

INTRODUCTION

Local history is generally understood as a range of historical writings, focusing on specific, geographically small, areas usually by non – professional historians for popular reading. Local history started as amateur attempts to promote a locality or community as a matter of pride and even now such trends prevail and the term local history continues to be linked with antiquarianism and amateur historiography. It often incorporates cultural and social aspects of life in a particular locality. Historic plaques are one form of documentation of significant occurrences in the past and oral histories are the other sources that are depended on for local history narratives. Many works of local history are compiled by amateur historians working independently or engaged by local organizations.

The importance of local history has been recognized the world over since the appearance of the Annales School . One of the early attempts to use the term micro-history as a self – defined term for local history was made by an American scholar, George R. Sterwart (1959). A few years later, independently of Stewart, an American scholar Luis Gonzales used the word micro-history in the subtitle of a monograph which investigates the transformation experienced by a tiny forgotten village in the span of a few centuries . With the writing of the micro histories of each locality, the hitherto banished locality, movements, struggles, sacrifices and people started to

occupy a place of respect in historical writings. These local histories helped to throw more light on the hitherto unknown, ignored or neglected aspects of human life in small localities and enabled the critical reading of the mainstream histories and necessitated changes in them.¹ The specificity of a locality could be due to one or more factors, in which geography and human interaction play a very crucial role. This effort is also aimed at enriching the existing corpus of knowledge related to human life in and around the region of Mavelikkara. In writing the local history, one should follow a different methodology which is interdisciplinary.²

Sociological methods of conducting field work, linguistic analysis, economics and anthropology are of great help in writing local history. For writing local history some basic requirements are to be met. The first one is a regressive method that will be more fruitful. Secondly the approach should be thematic. Place names are another important source material for writing local history.³

One of the most significant effects of this kind of local publishing, particularly the publishing of the characteristics of working classes autobiographies, has been perhaps; a book used in school, picked up by the parents at home which becomes the basis for real discussion between parents and children. The process of change which our local historical consciousness recognizes is of great significance to us, as it is a

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1. Russo, David, Keepers of our past. Local Historical writings in the United States, 1820-1930 (contributions in American History, No 128) New York, Greenwood Press 1988
 2. Trubshaw, Bob. How to write and publish Local History (Heart of Albion Press, 1999)
 3. Tiller, Kate-English Local History: an introduction (Thrupp: Alan Sutton. 1992)

source of unending interest.⁴ It expresses itself in the passion for learning the history of one's own locality. Local history encompasses all categories of people including the working classes which always remained marginalised. New local histories operate on a variety of levels such as the village or the town, the family or the clan, the caste or the ethnic group. Local history ties together all sorts of disciplines including academic subjects such as history, geography, and anthropology. It brings together librarians, archivists, museum curators, and heritage centre managers. The practitioners of local history come in all shapes and sizes from family historians simply trying to track down their ancestors to University professors writing detailed studies of particular places within this comity of interests. There is an inevitable tendency towards fragmentation, both in respect of the different skills, interests and subject matters, and also in relation to the occasional acrimonious debates about methodology⁵

Local histories may collectively constitute a major part of evidence which will be of great value in understanding the past. Local history debates and discussions on local communities, regions and the ways in which economic and social history, as well as political and other types of history, have their impact on the study of local history. Local history today can hardly be defined in a simple, forthright manner. Perhaps no other history is as difficult as local history because it is place specific

4. Burke, Peter(ed) *New perspectives on Historical writing* (polity press-1991)

5. Ronald, Grele, Oral History, in Kelly Boyd(ed), *Encyclopedia of Historians and Historical writing* -2 volumes (Chicago,Fitzroy Dearborn publishers 1999) Page 16- 18

rather than vast subject-specific and is not time bound, whereas other histories belong to a particular period or region⁶. It is neither ancient nor modern. Nor is it economic or political. Local history has neither the grand sweep of the 19th century narrative of historians, nor the detailed focus of academics writing about the state and the nation from the perspective of political history, foreign policy, international relations and similar perspectives.⁷

The pursuit of local history and chronicling the same engage the attention of teachers, students and even common men while there are laymen who boast of their native places and present their history according to their fancies. There are others who try to look into the past of their native places with serious interest and curiosity. Good and authentic local history makes enduring contribution to Social Science. Local history is a valuable source of information to different sections of society. For this spatial scale they can better realize totality and credibility in their micro historical endeavours, integrating various multidisciplinary approaches, and also achieving a bridging of the pursuit of histories of the local and of the national and general⁸. It serves as a guide to politicians, statesmen and other social workers. Above all it

6. Eric Hob.S.Bawn,"onhistory from below, in Eric Hobs bawn on history (London, Weidemfeld and Nicolson, 1997) Page 48-52 .

7. IBID Page: 56

8. Lyn Gorman, Regional and Local history in the 1990's into the main stream journal of Regional and Local studies, Vol:14 No1(1994)Page 10-24,Hudson optic Page:5-24 and J D Marshall Communities, societies, region and local history, Perceptions of locality in high and low Furnsess, The Local Historian, Vol.26, No:1(1996) Page36-39.

becomes useful in supplementing or complementing mega history. It supports or contradicts accepted postulates and may sometimes throw new light on existing perception of facts, myth, flight of imagination; all goes into it and makes it a subject matter of analysis, critical evaluation and future probe.⁹

Documenting the events of their life had been something like a pastime for many people. Such documents have benefited not only individuals but also the community as a whole. Such documentation has been motivated more by petty selfish interests or prejudices than by the real interest in the study of one's past. For example, in France and England, it grew in the 16th century in an effort to establish one's mobility. American historical writing of the 18th century portrays political points of view and seeks to establish a provincial identity.

The existing primary and secondary sources highlight some of the happenings of a political or ideological nature. There is no need for local historians to assume that the only kind of local history is compiling and writing the history of one particular place.¹⁰ Local history gives general information on the pattern of land holdings and different forms of occupation like education, health, cultural forms, caste, religion, etc. This is mainly intended as revenue statistics, information on law and order, activities of the state such as public works which are important but insufficient for understanding socio-cultural processes.¹¹

9. Hill M& Gillespie R (eds) Doing Irish Local History pursuit and practices, 1998, Institute of Irish studies Page:78

10. W .G Hoskins welcome from the president. The Devon Historian, Vol 1(1970) P 1-2.

11. K.N Ganesh, Local speaks-The experience of making a local history. The case of Tirurangadi project, 2009, p24

In local history it is clearly felt that the surname study would be a mechanism for this as an exercise that would also be more socially inclusive than the local bibliography. Local history draws information from different sources. Besides events, cultural heritage, genealogy, folklore, etc, provide information on the region concerned. Historical sites, institutions, worship patterns, folk songs and folk arts throw much light.¹² Every caste is legitimized by different versions of Keralolpathy account. Many of these accounts were later presented to the British authorities for earning some sort of Privy Purse or other compensation.¹³

Consistent efforts at writing the history of a particular community date back to the family histories of the 1840s and the study of records of institutions such as churches, temples, mosques and synagogues helps us to trace the life patterns of the people of a region and to identify the stages of the transformations that have taken place. Caste and community organizations have in fact encouraged some of the social activities which provided the services needed by the community, when various occupational groups, services personnel or other social sections needed some right or authority regarding their profession, or social status it was customary for them to resort to some traditional account.¹⁴ Another source of local history is folklore and narrative poems describing events such as the infighting amongst the members of a ruling family or the heroic death of a warrior.

