CHAPTER VIII

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An analysis of various aspects of rituals and music that accompanied these rituals enables to deduce the following conclusions.

Almost one-fourth area of the state is occupied by Temples. Here the division of Kshetras and Kavus is very significant and reveals the fact that both the Aryan and Dravidian culture prevails in this unique land. The ritual conducted in a Kshetram is done by those from Nambuthiri community and in a sophisticated manner. But the rituals conducted in Kavus are done by those from backward communities and are mostly of rustic type. They give importance to sacrifices, sorcery etc, but truly their rituals are more colourful than those done in Brahmanical temples.

Certain rituals like Kalampaattu are done in both Kshetrams and Kavus. This ritual is only conducted for Saiva Murthis, Bhagavathy, Sarpam and Ayyappa. The musical aspects are comparatively lesser in the rituals conducted in a Siva temple. In Siva temples Pani Kottal is given utmost importance.

In Vishnu or Krishna temples Sopana Sangitham is a main feature. Tyanis as well as Ashtapadis are also rendered for Pooja in a Vishnu temple. Another ritual that predominates in a Vishnu temple is Krishnanattam especially in Guruvayur temple. Ritual like Kalam Paattu is totally absent in Vishnu temples. In northern Vishnu temples ‘Tidambu Nrittam is an indispensable ritual. Ensembles like Kombu
Pattu, Kuzhal Pattu, Panchavadyam, Pani Kottal, Tayambaka are given equal importance.

Devi temples are vibrant with a wide variety of rituals. The rituals like Bhagavathy Paattu and Brahmani Paattu figures in a Brahmanical Devi Kshetram while Theyyam, Mudiyattu, Poorakali etc are the main rituals featured in Bhagavathy Kavus. Almost all the rituals associated with Devi are based on the story 'Darika Vadham'.

Regarding the other deities, people of Kerala give more preference to Lord Ayyappa and Nagas than Lord Subrahmania. Subrahmania temples are very rare in Kerala especially Northern Kerala. Lord Subrahmania is worshipped as a sub-deity in many temples. But worship of Nagas is followed very rigidly in Kerala that every temples, shrines and even Tharavadus have Sarpa kavu in them. The Sarpakalam is conducted even in some Bhagavathy temples also. The most favourite god revered by the people of Kerala is indeed Lord Ayyappa. The place where Ayyappa is worshipped is generally called as Ayyappan Kavu. Lord Ayyappa is also worshipped as the sub-deity in many temples. Sabarimala is a prominent world famous temple of Ayyappa.

Same set of songs are sometimes sung for Vettekkorumakan, Bhagavathy and Ayyappan. Regarding ragas used in the ritualistic music of Kerala often rare ragas are met. But due to the lack of proper training from the part of temple musicians, some of these ragas have lost their original colour. Sancharas of certain ragas like Nalatha and Srikhanti are totally unknown to the temple musicians. Some of them don’t even maintain minimum standard. This is going to be a real problem in the future. But few musicians those who belong to the family
of traditional musicians have really come forward to improve the present status of music they handle. Thanks to the influence of Carnatic music, they are singing these ritualistic songs in some of the Rakthi ragas.

Regarding talas Triputa talam is dominating in many of the temple ensembles. Many rare talams like Kaarika talam, Lakshmi talam and Kundanaachi talam have become obsolete. The talams like Panchari, Chempata and Chempa are favourites of the Melam performers.

Kerala temple ensembles are percussion oriented. Wind instruments or Sushira Vadyas takes the second place. Except Nandurni almost all other stringed variety or Tata Vadayams do not have any place in rituals.

Temple and Temple arts forms the preserving centre for many art forms and musical instruments. It is a tragic fact that many of these are falling into oblivion. Even though many studies are made in these fields, modern methods should be adhered to preserve and record these long cherished music of Kerala. Efforts and steps must be taken to record these music and preserve them for future generations.