. Nanduni is an indispensable instrument in Bhagavathy Pattu played by Kuruppu in Thirumandhankunnu temple as well as in Tharavadus. The person who plays Nanduni has a special place in these rituals. The Mannan community who conducts Bhagavathy Pattu in Kavus also plays Nanduni.
Nanduni has a rectangular hollow body made out of wood and a tail is projected. Strings are stretched over its body. Strings are usually made of palm fiber or Sisal and are tied to an iron hook at the top end which is tightened to a peg at the bottom. A small wooden peg is also attached. Frets are fixed on the resonator and will be 5 in number. Nanduni is about 5 feet long and 6 inches wide. The resonator itself is about 14 inches. The strings are strummed by a buffalo horn plectrum. One among the string will be slightly thicker and it is used as drone. Different notes are produced by pressing the thinner wire on the frets. Nanduni is normally held in a vertical position. It is kept on the left shoulder and the left hand figures are kept pressed on the frets. Usually right hand is used to strum the strings.

The projection of the tail at the end is at an angle which gives an idea that the instrument might have developed from ancient harp or yazh. Nanduni is considered as a divine child by Mannans. Their songs refers that Nanduni should be kept in divine lap. The description is given below;

“Oh Nanduni, what is your divine name.
Come my daughter
The goddess of Kurumba,
Tell us your name and
Your greatness and sing.”

“Oh Nanduni, what is your divine name.
Come my daughter
The goddess of Kurumba,
Tell us your name and
Your greatness and sing.”

“Oh Nanduni, what is your divine name.
Come my daughter
The goddess of Kurumba,
Tell us your name and
Your greatness and sing.”
The belief is that the Bilwa tree is cut into two parts which are Sakthi and Siva. Wood is shaped by the wind and the inside is scooped out with a chisel. Various gods are installed on the body. Bhadrakali resides in the centre. The two strings are Anna and Alamba. Two birds sitting on the tree will chirp while strumming the instrument with right hand and pressing the strings with left hand. Such is the greatness of Nanduni.

Pulluvan kudam

This is an instrument mainly used by Pulluva community. This instrument is an earthen pot covered with leather. A thong is taken from the leather and kept in tension by tying it at the end of a stick. It is played by plucking the thong. A “Brum Brum” sound is emanated from the instrument. They use small stick called Thera for strumming the Kudam. The instrument is kept on the thigh of the player so that it may not fall and press it with palm for playing it. The leather used for covering will be of ox hide. Pulluva Kudam is played for all types of songs except those sung on paddy fields during harvest.
PLAYING OF PULLUVAKUDAM

Puluva Veena
Pulluva veena is another type of instrument played by this community. It is a violin like one generally played by male Pulluvan. Veena is made out of coconut shelves or hollow thick stick of bamboo or brass strings. The bow used to play Veena is made of sharpened bamboo piece. A couple of metal jingles are provided at the end of the bow. Wooden rods are also attached to this metal jingles to keep time while singing. Pulluva Veena is played for almost all the songs sung in different occasions. Pulluva Mizhavu is another type of instrument used especially for Nagaradhana or serpent worship. This Mizhavu is also made of earthen pot. The mouth of the pot is covered with a plate upside down. Pulluva Mizhavu is usually played by female artists. This instrument is performed mainly for sorcery. Malaya community is specialists in playing this. All these instruments are rustic in their construction and appearance, yet the sound emanated from them is really captivating.

Onavillu
Onavillu is an attractive simple folk instrument that belongs to percussion type. The Villu is a bow made of wood. A wooden rod is also attached to it. Villu is played by beating on this rod by another stick. Different Jatis are played on it. The tension of the rod can be altered by holding it with left arm with one end of the bow pressing against the chest. This alteration gives the Villu its natural sound twang. It is possible to perform Laya-vinyasas on this instrument. Even Tayambaka is tried on this instrument. Onavillu is usually played for Onam festival. There is a folk art called Kummattikali which is performed in some provinces of Thrissur district, in which boys wear Kummatt Pullu, a medicinal shrub and dried banana leaves as costumes and masks of demon, monkey, old woman etc. they dance to Kummatt songs accompanied by Onavillu. This art form is purely entertaining. Kummattikali is performed in certain temples as a part of Onam.
There is another type of Villu which belongs to the Ghana Vadyas. This Villu is larger than Ona Villu and is about 5 or 7 feet long. This instrument is profusely used in certain parts of Southern Kerala and Tamilnadu. This is the main instrument used in the story telling art Villadichan Pattu. The bow is of fiber and a number of jingle bells are attached to it. The bow rests on an earthen pot which is the resonator of the instrument. The string is struck with a wooden rod and a group of 4 artists or more than that participate in the Villadichan Pattu.
Ritualistic ensembles or Anushtana Vadyam conducted inside the temple