12 M.R. Rahava Warriar, Local history changing perspectives, Publication Division. The Local speaks preparations local History, 2009, p 18.

13. IBID, Page, 19.

14. Vinay Lal, South Asian Cultural Studies, a Biograph, New Delhi, Manohar 1996.

We accepted these compositions as history because they follow certain features that are helpful in distinguishing history from non- history. The historian is motivated by the urge to record an event very important in the history of the locality, rather than to evoke emotions or sentiments. The ordering of events , vocabulary and the style show that these texts are different from the literary texts that deal with the past in fanciful ways.¹⁵ A local history movement has been gradually developing in India; serious efforts were made to write the history of the states like Kerala, Tamil Nadu or Karnataka. Though this has led to the detailed and accurate histories of the states, the problem of exclusion and marginalization continued. Interestingly, the state based histories have similar characteristics of mainstream histories, just as the states are being marginalized in the mainstream national histories; the state histories are manipulated to marginalize the localities.¹⁶

For example, a balanced history of Kerala representing its entire constituent regions is yet to appear. During the last few years a number of local histories have been published. They were mainly attempts at histories of Panchayats and sometimes districts. However the existing local histories have some methodological problems. Many local histories were conceived as local versions of macro histories with emphasis on national or major regional events, rulers or ruling houses, prominent historical movements in the area and so on; another version of local history basically narrates

15. Carter P & Thomson K, Sources of Local Historians, 2005, p28

16. Raina, Dhruv and Irfan Habeeb situating the History of science, Oxford University Press

the cultural heritage of the locality such as festivals, rituals, ethnographic details, etc.¹⁷

A third variety can be called folkloristic which concentrates on local knowledge, traditions and aesthetic expressions. It sometimes stresses the indigenous as against the great traditions described in macro histories. There is also the problem of fixing boundaries. The Panchayat boundaries have been fixed recently and so they do not correspond to the boundaries of the early settlements. Such changes in the local boundaries complicate the nature of the data collected.¹⁸ Many local histories do not take into account such methodological issues and often end up mixing them in irrational ways. Thus it undermines their authenticity. Local history provides some interesting insights which can be used to understand the relationship between the past and the present. The knowledge that the inhabitants of a region possess regarding their habitat, resources and immediate environment is vital.¹⁹ This can be seen in agrarian communities, aiming craftsmen and in the elements of the social practices and some religious rituals. The knowledge of village communities exists in naming places, flora, fauna, care of the baby and such other things as the dissimulation. Such knowledge is mainly oral.²⁰

The most important feature of knowledge is that it is based on practice and the link between knowledge and practice is very important in understanding the past.

17. Rafel Samuel people's history and socialist Theory R outledge & Kegan Paul Ltd London 1981. Page 25

18. Eagleton Terry, The idea of culture Massachusetts, Black Well publishers, 2000 Page-310

19. Raymond Gillespie & Myrtle Hill (eds) doing Irish Local History 1998, Institute of Irish Studies. Page: 210 -216

20. GWYN Prins, Oral History, in Peter Burke (ed). New Perspectives on Historical Writing (polity press Cambridge, 1991, 2001) 8-10

The importance of memory is another insight we get from local history. Memory is the most important link that one can have with one's past and it is a way in which human beings interpret their past. Such interpretations are all traditions which are only memories synthesized into institutions.²¹ Exploration of the materialistic culture of people also provides some insight. The material products have undergone changes as per the changing needs and taste. This is a feature one must explore in standard histories. But local histories have thrown light on such changes in the process of data collection.²² In order to demonstrate the socio cultural transformation it is the data collected from there that serve the purpose most.

Like several other fields of studies in the social and literary realm, historical investigations also are the subjects of purview of several schools of thought and conceptual positions. It may be necessary to make an overview of the various perceptions and positions received in this regard. Local history approach is made with a feeling that the local history approach facilitates the coming in of all types of events and influences in the life of the people. In any local context such elements are necessarily present. Nevertheless it would be useful to have a general idea of the approaches listed above. Ethno-historical studies are generally conceived as the study of the origin and function of human cultures.

21. IBID, Page-12

22. Eric Hobsbawm 'On History from below ' in Eric Hobsbawm, on history (London weidenfeld and nicolson, 1997)

Ethnology is a genre of anthropological study involving the systematic comparison of folklores, beliefs and practices. In the 20th century local history was a source of entertainment and local pride.²³ In India the cycle of regional studies began with modernization and westernization and it intensified in the 20th century. The challenges that are faced in thinking and theorizing in local history in the beginning of the 20th century concern the process and synthesis²⁴.

Jeffrey Stanyer's thoughts are echoed in some more recent commentaries urging renewed consideration of the region and regionalism, and their significance in the playing out of political, economic and cultural trends in the post modernising, globalizing and devolving context of the late twentieth century.²⁵ The growing concern with regional issues also led to the study of regions. Recently interest in local history has leapt up with the introduction of decentralized planning. The critical importance of local history in understanding and writing a truly national history cannot be ignored fast.²⁶ A local history is expectedly closer to the people's heart and consciousness because it reflects their own identity, experiences and aspirations. It is the interpretative re-creation of the past of their locality, embracing its political, social, economic and cultural life. This includes the development of the institutions in the geographical unit and the successes and failures of its people. An awareness of the

23. Neil Evans, Think Continentally, research regionally reflections on the rise of regional Europe; journal of Regional and local studies. Vol:14, No:1(1994) Page 6-7 Pat Hudson, Regional and local history.

24. Globalisation, post modernism and the future; journal of Regional and local history studies Vol: 20 Noss: 1(1999) Page 16-18. Royle opcit Page 178 and Michael A Williams, Researching local history: The human journey (Longman, 1996) P:265

25. Jeffrey Stanyer Devon, steadfast and changing: An essay in analytical local administrative history. The local Historian Vol: 15 (1977) P2&4

26. IBID: 6

local way in which provisional representations of historical pasts are revealed is as significant as the quest for absolute and impartial reconstruction.²⁷

The history of a local community is captured best by tracing the history of the institutions and social relations. In a realistic sense the study falls into the study of the history of economic, political, religious and social configurations that emerge in the locality. They are of particular significance in the context of social transformation as they often act as the agents of change.²⁸ This study is basically the local history of Mavelikkara in Kerala, the southern most state of India. Here an attempt is made to use the available materials with a view to recreating the experiences of the past communities of these regions. This calls for understanding specific issues and gaining knowledge about specific sites. The information gathered is expected to fulfil this need.

