CHAPTER I
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The greatest contribution of India to the world is its high and rich spiritualistic heritage. India's spiritual lineage is so powerful that it has attracted people all around the globe towards her. The spiritual thoughts along with its cultural values, art forms all paved the way to the birth of Temples as institutions to promote and develop all the natural skills that were bound in each and every Indian. Temples emerged as a centre for celebrations of rites and Traditions, a panorama of myths and legends for the entertainment and enlightenment of the devotees, a source to uplift the worshippers, a symbolic presentation of the aspects of good and evil birth and death, worldly and divine, mortal and immortal, a social and cultural centre and a spectacular display of political and economic power of the country.

Origin and evolution of Temples in Kerala

According to tradition, Sage Parasurama is said to have established Temples by raging the land of Kerala from Sea throwing his battle axe. He further built 108 temples in this region. Kerala Mahatmya¹, a great book which deals with history of Kerala discusses that God Vishnu instructed Parasurama to establish numerous temples all over the region and to install different deities in them. The book also clarifies that Temples of Durga were located on Seashores where as those of Sasta were established in hilly regions. According to Keralolpathi² the sage is credited with the establishment of 4448
Hinduism was the only religion pervading all over India and a movement for establishing the Hinduism originated in Kerala also around 8th century AD. The movement gave rise to many of the powerful personalities of whom, the most outstanding were Prabhakara Guru, Adi Sankaracharya, Kulashekhara Alwar and Cheraman Perumal.

The great Adi Sankaracharya is the most prolific of spiritual Guru, India had ever seen. He was born in Kalady, a place in Kerala. He is the innovator of Advaita Philosophy. But his doctrines of Advaita philosophy appealed to the intellect only. For common man he strongly promoted idea of Temple worship. For this he is said to have laid rules for priests regarding how to conduct Poojas or rituals in Temple.

A special mention should be made of Kulshekaras of Mahodyapuram (800-1102). They were great patrons of Hinduism. Temple building received a great impetus at their hand. The first Temple was built from the ninth century AD onwards, although most of present temples were built much later.

**Evolution of Tantrika Rituals in Kerala Temples**
Kerala Mahatmyam, a great treatise on the History of Kerala, which is in Sanskrit containing more than 2300 stanzas and hundred chapter states that Vishnu asked sage Parasurama to establish 24000 shrines in which 33 deities are to be installed³. The sage obeyed Vishnu and he also recruited twelve Tantrins of great repute for the worship in these temples. All these temples were installed with different deities like Siva, Vishnu, Bhadrakali, Durga, Ganapati, Subrahmanya, Sarasvati, Sasta, Sankaranarayana, Srirama, Krishna, Narasimha and Parvathy. In some temple we see conceived form of deities like Siva as Dakshinamurti, Sankaranarayana, Ardhanareesvara, Vettekkorumakan etc. Likewise for Vishnu and Devi also we see such aspects. Most unique deity seen in Kerala is Sasta, Ayyappa or Hariharaputra. Ayyappa is believed to have been born from the union of Hari in the form of Mohini and Hara i.e., Siva. Another deity specially known to Kerala is Kiratamurthi or the Hunter God born out of the union between Siva and Parvati when both assumed the form of hunters. Vettakkorumakan is also another name for Kiratamurthi.

**General characteristic features of rituals performed in Kerala temples and Tantrikas**

In the religious context of Hindu in Kerala the term ritual denotes a structured performance to establish a relationship between devotees and divine powers. The ritual or ceremonial worship is a combination of both Vaidika with Vedic Manthras and methods and Tantrika with non-Vedic Mantras and rules, the Tantrika element slightly predominating over the Vaidika. It therefore comes under the category Tantrika-Vaidika following the classification of the Purushartha Prabodha of Brahananda Bharati, a Vaidika worship in Tantrik mode.
Almost every major Temple in Kerala has a major priest called Tantri who has the authority on every aspect that matters rituals in the temple. This Brahmin priest has the power of certain traditional rites like installation of Idols, conduct of special rituals, festivals etc.

In Kerala priests recites the Mantras inaudible and show various gestures with meticulous core following the prescriptions of the manuals. In other regions the Pooja is ritualistic and religious where only a trained priest is allowed to perform.