Paani or Parusha Vadyam

Paani Kottal is an important ritualistic ensemble performed in Kerala temples. Paani’s are rhythmical nuances played on certain percussion instruments like, Maram, Timila and Chenda. Paanis should be executed with utter concentration and devotion. There are different ways of Paani execution like Saivam Paani and Vaishnavam Paani. For each ritual like Sreebhutabali, Utsava Bali and Kalasas there are specific Paani’s to be played.

In the ancient treaties Natyasastra of Bharata, we get references of the word Paani. But Paani is referred to as percussion instrument. There is a confusion regarding Paani that some refers to it as an instrument.

The style in which Paani is performed is often referred as Tatwam. The mode of playing paanis varies from temple to temple. In some temples, instruments like Sankhu, Chengila and Timila are included throughout a paani performance. But some temples like Guruvayur use only Chengila for this purpose. There are also variations regarding the duration and the Vaytharis played for Paani.
The Paani is played on Maram mostly. Just before the performance a small amount of ‘Havissu’ is applied to the left-hand side of the Maram to do the pitch variations. The performer should also offer Nivedyam to Lord Ganapathy before the performance. The artist must undergo certain purification process and after seeking permission from the Tantri, he starts the performance.

The artist plays the syllable ‘tha’ on the right head of the Maram with the right hand palm. He plays ‘twam’ on the left head of the instrument. The Paani artist usually faces towards the direction of the temple. Sankhu is blown 3 times at the commencement of paani. Soon after the sankhu is blown, the player postrates the Maram and starts the performance. Usually Chempata talam is played. That’s why a student of Paani should know how to reckon Chempata tala without any mistakes. The Vaythari that is taught to a student is known as ‘Theevattam’.

Atleast 64 Kaikottu or Aksharakalas are played for a Paani and is done in 5 stages. In some regions Paani will be subjected to gradual increase in speed. But in some place same speed is maintained throughout the performance.

**Traditional way of Paani Kottal**

When the Sankhu is blown three times and then commences the Paani Kottal. At this time the person who plays Paani keeps the right hand on the instrument. As soon as Sankhu is blown the Maram performer slightly bends forward, then stand erect and start playing. Then he plays the first ‘Tha’ Karam. This forward bending can be considered as a sign given to the Chengila player to indicate the time
for playing Paani. For each round of playing, he keeps the prescribed hand intended for playing. This is for giving indication to other players as well as to avoid errors. While concluding also the Sankhu is blown.

For greater rituals like Vijaya Bali, Koumara Bali and Durga Bali, more intricate Paanis are played. There are three types of Paanis played. The first one is of rather shorter duration and is called Cheriya Paani which is played by the accompaniment of Timila, Chengila and Sankhu for rituals like Sreebhuthabali and Utsavabali. For bigger rituals like Kalasam or Brahmakalasam which has Tantric importance Valiyapaani is performed. In addition to this there is another variety of Paani called Samharathathva Paani played for more important rituals like Kalasam.

The tala in which the Paani is played is Chempata tala which is equivalent to Adi tala of Carnatic music. Another peculiarity is that Nissabdakriya is maintained in Paanikottal than Sasabdakriya. Paanis are again categorized into three according to the deities i.e. Saivapaani for Siva, Vaishnavapaani for Vishnu, Bhagavathathvampaani for Bhagavathy. While playing Paani usually the player starts in Athivilambithakaala and ends in Drutha Kaala. This is for Avaahanam in which divine power of Idol are brought in. For Samharathathva Paani it is vice versa. It starts in Drutha Kaala and ends in Vilambha Kaala. It is Samharam a Kriya in which the divine power is withdrawn.
Idakka Kooru

Idakka can be considered as an indispensable percussion instrument used for temple rituals. For Kottipadi Seva Idakka is played as an accompaniment of Tyanis. Following the Tyanis, player plays particular rhythmical beats which is termed as Idakka Kooru. This is a very important part of temple rituals. There are specific Koorus for each and every Pooja. But Kooru set to Chempata talam is rather more important because when the Sreekovil is opened after each and every Pooja, the Kooru in the same talam is played. Also Chempata Kooru is played as a finishing item for Pooja Kottu and Kottipadiseva.