HYPOTHESIS

Local traditions and cultural forms of Mavelikkara truly reveal the agrarian character of the region. The prosperity gained through different agrarian practices played a crucial role in shaping the socio-economic history of the region. Development of agriculture, emergence of new classes and resultant changes in the cultural landscape of the region are probed in the thesis to understand various strands in the construction

27. George Sheeran and Yaniana Sheeran, *Reconstructing local history*. The local historian Vol: 29, NO 4 (1999) P 256-262 and George Sheeran and Yanina Sheeran *Reconstructing local history the Sheerans reply*; The local Historian ,Vol: 31, No:1 (2001) P49-50.

28. John Beckelt, *Writing local history*, Manchester University press, U.K 2007 Page 211

of its local history. Though a micro level application of research methodology is undertaken in the work, it is contextualized within the broad contours of Kerala history. It is argued that the emergence of Mavelikkara as a unique cultural entity cannot be explained well without shedding light on the agrarian expansion and commercial development of the region.

OBJECTIVES

1. To trace the historical roots of Mavelikkara and identify the structures that propelled social changes in its history.
2. To critically examine the political lineages of the region.
3. To trace the Buddhist tradition and its vestiges.
4. To explicate the religious life of Mavelikkara
5. To document the artistic and cultural heritage of Mavelikkara.

METHODOLOGY

The methodology adopted in the thesis is mainly descriptive cum analytical. The work is done with an interdisciplinary perspective. No work on local history is fruitful unless insights from other disciplines are intergrated. An effort is made to employ different techniques adopted in other disciplines to collect data.

Appropriate authentication is made in the form of foot notes. Oral interviews were conducted to extract otherwise unavailable information for which oral methodology was employed.

SOURCES

Documented information about the history of this place is very scanty . So the researcher used various sources that usually merit the attention of academic research. There hardly exists any study on the region and the information had to be collected from various social sources including families and caste based institutions. The present study has utilized both primary and secondary source materials. Apart from the oral evidence, careful effort has been made to collect information from the available records such as Administrative Reports (Travancore), South Indian Temple Inscriptions, Grandhavaries, Records from Panchayat offices, Census Reports, Travelogues, Family Records, Kerala Society Papers, News Papers, Pamphlets, hand written journals, archaeological reports ,etc.

Inscriptions

The study of inscriptions is of special importance in the history of Kerala. Most of the inscriptions were of different social, political, economic, cultural and religious aspects of different periods. The history of various kingdoms can be traced by the

epigraphic evidences as the inscriptions mention their genealogy. The inscriptions generally offer information on certain important events of Kerala history. It is believed that almost all important inscriptions already discovered have been studied and utilized for the reconstruction of cultural history of Kerala.

Kandiyoor inscription of Iravi Kerala Varman, Kollam 393

This is one of the oldest inscriptions in Mavelikkara. This inscription was deciphered by T.A. Gopinatha Rao. It is the earliest record dated in the Kollam Era and written in Vattezhuthu alphabet and the language used is Tamil. The details of property and materials gifted to the temple and the names and details of the persons who gifted them are recorded in it. Kandiyoor Inscription of Iravi Kerala Varman Kollam was issued in the Mal Era 393. The details of the edict were the request made by one Devadasi by name Unnikalathiram to Unnikerala Varma for reconstruction of the temple. The record establishes that the construction work started on seventeenth month of Thulam of Malayalam Era 392 and was completed on 8th Medam 393.

Kandiyoor inscription of Raman Kodai Varman of 396

Kandiyoor Inscription of Raman Kodai Varman of 396 made in the Malayalam Era 396 is located in front of the sanctum-sanctorum. The contents of this inscription are about respectable Kothavarman, son of Raman who had conducted abhishekam for

Sreekantan of Kandiyoore on *kalidinam* on 15-11-564. The language of this inscription is Sanskrit and the script is in grandhaksha. (Book letters).²⁹ (Fig.1)

Paliyam Stone Edict of Vikramadithya Varaguna

Paliyam stone edict is the record of Vikramadithya Varagunan. The influence of Buddhism is explained in this record. Sree Moolavasam is one of the famous Buddhist centers of Kerala. In Paliyam cheppedu it is recorded that Vikramadithya Varagunan tried to protect the temple of Lord Buddha at Sreemoolavasam.

Haripad inscription

Haripad Inscription is mentioned in the name of a local chief named Raman Adicha Varman who was the ruler of Odanadu the tract of land that represented the coastal territory, with Kayamkulam as its former capital. There is also information about his predecessors, Ravi Adichchan and Ravi Kerala Varman.

Grandhavarikal

Chronicles are the records narrating the social life of the people of Kerala. Besides giving the political history, these chronicles will help to form ideas on land and money transactions, customs and rites, agreements, provincial details of a particular place, and the give and take policy that existed between these states. Through this

29. Travancore Archiological series two & three.

study three important chronicles are found to be useful, i.e Thiruvalla grandhavaries, Puliyoor grandhavaries and Niranam grandhavaries.

Niranam Grandhavari

Niranam grandhavaries are about Churches established near Mavelikkara between 1770 and 1885. In this the importance of every culture, legend and history, is narrated. Besides, painter K.M.Varghese of Mavelikkara has copied the first historical Niranam grandhavaries written in Thaliyola in Malayalam language to add to the family history of Kaniyathira.³⁰

Thripuliyoor Grandhavari

In Thripuliyoor grandhavaries a total of 27 records are available. These records are the statistical details of land belonging to Thripuliyoor Thevar in Puliyoor desam and the rent paid by the tenants of land to the land lord, the income to provide protection, etc. Moreover the expansive authority enjoyed by Swamiyars (Brahmins) in the temples is explained very clearly.³¹

Thiruvalla Grandhavari

Thiruvalla grandhavari is the record of 356 years between the year 730 and 1086. A total of 90 records are available in this. Out of this, 46 records were on the accounts on the ritualistic procedures of the members of Paramboor Illam and another 46 were

30. M .KurianThomas Niranam Grandhavari, Sophia Books, Kottayam August 2000 P, 26.

31. P.Unnikrishnan Nair-Thripuliyoor Grandhavari, 1999, p, 35

the details of transaction of Thekkedathu Kuzhikkattu Illam, Thiruvalla. Thiruvalla grandhavari throws light on the nature of the agricultural and social relations apart from the structure of authority. It includes the structural aspects of Mavelikkara temple.³²

Kandiyoor mattam padapattu (Battle Song)

Kandiyoor mattam padapattu Harakshyamasa Samarolsavam is believed to have been written in AD 1550 & AD 1680 by Cheppukattu Neelakantan. The Nair warriors of Kayamkulam and their rulers were adventurous people who viewed a fight as a festival. The '*Onappada*' or '*Onathallu*' being conducted in connection with Onam festival in the month of Chingam is proof to this celebration. The martial art practice was stopped by the end of the month *Karkadakam*.