**General classification of Rituals**

Rituals in Kerala temple can be classified under four categories. They are the daily rituals, monthly rituals, the annual rituals and festivals which take place once or twice in a year. The first division comprises of the routine rituals that is performed every day in a Temple called as Nityanidana Pooja. Here considering the size and popularity of temples, the modes of worship also change and it is classified as minor and major. The rituals coming under second category are those performed on certain specific days like Tuesday and Friday and those conducted on the asterisms of Karthika and Sravana on days like Chathurthi, Shashti and Pournami etc. The annual rituals also known as Attavisesham are those performed annually on the days of Sivarathri, Ashtamirohini etc. In the fourth category belong the pompous festivals with processions, ‘Vilakkacharam’ and cultural performances.
The festivals performed in Kerala temples is a latter development after the Aryanisation of temples. The Utsava conducted are also classified into three classes. One is the Anguradi Utsava which is more Satvic in nature. Here great importance is given to Tantrik rituals like Utsavabali etc. examples of such Utsavas are those conducted in Irinjalakkuda and Guruvayur temples. The second one is Padahadi which is conducted in the temples of Thrirayar and Peruvanam of Trichur district, where lesser importance is given to Tantric rites. Thrissur Pooram is an example of the third one Dhvajadi. Here the Kodiyettam is given importance.

**General survey of Daily and annual rituals and festivals conducted in Kerala Temple:-**

Both major and minor follows a systematic mode of rituals. The rituals practice can be distinguished as between daily occasional and annual rituals. The annual rituals are always celebrated with a festival. It can be said as an extended version of the daily practices. There are written accounts of the temple rituals in detail from the 9th century AD onwards. These rituals are practiced on the basis of great treatises like Prapanchasara of Sankaracharya. This work is found to be the earliest of this kind. The last concise and still being used ritual manual is the Tantrasamuccchaya written by Chennas Narayan Nambuthiri in the 15th century. The works are written for the benefit of Temple priests and authorities by providing instructions about rituals. There are rules regarding the number of Poojas as well as the time of their performances.
The daily poojas of temple begins with Palliunarthal which is waking up of the deity from the nidra Samadhi. Generally there will be 3 Poojas in the temples of which is called Ushapooja. This is done around 5.00 to 6.00 am. One Abhisheka is performed to the Idol every day very early in the morning followed by Alankaras or decorations. The second Pooja is done noon time is called as Madhyahna Pooja or Uccha Pooja. The temple is closed after this. In the evening after opening the third Pooja is done in the early part of the night. This is called Ardhayama Pooja after which the temple remains closed till the next morning. All these Poojas have certain peculiarities in detail but the one that is most noteworthy is the offering of Bali to the Dikpalas and other connected Devatas after the Naivedya to the principal deity, followed by a procession of the Utsavamurthi along the Bahyaharya to the accompaniment of drums and other musical instruments. In some temples there will be an additional Pooja called Pantheerati between the Ushapooja and Uchapooja and in certain temples yet another Pooja called Ethirtha Pooja or Ethirettu Pooja between the Ushapooja and Pantheerati. Pantheerati literally meaning 12 feet, determines the time of pooja based on human shadow measuring 12 feet in the morning. Ethirthupooja is conducted at the moment when the rise of the sun are right in front of the deity or garbhadwara of the sreekovil or simply the time when the sun emerges on the eastern horizon at a particular level that is between one and one and a half hours after sun rise.

A table of pooja and timings are given below. Timings may vary according to sunrise and sunset and also depending on specify rituals followed in a particular
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl.No</th>
<th>Pooja</th>
<th>Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Palliunarthal</td>
<td>7½ nazhikas (3 hours) before sunrise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Abhisheka</td>
<td>1½ nazhikas (30 minutes) before sunrise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Ushapooja</td>
<td>1½ nazhikas (30 minutes) after sunrise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Ethirthu pooja</td>
<td>Between 2½ nazhikas (1 hour) and 2¾ nazhikas (1½ hours) after sunrise.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Pantheerati pooja</td>
<td>Between 5 nazhikas (2 hours) and 6¼ nazhikas (2½ hours) after sunrise.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Navaka-kalasabhishekam</td>
<td>At 7½ nazhikas (3 hours) after sunrise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Uchapooja</td>
<td>Between 11¼ nazhikas (4½ hours) and 15 nazhikas (6 hours) after sunrise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Thirinja Pantheerati</td>
<td>5 nazhikas (2 hours) before sunset</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Athazha pooja</td>
<td>Between 2½ nazhikas (1 hour) and 5 nazhikas (2 hours) after sunset.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The rituals during the Utsavas or festivals are very elaborate and have unique features. The item that deserves special mention is the Sribhutabali that lasts for quite a long time and has to be done with special care and in strict adherence to the rules laid down for each
Devata connected with it.

The everyday ritual of an ordinary Kerala temple is rather a modest affair. But the Temple festivals are conducted in a lavish way. These festivals forms are the main leisure time attraction of Kerala’s population. A normal Utsava of Kerala temple features performing art forms like Kathakali, Koodiyattom, Krishnanattam, Koothu etc. Also huge elephant processions with the animal in the centre carrying the divine replica will be there. Other interesting feature is the musical performances of the bigger percussion orchestras like Panchavadyam, Tayampaka etc. During festival Tantri will conduct extensive rituals and finally grand fireworks will also be there. The festival season lasts from mid-September to the end of May. Temple festivals like Pooram, Ekadashi, Shivarathri are conducted annually in accordance to specific moon or star positions.