When one plays Idakka Kooru for a ritual he should concentrate on the Nada or purity of Idakka and also the tempo of the particular tala that is played. Here the player is not allowed to show any sort of gimmicks. When the Sreekovil is closed for Pooja the Tyanis are sung by the Marar to the accompaniment of Idakka. It is followed by Idakka Kooru, the next item will be Ashtapadis or in rare cases Kirtanas are sung. At this point of time Idakka player will be given opportunity to show his excellence. He also has the freedom to play Kalasham of 2 or 4 tala Vattomes after Pallavi, Anupallvi and Charanam of Ashtapadi or the Kirtanam sung. This is the only time where he attains the status and freedom of percussion accompanist as in a Carnatic music concerts. This freedom is denied while accompanying Thyani or playing Idakka Kooru may be because of its pure ritualistic approach.
Panchavadyam

One of the most indigenous percussion ensembles of Kerala is Panchvadyam. This is the most unique percussion orchestra that can only be found in Kerala. The instruments Shankhu, Timila, Maddalam, Kombu and Ilathalam constitute a Panchavadyam. There are two types of Panchavadyam namely Kriyanga and Sevanga Panchavadyam. The former one is used for Abhisheka, Sreebhuthabali and special rituals like Utsavabali and Ashtabanda Kalasha. The later one Sevanga Panchavadyam is more popular and it is performed for Temple festivals. Panchavadyam has immense mass appeal that it is now been performed for secular areas like processions etc.

**Kriyanga Panchavadyam**

As mentioned above Kriyanga Panchavadyam is performed for rituals like Kalasham in a temple. The famous sloka ‘Dakkamsya kaamsya vadyam cha’

...
“Bheri sankha maddala
Panchavadyamiti prahu
Raga Martha visharada” conveys the idea that the instruments like Idakka, Ilatalam, Chenda, Sankhu and Maddalam constitutes the Panchavadyam. When the kalasha is brought towards the Srikovil the Kriyanga Panchavadyam is performed. But this Kriyanga Panchavadyam has no connection to the actual Sevanga Panchavadyam which is performed widely nowadays outside the Srikovil of the temple, moreover the Kriyanga Panchavadyam somewhat similar to the Panikottal.

There is another ritual called Idakka Pradakshinam which can be said to be the actual predecessor of present day’s Sevanga Panchavadyam. Idakka pradakshinam commences in front of the presiding deity of the temple. After lighting the Nilavilakku, the performer on Idakka stands on the Sopanam and begins playing the instrument. Followed by this the Tyanis will be rendered in the prescribed ragas. Soon after this he plays the Idakka Kooru. Then Sankhu is blown thrice. During the third time, the Timila player along with the Maddalam artist joins the vadyam. Ilatalam is also used to keep time. Besides this Kombu and Kuzhal is also played for this vadyam. This special vadyam comprising Idakka, Maddalam, Timila, Kombu, Kuzhal, Ilatalam and Sankhu performed in an Idakka Pradakshinam is also known as Panchavadyam.
Playing Timila and Maddalam in Panchavadyam

Chengila

Udukku

Sankh
It is said that in earlier days Nandurni was also used in this type of Panchavadyam. Presently Kurunkuzhal is exempted from playing in this panchavadyam. The tala used for the Idaikka Pradakshina Vadyam is Triputa tala. This Vadyam also called as ‘Pancharahasabdam’. P.S. Varrier, a scholar in the field of temple arts opines that this Idaikka Pradakshina vadyam is the actual predecessor of the Sevanga Panchavadyam.

**Sevanga Panchavadyam**

Depending up on the number of artists performed and also the duration that is taken for the performance, there is a fixed proportion regarding the number of instruments used in the Panchavadyam.

For a small Panchavadyam 3 Timilas, 1 Maddalam, 1 Idaikka, 2 Ilathalams, 2 Kombu and 1 Sankhu is needed. For a full fledged Panchavadyam (Sevanga) 15 Timilas, 7 Maddalams, 2 Idaikkas, 15 Ilathalams, 15 Kombus and 1 Sankhu are used.

Fixed positions of the artist performing in a Panchavadyam are also prescribed. The Timila player and Maddalam player should stand face to face. The main Timila player will stand in middle of Timila player like wise the principle Maddala player also take position in the middle of Maddalam players. Just behind the Timila artist will be positioned by Ilattalam players and likewise behind Maddalam artist will be Kombu player. If there are two Idaikkas the place of them will be positioned at the end of both Timila and Maddalam players. The main Idaikka player will stand in the right end of the Maddala players. If there is only one
Idakka player there will be no change in the position. The Sankhu player will be placed at the right side of the Idakka player who is standing at the right side.