Subsequently the Nair warriors turned to '*Onappada*;' as a suitable occasion to display their talents in the art of warfare (martial arts). They believed that '*Onathallu*' is the privilege of men folk. During the period of Veera Ravi Varma a fierce Onathallu was conducted at Kandiyoor. This padapattu attests that during this fight many young warriors were killed, so many got injured and the women folk of those killed deeply mourned the death of these warriors. Besides Onappada, Kayamkulam warriors used to conduct '*Makam pada*'. The great poet Ulloor has recorded that one Mr. Canter

32. P.Unnikrishnan Nair-Thiruvalla Grandhavari, 2002, p.5

Visscher of Dutch origin had seen one such *onappada* in the year 1720 at Kayamkulam.³³

Mavelikkarappadiyola

Mavelikkarappadiyola is an important document on the history of Mavelikkara. When the C.M.S Missionaries spread the rumour that the missionary activities in association with the Malankara church had been a big failure, Mar Ivannios prohibited the C.M.S. missionaries from entering the Puthiyakavu church and making speeches there. On 6th January, 1936, Mar Ivannios summoned a Sunnahados at the Puthiyakavu church. The Sunnahados rejected the suggestions put forward by Mar Divannios. Dr. Wilson, the Metropolitan Bishop of Calcutta was the mediator in the issue. The “*Mavelikkarappadiyola*” consists of the arguments raised by the Sunnahados for rejecting the suggestions by Mar Divannios. The Padiyola also reflects the spirit of protest against the suppressive measures of the British, and the awareness of the natives about achieving national freedom.³⁴

Buddhism

It would not be an exaggeration to say that Buddhism had penetrated its roots deeply and firmly in the soil of Mavelikkara. Even though, Buddhism disappeared from many parts of Kerala long ago, it continued to exist in Onattukara, i.e. Mavelikkara. Most of the Buddha idols were found at Mavelikkara which is an

33. Chepuukattu Neelakantan, Kandiyoor Mattom padapattu (Manuscript library, T.V.M)

34. Prof VI Niynan-Mavalikkara padiyolayummattu chilakarayungallum keli 2006p-8

important taluk in Kerala. People believe that in the 6th and 7th century, Mavelikkara was one of the great centres which preached Buddhism.³⁵ The erstwhile central Travancore area which consists of Mavelikkara, Karthikkappally, Tiruvalla and Chengannur was one of the flourishing centres of Buddhism between the 3rd century B.C and 15th century A.D.

According to a series of songs called *Mavelipattu* it was from Mavelikkara (the land of Maveli), the king Maveli ruled a region roughly corresponding to the present taluk of Mavelikkara, part of Karunagapally and Karthikapally called Odnadu or Onadu.³⁶ The Buddha idols in Mavelikkara taluk are from Kandiyoor, Bharanikavu and Pallickal.³⁷ One of the well known Buddhist centers of Kerala, Sreemoolavasam, was at Thrikkunnappuzha near Mavelikkara. There existed at Sreemoolavasam a very beautiful Buddha vihar. Besides this, Buddhist religious meetings were held frequently at Sreemoolavasam. During Emperor Ashoka's period itself Buddhism started spreading in Kerala. In the epigraphic records we come across references to this. Those who came from Srilanka gave much publicity to Buddhism. Like this, those who came from 'Ezham' were later called Ezhavas. If we go through Sangham writings, it can be learned that during Sangham period Buddhism was well rooted in Kerala. It is believed that the Kings of earlier periods were Buddhist.³⁸

35. Sreedhara Menon, Kerala Charithram -, 1967, P.11

36. S.NSadasivan -A social history of India. APH Publishing Jan: 2000, P.129

37. Narendra Nath Battacharya, Geographical dictionary Munishiram Manoharlal Publications, 1999 P.93

38. Mavelikarayude Samaskarika Charithram,, unpublished work, Mavelikkara Municipality , 2007 P, 76

Kerala could give birth to so many famous Buddhist scholars in the 5th and 6th centuries A.D. The native place of Aarya Devan, the disciple of Nagarjuna and the author of the book '*Chathussika*', was '*Sembapuram*'. This place is Sringapuram near Kodungalloor. The remark of Huang sang that Aarya Devan was South Indian is reliable proof. The important Buddhist Centre of South India '*Sreemoolavasam*' was situated in Kerala. In three records there is reference to Sreemoolavasam. In the great poet Athula's verse '*Mushika Vamsam*', it is said that the Kola King Vikrama Raman saved Moolavasam, the coastal centre from sea erosion. In the other record the Paliyam Cheppedu, the Aay King Varagunan has recorded that he had donated property to Sreemoolavasam. The paliyam copper plate of the Ayi king Varaguna shows that he donated considerable land in south Travancore to Sreemoolavasam Buddhist shrine. The inscription gives the name of the donor of the grant as Bhattaraka of Tirumulapadam.³⁹ In the beginning of the order itself, it is stated that the Commander of the order (Sasan dathavu) is of Vrishni family and named as Varagunan. The third reference is in the '*Aarya Mangusree*' Moolakalpam, the Buddhist tantric text. In this text it is referred to as '*Sreemoola Gosha Viharam*'.⁴⁰

The scholar Monsieur Foucher has stated that on a Buddha idol situated at Gandharam of Afghanistan there is a note *Dakshina Patha Mulavasa Lokanatha*. It was opined by Lokanath Rao that Sreemoolavasam was a place in between Ambalappuzha and Thrikkunappuzha and according to Sanku Iyer it was between

39. T.A.S Vol. I .p.189

40. KRC Menon, Buddhamatham Keralithil, Aasriya Mathirnadu: 2011April, p5

Kodungallur and Kolathu town. The memorials of Buddhism which were popular till 10th Century AD are few. Buddha idols and place names like 'Pallippuram' indicate Buddhist centers. Most of the idols of Buddha were recovered from south Kerala. Buddha idols were recovered from places like Marthurkulangara, Karumadi, Mavelikkara, Bharanikavu, Kunnathur and Pallickal belonging to taluks like Kollam, Karunagappally, Mavelikkara and Kunnathur.

All idols are made of stone and in the posture of Yogasana. From pedestal to turban these idols have a height of 2 to 3 feet. All these have the specific identities of Buddha idols like *Padmasana* posture absorbed in meditation, wearing turban, shawl, and palm kept one over the other and with divine gesture. From the architectural method, it can be seen that the idol found at Marthurkulangara is the oldest one. It was made in 7th century A.D. The idol found near Thottappally at Ambalappuzha is called 'Karumadikuttan'.⁴¹

The Buddha idol recovered from a vacant plot near the Guest house at Mavelikkara is installed on the public road near Mavelikkara Sreekrishna Swamy Temple⁴². The idol recovered from Bharanikavu in Mavelikkara taluk is assessed to be of 9th century A.D. Cultivation in Kerala was spread by the Buddhist among the people who were leading their life with cattle rearing as the main occupation.⁴³ The Buddhist monks brought the plough to South India and initiated cultivation system. Bringing agricultural

41. IBID Ps-6

42. Opcit -Buddha Vigraham P: 8

43 K.P .Velayudhan, Journal of Kerala studies, Buddhism in Kerala ,1983. P, 220

activities to Kerala was the effort of Buddhist monks. They only started educating the people here. The Buddhist monks had arranged '*Pallikkudangal*' connected with Buddhist monasteries. The names '*Ezhuthupally*' and '*Pallikkudam*' for schools originated from the schools started in connection with the '*Palli*' (temple) of the Buddhists.⁴⁴

P.K. Gopalakrishnan has stated that the Brahmins learned Ayurveda and Astrology from Buddhists. It is said that by influencing the Buddhist Ayurveda scholars, Brahmins lured them to Hinduism and as a result these Buddhist scholars converted themselves to Brahmins. They are the Moosathus known as Ashta Vaidyas.