**Division into Kshethram and Kavu.**

The assimilation of Aryan ideas from the north and Dravidian ideas from the south are widely seen in the religious practices of Kerala. There is nothing wrong in estimating that Aryan practices merged and got developed in the Kshetrams or Brahmanical temples while Dravidian ideas were manifested in Kavus of Kerala. Temple or kshethram literally means fertile land, a place of abode or a place of origin. Kshethram can be compared symbolically to the various angas of human body. A sloka quotes: “kshatal trayathe iti kshetraha” which means that which helps one to get relieved from body ailments. Another sloka that shows the significance of word kshethra is: “idam saivam koundeyam kshethra mithyabhitiyade”.Kavus literally means grove where the village or house shrine is located.Intially kavu was
attached to tharvadus and the kshethram associated with houses, but currently kavus are found attached with the main temples only. The ritual performances done in both the Kshethram and Kavu ritual is of highly spiritual type. They represent the two main forms of Hindu rituals in Kerala. Famous anthropologist J.R. Freeman uses the terms possession and priesthood to describe the nature of rituals conducted in Kshethram and Kavu respectively.

Evolution of Sopana Sangeetham

The whole of South India, especially Tamilnadu witnessed the dawn of Bhakthi movement in early medieval period. The movement stirred the music of Tamils through Tevaram and Nalayira Divya Prabandham. The songs conveyed a huge amount of philosophical thought and spiritual pursuit. A shadow of this movement was seen in Kerala which also influenced her musical aspect. As a result of this a new style of singing emerged in the temples of Kerala. Thus the songs dipped in devotional fervor which was sung standing in the ladder or staircase called Sopanam leading to the sanctum sanctorum of a temple came to be called as Sopana Sangitham. Naming may be a later development say, during the rule of Kulashekhara Varma. During his reign temple architecture received a fresh impetus. He built Vimanam, Gopuram, Srikovil, Sopana Mantapam. In order to patronize art he constructed Koothambalam. He also recruited artists and singers in temple to assist the daily chores. We can see influence of Tevara pans when we closely evaluate the ragas used for Sopana singing. Many ragas used in Tevaram are being used in Sopana Sangitha like Puraniru, Padi, Kanakkurinchi and Khandaram. The ragas of Sopana Sangitha are sung to Ganakala Niyama strengthens the fact that those are adopted from Tamil music. The fact that there is a Tamil tinge in
these songs is also a reason to give a Tevaram origin for the songs. Moreover this Tamil influence is widely seen in the songs used by village folks and later on it manifested in the ritualistic songs performed in the Kavus also, such as Sarppam Paattu, Mudiyettu Paattu etc.

Later in the twelfth century with the influence of Githagovindam Sopana Sangitham took another shape. Besides that Ramapanivadan’s 36 songs composed in Sanskrit in praise of Mookkola Bhagavathy were willingly received by the temple singers. According to Theeyadi Raman ‘Sopana Sangitha is a unique style of rendering, mainly created to converse with deity in the ambience of utmost devotion, thus making it more simple with lesser raga Sancharas. This type of singing is also known as “Kotti Paadi Seva”.

The presence of music in temple rituals

Music is an indigenous aspect in all the rituals that are conducted in a Kerala temple. Every routine rituals conducted in a temple will be done by the accompaniment of Music. Instruments are also used for this purpose specially percussion instruments. For instance, before the first Pooja ie, Ushapooja, the priest plays the Shankh or conch three times to wake up the deity which is called Palliunarthal followed by Abhishekam, the cleaning and oiling of the idol, done in the closed Srikovil. For this Ushapooja “Kottipadiseva” is performed by Marar to the accompaniment of Idaikka and Chengila. For Kottipadiseva the singer sings Dhyanis or Tyanis. There are short songs sung in praise of the presiding deity of the temple.
As mentioned earlier for each and every Pooja there will be the accompaniment either by singing or drumming for the Ethiruttupooja which is performed in the morning at about 7 am also there will be Kottipadi Seva followed by Sreebali or Seeveli. Like wise for Pantirati, madhyahna or Uchcha pooja and Ardhayamapooja also which is normally performed at 7.30pm ,the Kottipadi Seva is done.