Panchavadyam commences with the blowing of Sankhu 3 times. It is the principle Timila player (Timila Pramani) who starts the performance by playing Thi- Thi -Thi -Tha –Thom in respect to the Kalam or tempo in which the whole performance should continue. This is called “Kalamidal”. The talam taken for the performance will be usually Thriputa tala or Atanta.

Soon after Sankhu is blown the usual Panchavadyam begin with the variations (Vinyasam) played on Timila by the Timila Pramani. All the other instruments except Kombu join him. These variations are done 4 times. When it reaches the fifth and sixth round its speed gradually increases by twice the tempo in which they started playing. At this point the Kombu player joins the venture. The Timila players usually accomplish 48 variations by their fingers and hands. Here the term fingers and hands are used to denote the generally for playing Timila the tip of fingers and palm are used. No sticks or other stuff are used to play this vadya. When the variations are done 16 times, the Idakka player plays in between for the rest of the 16 variations. After this is the time for tempo fixation and this is done Timila Pramani and the co-players standing next to him. They decide in which tempo the whole Panchavadyam should continue. While fixing tempo, an important matter to be considered is the total duration of the Panchavadyam.
If it is a full fledged Panchavadyam it will be performed in the Pathikalam or Vilambakalam. If it is a mediocre Panchavadyam then the whole performance will be in Madhyamakalam. If it is a small scale Panchavadyam it will be in Druthakalam.

In Pathikalam one full Avartha will be played by Timila players followed by Maddala performers who will play the next one full Talavattam. After these both the instrumentalists play in collaboration with each other. For this melodic support will be given by Kombu players. In addition to this the Ilathalam players lend systematic tala support without any flaw.

This will be followed by the second speed, started usually by Idaikka players. In rare cases the Idakka, Maddalam and Timila players together perform at the second speed. Followed by this one full Tala Avarthanam will be performed by Maddala players. The third speed also will be commenced by the Maddala performers. Here there is scope for improvisation and more than one talavattam are played either on Maddalam, Timila and Idakka separately or jointly. Here also there is gradual increasing of the speed and with that they step into the fourth speed. In this stage more importance will be given to joint performances. The total time of a Talavattam will get decreased. These diminished Talavattams will be played individually or jointly by Timila Maddalam and Idakka. Different Gathibhedas or Kurus are played on Timila and Maddalam at this stage. The Kombu players follow the patterns played on these instruments. This procedure will continue for some time and with an increase in the speed they enter into the sixth phase. In this stage some variation are played by all the instruments and then the entire 7 stage which is also called as ‘Triputa ghattam’.
The Triputa Ghattam is a combination of Vilamba Madhya and Drutha Layas. Here there is no scope for individual performances. Triputa Ghattam is also featured by increasing of the speed and after this the Timila players perform Eka tala. Here also after the gradual increase of speed the performers in Maddalam, Idaikka and Kombu are dispersed. Followed by this there is a round called “Timila Idachil” which will be played by Timila and Ilathalam players. It will take Maximum four or five minutes. This will be performed by a player who will be an expert selected by the Timila Pramani. This is a general pattern of Sevanga Panchavadyam played now days.

It is difficult to estimate the time actually Panchavadyam had its origin and development. Formerly Panchavadyam was a part of royal processions but in course of time it became an indispensable factor in temple rituals and festivals. There has been certain difference in its usage depending up on the areas, places where it is performed.
Tayampaka

Tayampaka is another distinctive tala ensemble of Kerala. The main percussion instrument used here is Chenda. In Tayampaka more importance is given to individual performance unlike Panchavadya where the harmony of different instruments is given importance. In Tayampaka Ilattalam is also used as a major time keeper. It also helps to amplify the total performance.

The natural talent of a Chenda player, his Manodharma skill can be shown to its utmost perfection in Tayampaka. Here a player does variation in the left head, colloquially called as Idamthala of Chenda. The reason is that Idamthala is rather softer than the Valamthala of the Chenda.

Standing position of the principal Tayampaka player is the middle position of the dais. Those who keeps tala on Idamthala stands on both the side of the principle player little bit in front and face to face. Besides them the tala keepers on the Valamthala and Ilathalam players form a semi circle and stand behind the main performer. The minimum number of players that take part in a Tayampaka should be 7 in number.
Before commencing the Tayampaka there is a ritual called Sandhyavela or Kottivekkal. In few places Tayampaka is performed without this ritual. There will be four or five Valamthala players and one or two Ilathalam players. They will continue playing throughout the whole performance. The tala commonly used for Sandhyavela is Chempada, Atantha and Ekam. But there will be region wise differences and it takes 5 minutes for the performance.