The traditional Ayurveda Vaidyas from the lower community were the successors of the Buddhist Ayurveda Scholars who refused to be converted to Hinduism. The celebrations like the grand show, *Kettukazhcha*, etc. in the Hindu temples in Kerala are linked to the Buddhists.⁴⁵

The Chinese traveller Fahiyen has narrated the 'Rathas' (Chariots) were used in Buddha Jayanti celebration every year in Pataliputhra. The 'Rathas' displayed by the people of the 'Kara's in Chettikulangara temple of Mavelikkara in connection with the Bharani festival have similarity to the Rathas described by Fahiyen. Big and small Rathas are seen in the temples of Kerala during festivals. The Rathas with three or four floors are called 'Kuthira.'⁴⁶ Before the introduction of modern schools, the

44. *ibid*,222, Gopalakrishnan, P.K., Keralathinte Samskarika Charithram, Kerala Basha Institute, Tvm., 1991, P.256

45. S .N. Sadasivan-,A social history of India, Buddhism in Kerala P. 156.

alphabets taught in the 'Kudipallikkudam' were called 'Nanam Manam'. Sanku Iyer has stated that this indicates the auspicious opening words. It is said that 'Namothu Chinathe' is the Pali form of the Sanskrit words '*Namost hu jinathe*'. Though Buddhism as a religion has disappeared from Kerala, the affinity towards Buddhist ideals and respect towards Buddha are still continuing in Kerala as indestructible. The Ezhavas of Kerala talk about their Buddhist tradition.⁴⁷

Most of the literary works of the great poet Kumaranasan idealise the advice and mode of living of Buddha. Successors of the Buddhists who came to Kerala with agriculture as their source of livelihood, hard working nature and public service mentality, later became lazy. They were fond of luxuries and addicted to sensual pleasures. Owing to this Buddhism declined and disappeared from Kerala. Tantric Buddhism is the denial of most of the good deeds preached by Buddha.

In Kerala, during the end period, Tantric Buddhism got wide eminence. The text of tantric Buddhism 'Arya Mangusree' Moola Kalpam was recovered from Kerala. The Shaivas and Vaishnavas who opposed Buddhism led a pious life. Naturally people were attracted to this. In the beginning of the 9th century, Sankara's divine insight superceded Buddhist divinity completely. It is believed that around 800 years ago this region was destroyed in sea-erosion. In the Sanskrit historical poem

46. V.R. Parameswaran Pillai, Pracheena ligithangal, state institute of languages, Thiruvanthapuram, 1963, p.121

47. S.Sanku Iyer, Keralavum Buddhamathavum, N.B.S, Kottayam, p218

Mooshikavamsha, there is a striking description of Sreemoolavasom sinking into the sea.⁴⁸

The Paliyam cheppedu throws enough light on the fact that in AD 885-925 Vikramadithya Varagunan took necessary measures for protecting the Buddha Vihar at Sreemoolavasom from invaders⁴⁹. The historical council acknowledged Sreemoolavasom to be a Buddha Vihar, when M. Foucher got an idol of Lokanathan from Afghanistan. It is inscribed on this idol “*Dakshinapathae Sreemoolavasa Lokanatha*”⁵⁰

There was a period in Kerala when Buddhism had a lot of importance. The Kuthriakettu and Kettukazhchas being conducted from Kollam to Ambalappuzha are the left over rituals of Buddhist festivals. This is an important ritual in the temples of Chathannur and Chettikulangara, and it is found that these types of Kuthirakettu etc were seen in Patna as per the narration of Fahiyen. It can also be seen that Kettukazhchas existed in North India. When Buddhism was popular, the Devadasi system, the practice of running schools and hospitals connected with temples and treasurers of Saraswathi (goddess of art and knowledge), were learned by Hindus from Buddhists.⁵¹ It is from Buddhism that the various aspects of temple-worship such as *aarattu* of idols and deities originated.⁵²

48. Elamkulam Kunjanpillai, Elamkulam Kunjanpillaiyude Thiranjedutha Krithikal 2005 ,p310

49. Ibid -311

50. Dr putusseri Ramachandran , Kerala Charithrathinte Adisthana Rekhakal, Kerala Basha Institute 2007,p 49

51. Kerala Charithram vol.2 Buddha Jainamathangal K. H Association p. 353

52. Aarattu –bathing of an idol in a river, etc. on the final day of a temple festival

The Buddhist idols at Onattukara should be looked upon as the contributions of Sreemoolavasom. Place names ending in the suffix –‘pally’, such as Karthikappally, Puthuppally, Mainagappally, Pallipadu, Pallikkal, are mostly of the places near Mavelikkara. They are all reminiscent of the greatness of Buddhism.⁵³ Another significant contribution of Buddhism to the overall progress of Mavelikkara is literacy and the tremendous vigour it brought about in the educational sphere.⁵⁴ The *ezhuthupally* and *pallikkoodom* indicate their association with the Buddhist idols. There were also Ayurveda hospitals attached to the Buddha viharas in those days. It is said that mustard-farming was widespread at Mavelikkara for the preparation of ointments and medicated oils. By and by, Buddhism began to decline in Kerala due to the constant and powerful attacks from religious reformers like Sree Sankaracharya. By 8th century AD it began to lose its dominance, and by 12th century it disappeared from the land completely⁵⁵. During the sixth, seventh and eighth centuries, this area was the centre of Buddhism.⁵⁶

This image is 3 feet in height including the pedestal upon which it is seated. The Ushnisha, jvala and the upper cloth can very well be noticed in the photograph of the

53. Sanku Iyer, Buddha Jainamathangal Kerala Charithram Vol: 2, K.H Association P.353

54. P.C Alexander, Buddhism in Kerala. Annamalal University p 59

55.. Dr. StelleKramirschi, Dr.J .M cousins & R Vasudeva Poduval, The Art and Crafts of Travancore, Department of cultural publication, Govt of Kerala,P, 48

56. T.A.S Vol .2, p, 122

figure reproduced elsewhere in the volume. (Fig.2) The idol discovered from Pallickal is at Bharanikavu temple premises in Mavelikkara Taluk. It is situated at a distance of five miles to the northwest of Mavelikkara. The total height of this idol including the pedestal is about two feet. The upper cloth is seen as many folded pieces, covering the left shoulder and lying spread over the chest.⁵⁷ (Fig.3) Our centers of worship are the magnificent products of the ardent and persistent meditation and prayers of our devout saints. They are the foundation stones of our culture and civilization. These worship-centers and the methods of worship followed there have sustained the life and vigour of our culture down the centuries. The importance of Buddhism, the features of Buddhist idols, the influences of Buddhist rites and rituals can be seen in the nearby areas of Mavelikkara.⁵⁸

CHAPTERISATION

- 1 Chapter one is the *introductory* chapter which gives a general introduction including the objectives, methodology of the study, and hypothesis followed by a literature review.
- 2 The second chapter "*Land and people*" deals with the geography and topography of Mavelikkara. It also gives the details of the land and people of Mavelikkara.