One of the rituals that deserve special mention is Sreebali or Seeveli. These are offerings done to Bhutaganas which are consecrated in the temple in the form of circular stones. Sreebali or Seeveli is the daily ritual. The same offering conducted in more elaborated manner on special days is called ‘Sreebhutabali’ and Ultsavabali, the most elaborate ritual performed at the annual temple festival. This ritual is done by taking quite a long time and has to be done with special care and in strict adherence to the rules laid down for each Devata or deity connected with it. For Sreebhutabali, Timila, a drum indigenous to Kerala has to be beaten for each Devata in different manner with different duration. This is called Paani Kottal. Though it is a ritual but it is very delicate in nature. Usually senior temple drummer plays it with utmost care because there is a famous saying in Malayalam, ‘Paani pizhachal Koni’. It means if any mistake done by drummer while performing Paani, will lead to death. This shows how important every ritual is and also it musical as well as rhythmical.

For Madhyahna Pooja after singing Tyanis followed by Sreebali, Kooru is played on Idaikka which is an interesting aspect of ritualistic music. Kooru are set rhythmic patterns played on Idaikka. There are Koorus set in different talams like Chempata, Triputa etc. For each
Pooja, they perform Kooru in different talas which are already fixed earlier. For instance for Uccha Pooja Kooru is performed in Chempata talam which is the Aditala equivalent of Carnatic music and for Ardhayama Pooja Idakka Kooru is done in Triputa talam and Tyanis are sung, followed by Sreebali and Diparadhana. Diparadhana is daily ritual done by lighting of the oil lamps attached to the Srikovil and burning of the camphor. It is done after sunset in temples. This ritual is not directly related to any Pooja and is not mentioned in the treatise like Tantrsamuchaya. But it is an important part of the evening Pooja. It starts with playing Sankhu 9 times. The temple musicians usually support this Pooja with an abbreviated Melam and Idakka Kooru. The lighting of the oil lamps along the outer walls of Nalambalam i.e., the inner temple wall is the main attraction for the devotees. In some temples of Kerala Deeparadhana is done with 5 different lamps such as Tattu Vilakku, Kumbha Vilakku, Naga Vilakku, Panchalathiri and lastly Karpura Arathi. Only the last one is shown to devotees.

During festivals when Pradakshinas are done there is a ritual where in the goddess is situated in front of the Saptamadriga stone plinths. The priest uses all lights and flowers and distributes food morsels in to the plinths. The concept is that the Goddess is receiving all minor Gods and spirits of the temple. By doing this she receives the blessings of their divine companions. This ritual is considered to be very auspicious and this is accompanied by Kriyanga Panchavadya, an indigenous percussion ensemble of Kerala. All this shows that music plays an important part in Kerala temples especially for accompanying rituals.
Aims and objective of the study

The topic of this study is ‘THE ROLE OF MUSIC IN THE TEMPLE OF NORTHERN KERALA’. The objective of the study is to showcase the musical elements of rituals that is conducted in the northern parts of Kerala (Thrissur till Kasargode). Even though many works have already been done to elucidate the significance of these rituals, no attempt is made to popularise the musical aspects of these rituals till now. Present study is taken up with the intention of popularising music as well as the instruments used for accompanying these rituals.

Methodology

The methodology adopted for this study is historical and analytical. Data is collected from both primary and secondary source. For primary source, Temples were visited and interviews were done with the exponents of these rituals. Secondary source comprises of references taken from books, journals, periodicals, articles, paper cuttings and internet. Photographs of some of the temples, rituals as well as instruments are included in this study. Audio CD of the songs and percussion ensembles are also kept within this thesis.

The proposed Research study consists of the following chapters

1. Introduction
2. Music for rituals in Siva Temples
3. Music for rituals in Vishnu Temples
4. Importance of Music in the rituals in Devi Temples
5. Music of rituals perfume in the temples of other Deities
6. Ragas and Talas used in the songs
7. Musical instruments used in these Temples

8. Conclusion

Glossary - Certain unique terms in Malayalam and their meanings are given

Appendix- List of photographs of rituals as well as instruments and recordings of songs and ensembles used in the rituals included in the study

This study is a humble attempt to know about the evolution as well as the presence status of rituals and music that accompanied them in northern Kerala Since the topic is vast, only selected rituals are taken for the study. Only temples with ritualistic and musical relevance have been dealt through this work.

End Notes

1. The very first book written about the history of Kerala in Sanskrit by unknown author.

2. Treatise in Malayalam written in 18th or 19th century.

3. Edited by Maha Mahopadhya, T Ganapathy Sasthri with an elaborate introduction by Dr. N.P. Unni, Tantra Samuchaya of Chennas Narayanan Namboothiripadu – pp 5


5. Rolf Killius, ritual music and hindu rituals of Kerala pub Motilal V.K. books of India 2007 – chapter 2 kshetra, pp24