Tayampaka can be performed either individually, doubly, sometimes triple and in rare cases up to five. In such cases Tayampaka will be led by the principle performer. Though Tayampaka is a one man show but he is supposed to do only with in its limits. Tayampaka is much older than Panchavadyam but it got more popularity than the latter in the beginning of last century. Many artist of caliber are responsible for its gaining popularity and as a result the art of Tayampaka is flourishing even to this day also. The general pattern of Tayampaka performed now days is as follows. Soon after Sandhyavela the Tayamplaka performer takes his “Kol” (This is usually called for the stick that is used for playing). He gives a weighty stroke twice in the middle part of the Idamthala of the Chenda. He should hold stick only in one hand. The other hand will be devoid of stick. The tempo of the whole performance will be based upon the tempo of the stroke given on Chenda.

Generally speaking Tayampaka is divided into three main sections. These are Chempata Vattam or Pathikalam, Kooru and Ekatala. These three sections are again comprised of sub varieties. Of these the last one which is the Eka tala has subdivisions which have four different names. But for Pathikalam and Kooru there are no such divisions. The Pathikalam is performed in four speeds namely
Athivilambam, Vilalmbam, Madhyamam and Drutham. Next division is Kooru. It is also divided in to two subdivisions, Madhyamam and Drutham.

A usual Tayampaka, will last for atleast one and a half hours. In other cases about ¾ portions will be taken for Pathikaalam ½ for Kooru and 15 minutes for Ekatalam. There can be variations in the timings according to the performers.

It is difficult to estimate the origin of the ensemble. There is no idea regarding the creator of this percussion orchestra. But general opinion is that it originated as temple art form. Among the ritualistic instruments used Chenda has a indispensable position. The Valamtala or Chenda is consider as Devavadyam and Idamtala as Asuravadyam.

Many eminent performers of Chenda have contributed to the growth of Tayampaka and to make it more attractive. Foremost among them are Trithala Kunjikrishna Poduval, Alimparambil Sivarama Pothuval, Thrithala Keshava Poduval, Pallavur Appu Marar, Pallavur Kunjukuttan Marar.
Chenda Melam of Kerala is another wonderful example of percussion orchestra. They are performed inside and outside the temple especially for the festivals of Kerala. The most important among them are Panchari Melam and Pandi Melam. Panchari melam is believed to be the oldest type of ritualistic ensemble to be performed in Kerala temples. Panchari melam is regarded as the basic of all other rhythmic ensembles.

Other melams are Pandi, Chempata, Anchatanta, Druvam, Atanta and Chemma. There are certain musical and ritualistic differences between Panchari and other Melams. Panchari melam is performed in an elaborate manner during the annual festivals of a temple. Sometimes the abbreviated version of panchari melam is performed to accompany the daily or weekly rituals.
Panchari melam usually begins at the main entrance of a temple. The performance is done by circumambulating the temple. They usually take a pause and perform on the eight wind directions and atleast complete one Talavattam, thus paying homage to each divinity located in the different parts of the temple. Usually a procession accompanies the Melam which will be led by the main priest sitting on an elephant holding the idol of presiding deity of the temple.

The players stand in a semicircle facing each other. The front row will be occupied by leading Chenda players who play on Idantala. Behind them will be the Valamtala players intermingled with Ilatalam players. Players of Kombu and Kuzhal will stand in the other side of the semicircle. The Chenda melam is led by the main artist in Chenda and each set of instruments will be having a sub-leader. Minimum number of instruments required for Chenta Melam is 1 Itantala Chenda, 3 Valantala, 1 Kuzhal, 1 Kombu and 2 Ilatalam.

The general nature of a Panchari Melam is increasing the speed by decreasing the rhythmic units. A performance of Panchari Melam is divided into 5 stages. Each of the 5 stages will be featured by a Talavattam, which will be repeated according to the total time allotted for the performance. Each of the 5 Kalams has a fixed number of Akshara Kalams starting from 96, 48, 24, 12 to 6 beats. Usually the Panchari Melam begins in a slow speed with 96 Akshara Kalams. A Kalasam is performed after a specific number of repetitions. Then they enter into next stage of performance within the first Talavattam itself. After completing the whole 96 beats they goes to the next phase that is the 48 beats. They increase speed after each Talavattam for the Kalasam and it is called as Tirukalasam. The last phase comprising 6 Talavattams is the shortest and fastest one. The Panchari Melam is
ended with a grand finale with the all instruments playing in highest possible speed thus making the whole show exciting.