57. Mathrubhumi 2008, May, Kottayam Edition.,p, 3

58. Malayala Manorama 2010, April 26 Page-2

- 3 The third chapter "*The Economy of Mavelikkara*" focuses on the economic changes in Mavelikkara from the ancient times to the present. It reveals the transition of a tribal economy to a monetary economy and the flourishing trade and commerce in Mavelikkara in the ancient to medieval and modern times.
 4. Fourth chapter "*Polity of Mavelikkara*" attempts to explore the political history of this place from ancient times to the present. It throws light on the tribal polity in each and every *Tina* related to this place and the Ayis who made Mavelikkara a centre of administration. It also throws light on the methods of administration, customs and rites, system of adoption and the importance of royal dynasty.
 5. Fifth chapter "*Religious Institutions*" deals with the religious traditions of the region and the religious life of the people of Mavelikkara.
 6. Sixth chapter "*Cultural Pattern and Social Organization*" analyses the cultural and social progress of Mavelikkara through the ages. Mavelikkara is a place adorned with a number of ancient and medieval monuments and they are described in this chapter. Social organization in Mavelikkara from the ancient times to the present is examined. Special attention has been paid to discuss the Brahmin settlement and the emergence of social stratification on the basis of castes. A historic approach is used to discuss each and every caste of this region.
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7. Seventh chapter is the *Conclusion*. The concluding part of the work discusses the findings of the study. They include the formation of the agrarian pattern of this ancient settlement and the various changes it underwent in different historical periods. In the cultural realm, the study could document among other streams the Buddhist vestiges of the region and their continuing influence. The study further attempts to map the cultural contributions of various institutions, communities and individuals. The study also documents the remnants of 'Yuyoumaya' sect that demands closer study.

Review of literature

As part of literature review the work tries to scrutinize some of the prominent historical literature like that of historians like Sanku Iyer, Venniyil Vasu Pillai and Elamkulam Kunjan Pillai who were the pioneers in the field of study about the heritage of Mavelikkara. N.P. Chellappan Nair provides wide information about Kandiyoor Padappattu. "*BUDDHIST INFLUENCE ON MAVELIKKARA*" edited by Sanku Iyer also gives a clear picture of the cultural heritage of Mavelikkara, biographical sketches and services. "*Kerala Charitham*" by Prof. Sreedhara Menon gives an overview of the history of Kerala. *History of Kerala* by K.P. Padmanabha Menon, *Kerala Charithrathinte Adisthanashilakal* by M.G.S Narayanan, and *Buddha Prathimakal* by Stella Gramathil., *Trade and the Traders in early Indian Society* by Champkalekshmi refers to the influence and importance of Buddhism in Mavelikkara. In addition to the various souvenirs, ideas of art publication of organization and political parties have been valuable source of information.

Thiruvitamcore Charitham By P.Shankunny Menon

Thiruvitamcore Charitham by Shankunny Menon unravels the history from the initial period. The author of this book Shankunny Menon details the history of Travancore, the expansiveness of the land, important rulers of the country, their style of administration and their contribution towards the states. The ruler of Travancore, Marthandavarma had conquered Mavelikkara and expanded his kingdom. It is believed that the two conciliation agreements with the Dutch took place at Mavelikkara. He entrusted Ramayyan Dhalva to look after the entire area of Mavelikkara and to deal with the day to day matters.

Since Mavelikkara was more suitable for commercial activities he had decided to make Mavelikkara its head quarters which provided an opportunity to collect pepper growing abundantly in the nearby areas. Another subject of narration was the adoption ceremony of the Travancore royal dynasty. On the occasion of no heir to inherit, they established an adoption system from the royal palace of Mavelikkara. The author describes the famous kings of Travancore, their style of ruling and also their modernization efforts’.

Samskarathinte Nazhikakallukal by Elamkulam Kunjan Pillai

“Samskarathinte Nazhikakallukal” by Elamkulam Kunjan Pillai constitutes one of the important historical publications about Mavelikkara. The author, through this text, evaluates what was ancient Kerala while studying about Kerala history. He has narrated in detail about ancient Kerala and the cities of Kerala. The beginning of

Malayalam Era is very important in every respect. He has written about the beginning of the Malayalam Era and its importance and also about different stages of the time-frame. It is considered that up to 10th century AD there was not much importance for caste and religion.

Kerala Charithram published by Kerala History Association

The political and social history of Kerala is narrated in three main parts-economic history, religious history and cultural history. Kerala which was engaged in trade with Western and Eastern countries from the pre –historical period remained a melting pot of different cultures. In addition to internal economic development of the economic circle of Kerala, the income from foreign trade relations has always helped the economic progress of Kerala. In this text the author speaks at length about Malayalam literature, journalism, art forms of Kerala, the art of painting and architecture, drama, philosophy, physical entertainment, the celebration of different festivals, etc.

The author speaks about the influence of Buddhism which spread very fast in Kerala and its fame attracted other countries also. When the Mahayana Buddhism came into force in Kerala, the Buddha idols which were worshipped with invocation and rituals, after the disappearance of Buddhism were recovered from south Kerala. There are the Buddha idols found from Mavelikkara and Bharanikavu. On the Buddha idol installed near Mavelikkara Sreekrishna swamy temple, the turban has grown like sthupi on the top. The upper cloth Shawl comes down across the left shoulder as

a sacred thread. A Buddha idol was recovered from Bharanikavu in Mavelikkara Taluk. On this idol also in the middle of the turban a bud like projection is seen. Flame is not carved into this. On the left shoulder one folded shawl is lying down up to the chest. The author also writes about Sreemoolavasam which was a Buddhist center earlier.

Kerala Charitham by Rajan Gurukkal & Raghava Varrier

Kerala Charitham by Raghava Varrier and Rajan Gurukkal gives an overview of the history of Kerala and it also mentions agricultural developments, resource articulation, power structure and its relation to the society. The authors in this book give us a detailed description of the structural completeness of different aspects involved in human culture by discussing them one by one.

The writing of the history of Kerala has got a lot of contexts and approaches. The authors opine that the old historical remains, great stone remains, architecture, coins, records and inscriptions, etc. are the beginning of historical writing which helps us to make an important outline. In this book the origin of agricultural techniques and different styles of occupation, etc. are narrated. Another aspect is the process of social formation. It also narrates the authority for collecting resources and redistributing them. Certain valuable information on bazaars and market places of middle era of Kerala can be gleaned from Malayala Manipravala compositions.

In this book a detailed description of bazaars (angadikal) and markets of that period is given. Mattam and Sreeparvatham were the important market places of Mavelikkara. It can be learned from this book about the coins, way of handling money,

law and justice, punishment, documents, records, which were parts of an ancient social system.