The role of Ilatalam players is to keep time but it really adds colour to the melam. The main function of Kombu and Kuzhal in a Panchari melam is to emphasise and prolong the beating of Chenda. So although they are wind instruments in Melam they play the role of rhythm instruments. Usually the raga Sankarabharanam is played in a Panchari melam.

Generally a full-fledged melam takes atleast 3 hours. But in some temples to perform Panchari Melam takes atleast four hours. The performance of a Panchari Melam could be shortened to 45 minutes and for this the first two phases are sometimes omitted. For some poorams maximum 200 musicians take part in a Panchari Melam.

The other types of melam performed other than Panchari are Chempa, Chempata, Atanta, Paandi, Anchatanta and Dhruvam. Usually in a pooram festival Panchari Melam will be followed by Paandi Melam. Other Melams are performed very rarely now a day.

Peruvanam Kuttan Marar, famous Melam performer says that the Melams also can be categorized into Devavadyam and Asuravadyams. The Devavadyam Melams are performed within the Temple walls and are played with bare left hand and right hand holding the stick. Since it is played inside the temple they do it rather softly. Paandi melam is an example for Asura Vadyam and is always performed for Asuras, who live outside the Temple precinct.
The instruments constituting these Melams are Chenda, Kurumkuzhal, Ilathalam, Kombu etc. Two varieties of Chenda are used, one is Uruttu Chenta and other is Veekken Chenda. They are also called Idamthala Chenda and Valamthala Chenda respectively. In Melams, Veekenchenda and Ilathalams are used to keep time. Kurumkuzhal is equally important in leading Chendamelams. The changes figuring in a Melam is shown accurately by the Kuzhal player. The other players understand by following the mannerism shown by the Kuzhal player. So this will be a clue to the other performers about the changes that figures in a performance.

**Elanjithara melam**

Elanjithara melam conducted for Thrissur pooram is very significant because it is the Pandi melam. Pandi melam is usually performed in Devi temples and is in Atanta talam. Legend says that Paramekkavu devi along with Kuruppai (head of an aristocratic Nair family) from Thirumandhankunnu came with umbrella. After reaching Vadakkunnatha temple Kuruppai kept his umbrella on elanji thara and went inside for darsanam. The prathishta of Devi in that elanji thara for a short time is still remembering during Pooram ceremony. It is believed that every year the idol of Paramekkavu devi comes to this Elanji thara on the pooram day with elephant processions and performing pandimelam.
Kombupattu

This genre is one of the few instrumental temples art form in which the melodic instrument dominate. But in Kerala, Kombu is also regarded as a rhythmic instrument because it plays an important role in the embellishment of the drumbeats. Kombu can only produce three notes, Sa, Pa, and Tara Sa. Kombupattu is played by a group of Kombu performers led by the Kombu leader. The leader improvises Kombu pattern on the spot and the others repeat it.

Kummath Raman Nair a solo Kombu artist from Thrissur is of the opinion that Kombupattu can be played in six talam. They are Chembata, Atanta, Dhruvam, Chemba, Anchatantha and Triputa. Each cycle will be accompanied by the Ilathalam players. Kombupattu is played in a steadily increasing tempo like Panchavadyam and Tayampaka.
Kuzhal Pattu

This is another temple genre in which the melodic instrument Kurumkuzhal is played to produce melodic line. In Kuzhalpattu Kuzhal is accompanied by the drum Chenda and Toppimaddalam, Ilathalam and sruthi. In this genre certain ragas like Natta, Harikamboji, Sankarabharanam and Bhairavi are played in sequence. This will be followed by a performance with the accompaniment of Ilathalam, Idamthala Chenda or Thoppimaddalam. The Kuzal artist plays ragas Kamboji and Sankarabharanam to Chembada tala. After this the tempo will be increased and for this they play Hamsadhvani raga to Ekatalam. After a Kalaasam again ragas Kamboji and Madhyamavathi are played in Ekathala. In this stage a performance will be concluded by the final Kalaasam.
End Notes:


2. A folk dance in which the artist plays the role of Kurathi (Tribal woman).

3. The piece of wood in which the students practice.


5. Idiophones or Metallic instruments (Ghana Vadyas)