Keralathinte Innalekal by K.N. Ganesh

The book 'Keralathinte Innalekal' was written by K.N. Ganesh. This book lays stress on the relationship between nature and human beings, while describing various production systems, production connections and picturing the life of the people of Kerala from ancient stage to date. Sharp scrutiny of documentary materials, production of new evidences and imaginative explanations, are the peculiarity of this book. A lot of references were available about Mavelikkara's Buddhist centers. Mavelikkara earlier known by the name 'Odanadu' was one among the primitive centers. Besides, in this book the author has opined that from odalbamboos, the area including Kayamkulam and Mavelikkara got the name 'Odanadu'. There is narration about Naduvazhis and their style of rule. This book also explains the supremacy of the Brahmins in the society. Moreover the author presents the details of activities like cultivation, tax collection, religious sections, languages, literature, arts and culture that existed during 15th century.

Jathiya Vyavasthithiyum Kerala Charithravum by P.K. Balakrishnan gives an overview of caste system and its impact on Kerala society. "*Venadinte parinamam*" by K. Sivasankaran Nair gives an overview of the history of Venad. It also mentions the origin, geography, socio political and economic history of Venad.

Sthala Puranas

Temple Culture of Chennithala by Karzhama Venugopal

Karzhama Venugopal is the author of the work “Chennithala’s Temple Culture”. The above text explains the greatness of temples of Chennithala, a place coming under Mavelikkara taluk. Chennithala is a place which attained fame even in the olden days. Chennithala is surrounded on three sides by Achan Kovil River which is believed to have medicinal properties, since it originates from Achan Kovil hills where Neelakoduveli, a plant which is considered to be a symbol of abundance, prosperity and wealth grow luxuriantly. It is also an ancient holy place where fertile land with coconut trees and swaying ears of paddy are visible. This text describes the greatness of temples of Chennithala. On the eastern part of Chennithala Krishna temples and on the western part Shaiva faith temples are seen. In the past, on the eastern part of Chennithala people having connection with Vishnava Movement were settled. Believers of Saivism walked around and settled in the western part of Chennithala. Because of these shrines like Thiripperumthura Mahadeva temple, Eramathoor Shiva temple, etc. came up in this area. This literary work gives explicit information about the temple festivals of different Karas of Chennithala.

Odanadinte Ulthudippukkal by Cheravally Sasi.

The following secondary sources shed information on different aspects of the people in Mavelikkara. Odanadinte Ulthudippukkal authored by Cheravally Sasi presents

a touching account of Mavelikkara, Karthikappally and Karunagappally taluks. It is possible to understand the history and cultural splendour of these areas through this literary work. In this book the author in his own style narrates Odanadu's rule of the royals, Unnuneeli Sandesam, Mayura Sandesam and important places of this area and the greatness of Kandiyoor Shiva Temple. The author is explaining that since Odandu's family deity was Rajasekharan's favourite deity the construction of Kandiyoor temple took place. The author through this literature explains the greatness of the Baghavathi temple of Chettikulangara and its important festival.

Biographies

Biography of T.K. Madhavan by P.K. Madhavan

The biography of T.K. Madhavan was written by P.K. Madhavan. The above text explains that T.K. Madhavan was born as the third son in his maternal home Thanniyam Kunnel Kannamangalam, Mavelikkara in 1886. T.K. Madhavan was a person who occupied various positions such as Sreemoolam Prajasabha member. He became a notable person through his involvement in activities like the temple entry agitation, prevention of liquor intake, freedom of movement, representation in public service and Vaikom agitation.

T.K Madhavan as a member of the Sreemoolam Praja Sabha demanded in 1904 permission for temple entry to all Hindus without caste discrimination and abolition of untouchability through a royal proclamation. On 14th December 1921 violating the

prohibition a few volunteers walked from the western entrance of Vaikom temple to the Boat Kadavu along the public road, thereby showing their protest against the prohibition. As part of this, in 1921 Sree Narayana Dharma Paripalana Yogam launched a movement against entering the temples of upper caste communities. It is worthy of respect and a good example too. It can be said that he was an ardent proponent of Sree Narayana Guru Dharma.

T.K. Madhavan was the first non-Christian leader who was invited to speak at the Maramon convention. In 1927, T.K. Madhavan was appointed as the secretary of SNDP union, Alappuzha. Mahatma Gandhi was T.K. Madhavan's guru in politics. The life of Madhavan had undergone transformation due to the inspiration of that power. He was also the first community leader who stepped in to the Gandhi era. He was a potential rebel who worked with people of different castes to eradicate caste malice and impure thoughts. Through this biography the writer throws light on the fact that T.K. Madhavan was one of the brightest among the few people in Kerala who believed that equality consciousness was one's duty and they should be ready to sacrifice everything to achieve this.

Mavelikkarayum Maneeshikalum by George Thazhakkara

George Thazhakkara is the author of the biographical series, *Mavelikkarayum Maneeshikalum*. Many creative geniuses became the dignified faces of Mavelikkara. Mavelikkara has so many persons who have affixed their own individuality in the fields of spiritual, intellectual, musical, literary, cultural and political fields.

Biographies of these persons are being quoted by the author George Thazhakara in his composition '*Mavelikkarayum Maneeshikalum*'.

In the Biography of Kocheppan Tharakan of Polachirakkal ,he narrates the points of Manorama and the background of Ulloor's historical literary creations. Through the first Malayalam drama 'Mariyamma', he presented the social outlook of Christianity. In Tharakan's individual depiction it can be seen that he was a journalist, agricultural businessman and a very hard working person. While presenting A.R. Raja Raja Varma in the next chapter, the author explains how much Malayalam language was neglected at that time and through the effort of Thampuran how far that situation changed. Brahma Sree Subhananda Gurudevan encouraged devotion to God through spiritual consciousness. It can be seen that he became an uplifter of the ignored and the down trodden due to god's will.

Archbishop Mar Evanios was the person who gave due importance to the female community in the sabha through this book. It is made clear the learnedness, intelligence and humanitarian activities of Bishop Evanios are noteworthy . He was destined in history to work with the Catholic Sabha by Christian outlook of priesthood (ascetic movement) establishment. Padinjarethalakkal Jacob Kurian is presented as a person known for his stand on equality of citizens.

T.K. Madhavan was in the forefront as a public activist and social servant. The effort of T.K.Madhavan to transform SNDP into an organized society was commendable. K.M. Varghese's field of activity was painting and writing books. Sethu

Parvathi Bhai Thampuratti who was adopted from here witnessed an explosive transformation in Kerala's political and social field and also became a driving force behind all their activities. C.M. Stephen was an outstanding person Mavelikkara gifted to the political field. He worked as a journalist and also as an advocate.

'*Aranazhikaneram*' a novel based on a Biblical theme written by Parappurathu is a gift Mavelikkara has given to the world of literature. It is considered as one of the best novels in Malayalam. George Thazhakkara's *Mavelikarayum Maneeshikalum* is an exhaustive life series of ten important charioteers of local society. It includes their biographies and their detail total contribution to the Mavelikkara circle.

Family history

The family history also provides certain valuable information about Mavelikkara Pynummoottil family members as the inheritors of a very ancient historical tradition having connection with the origin of Syrian Church in Malankara. The area including Kadambanadu was under the jurisdiction of Ilayidathu Swaroopam. It was a common practice at that time for offenders, to leave their own state and stay under the rule of another naduvazhi to escape punishment. Like this, the above family migrated from Kadambanadu to Mavelikkara.

Joining some powerful families they constructed a church on the land owned by landlord Edasseril Unnithan. This Church is known as Puthiyakavu Church. Those who had come from Kadambanadu became the members of this Church. In the records of the Church the name '*Pynummoottil* is mentioned. As they continued as the

members of Puthiyakavu diocese, there occurred a split in the branch. In the first half of the 18th century one family shifted to Cheruvallor Kalukkal Kudumbam. They are the branches of Pynummoottil family.

Another one is the family that remained under priest Potha. As per the order No.62 of his Excellency Marthoma a member from this family was appointed as the priest of the great Church of Niranam. This branch of the family is Pallichira family. Father Geevarughese had held the leadership of Niranam Church up to AD 1818 as per the records.

TRAVELOGUE

Kerala Sancharam by Kattakada Divakaran

In “Kerala Sancharam” the author Kattakada Divakaran throws light on the villages and towns of Kerala with special reference to their historical background, social planning, financial circumstances, farming-occupation sectors, life speciality, customs and rites, shrines of different religions, local festivals, little known and unknown tourist centres, departed and living important persons of this place, developmental progress and local problems. He explains Mavelikkara’s festival fervour, the coastal areas of Onattukara etc. He drives home the importance of Kandiyoor, Kandiyoor temple, the palaces of Mavelikkara and festivals. In this book there is mention of the references to Kandiyoor temple in various literary compositions Unniyadicharitham, Unnuneeli sandesam, Shiva Vilasam, Haryakshamasamarolsavam and Kilippattu. In the book written by Damodara Chakkiyar, he showers praise on Kandiyoor, the capital of Kayamkulam rulers.

In the lengthy narration starting with Aaghandalapuri, there is explanation about the capitals like Keerthipuram, Narayinga Mannoor etc. There is also narration about the Bhagavathi temple of Chettikulangara, its purity, about 'Kuthiyottam' and 'Kettukazhcha'. All these details are told by him through this book. This brings out the cultural heritage of a majority of places in Kerala. The fact which brings out the importance of Mavelikkara, i.e. Chettikulangara Kandiyoor, Buddha idol etc, has been mentioned. The traveller states that once upon a time the abundance of agricultural products was the hallmark of Onattukara. The paddy fields were cultivated twice or thrice a year, i.e., twice paddy and once sesame. These fields were called as irippoo.

Mavelikkara is moving forward changing into a new form. From the viewpoint of the traveller the educational growth has made social life more enlightened and culturally prosperous. He makes a reference to the Devadasis of Kandiyoor temple also. Devadasis were a prime factor in Kerala. A document was available for the first time about Devadasis from Chokkur temple at Puthur. Sivavilasam Sanskrit poetry and UnniyadiCharitham Chamбу praise the Devadasis, especially Cherukara Kuttathi and her daughter Kandiyoor Unni. In 1930 the Devadasi system was abolished by Rani Sethu Lakshmi Bai. With this the Devadasi system existed for centuries came to an end. The contributions from the Devadasi system to Kerala's art and literary field are unforgettable.

Memoirs

John Nieuoff's Memoirs form an original source of information. John Nieuoff was the Dutch captain who came to Kerala to inspect godowns and to maintain business connection. Kayamkulam is the place where an excellent business deal was struck with the Dutch . When the Dutch visited the ruler of Kayamkulam with gifts, the relationship with Kayamkulam grew stronger. The meetings with Nieuoff gained permission for building godowns at Cheriyaazheekal and Thrikkunnappuzha, the places near Mavelikkara. These relations helped to make pepper trade stronger.

Out of 20 lakh tonnes of pepper exported, 1/5 was from Quilon. In the initial stage of the Dutch period, opium trade was widespread in this area. The main purchases of the Dutch were pepper and cloth materials from south Travancore. The Dutch concentrated on pepper trade in Kayamkulam. They wanted to establish complete monopoly over this. With the aim of establishing better trade relations with the neighbouring places of Odanadu, he met the king of Purakkadu. The king gave full permission to plan new trade strategies. Later he succeeded in establishing business relationship with states like Maruthur Kulangara, Travancore, Desinangadu, Kollam, Kochi, Kodungallur etc.

The documentary sources were further supplemented with the data gathered through interviews

Mahakavi Muthukulam Sridhar

Mahakavi Muthukulam Sridhar was a noble scholar who won so many honours and special titles like Sanskrit scholar, Vayyakaranan, Mahakavi, Bhasha Panini, Kaviraja Panditha Rathnam and was also known as Sridhara Kavirajan . The village Chennithala of Mavelikkara was blessed by the presence of this Mahakavi. Mahakavi, who acquired scholarship in Sanskrit known as the language of the Gods and the Vedas, wrote many poems. He has provided a good narration about yester year Mavelikkara. His outlook on art, culture and literary heritage is noteworthy. He evaluates the temple culture and the style of ruling of the kings of Mavelikkara very efficiently. Mahakavi's scholarship is evident in his works.

C. Prasad

C. Prasad was a writer, poet and publisher of books. He wrote the book *Purana Samja Gamana Kosam*'. It explains the entry of names in epic legends and poetic dramas and is a Hindu encyclopaedia for the first time in Malayalam . It imparts detailed knowledge on the historical heritage of Mavelikkara. He has provided very useful information on Mavelikkara's palaces, adoption system, and the influence of Buddhism and on literary and cultural leaders. He was also the chief editor of the book "Odanadinte Ulthudippukal" which reflects the heartbeats of Onattukara. He

has presented his knowledge on the entire tradition of Mavelikkara through the chapters of this thesis.

P.M. Madhavan Kutty Nair

P.M. Madhavan Kutty Nair has provided detailed information on Mavelikkara's temple traditions and the importance of Kavus. He now holds the position of the secretary of Ivala kavu, Thazhakara and the president of N.S.S Karayogam, Chennithala. He has imparted much information on Mavelikkara's famous Edasseril Kavuvu, Thazhakkara, Ivala kavu, Kannannur Kavuvu and Mulakkal Kavuvu. He has narrated in detail about the serpents of the kavus, worship of trees and the rare plants and trees of these kavus and the information on the origin of Chennithala Palliyodam which was one among the Palliyodams going for the divine sight of Thiru Aranmula Bhagavan which was also a part of Chennithala's cultural heritage.

The information given by him on the heritage of Mavelikkara was very much useful. Besides the above, many important persons were interviewed who have presented very clear hypotheses on historical matters. The valuable knowledge provided by these people has benefited a lot in preparing this thesis.

Thus this research work comprises a confluence of pieces of information gathered from many sources.