CHAPTER III

GURUVAYOOR DEVASWOM AND THE STATE

From the discussions in the second chapter it was brought out that the relationship between the Ooraalaars and the kings (rulers) institutionalized temples, made them into organizations. This chapter examines role of Ooraalaars in institutionalizing Guruvayoor Sree Krishna temple and its twelve sub temples into an organization called Guruvayoor Devaswom comprising the twelve temples and their managements.

We have also seen the development of organizational patterns of other religious places of worship in the state. In this context it is important to investigate whether the organizational patterns of churches and mosques have had any influence in shaping the organization of the Devaswom.

The foreign invasions had many effects on the religious and socio-cultural life of the state. As is discussed in the second chapter, the Dutch, the Portuguese and the Mysoorean invasions resulted in many changes in the management of temples. The role of the ruler of the princely state of Kozhikode in protecting the temples under Guruvayoor Devaswom and its effects in the management is examined. The discussions also focus on the development of the relationship between the state and managements of temple during the British rule.

After independence, the constitution vouches for the separation of the state and religion. This was a major development. Kerala state has 19% Christian and 21% Muslim population (Namboothiripad;2008:23). The focus of discussion is on the state vis-à-vis secularism. It is important in the context that many temples in the state are owned and managed by the state where as all the worship places of non Hindus are outside the ambit of any state control.

The issue of secularism vis-a-vis equality and freedom to profess a religion one’s choice is the crux of the state-temple relationship. Against this background it must be noted that the majority of Indian people are Hindus. At the time of formation of the constitutions, there was a debate about the domination of the majority. National leaders had different views on secularism. Vallabhai Patel and Rajendra Prasad were advocates of
domination of majority (Khilnani;2004:30). Ramachandra Guha (2008) says that, Nehru who was educated in England held an opposite view.

Gandhi favoured the involvement of religion in public and official life. He practiced the system of offering Hindu prayer in public meetings (Ramachandra Guha;2008:31). In a way it was an imposition of the majority religion on others, yet Gandhi remained secular when compared with Hindu Nationalists. However Gandhi did not have any role in the formation of the constitution. It was Nehru, the first Prime Minister who had influenced in shaping the Indian constitution. He believed in equal distance from all religions in the official life (Khilnani; 2004:34). Ultimately, Nehru’s democratic reformist argument edged out Patel’s authoritarian and more conservative Hindu nationalists ideas (ibid:33). Both Khilnani and Ramachandra Guha argue that Nehru’s modernism is also reflected in shaping the Indian state. Such leaders were instrumental in defining the relationship between the state and religious institutions after independence.

Nehru was instrumental in creating a parliamentary democracy based on universal suffrage without religious affiliation and committed to social reform (ibid: 29). Indian constitution also gave freedom to Provincial governments in many areas of administration. It was yet another contribution of Nehru with in the frame work of religious freedom defined by the Indian constitution - that the provincial governments are free to define their relationship with the places of worship.

The discussion in the second chapter pointed out the differences in policies between Tamil Nadu and Kerala with regard to the state – temple relationship. Prestler (1987) says that the relationship between the state and temples in Tamil Nadu is a product of the political and social movements that took place during both pre and post independent days. Each provincial government at the time of its formation after 1956 adopted its own set of laws to govern the Hindu places of worship and itself. The laws vary from state to state. It is to be noted that the sacred area in Tamil Nadu is more open to state intervention when compared with Kerala (Fuller;2003:155). This chapter examines the role of the first elected government of Kerala and the leaders in shaping the relationship between the state and temples along the lines of Nehruvian ideas.

The difference in policies of Tamil Nadu and Kerala with regard to the management of temples started from the pre-independent days. During
the independent movement in Tamil Nadu, there were many initiatives to introduce reforms in the sacred area of temples (Fuller;2003:82). This chapter examines whether any such social reform movements took place in Kerala with regard to the Guruvayoor Devaswom. The political conflicts in connection with Guruvayoor temple and its sub temples is also examined to understand the role of the leaders of the state in shaping the relationship between the state and temples during the pre independent period. In the post state reorganization context the role of the communist leaders is an important aspect to be examined in this chapter.

Kerala had very long and strong communist movements during the period of independence movements (Khilnani;2004:46). The movements were lead by three leaders namely Krishna Pillai, A.K.Gopalan and E.M.S Namboothiripad all belonging to Hindu upper caste (Balakrishnan;2004:62). E.M.S. Namboothiripad later became the first Chief Minister of Kerala state in 1957 (Khilnani;2004:46). Namboothiripad a Brahmin had taken initiative to introduce reforms in his own Brahmin community such as organizing widow marriages which was forbidden in those days (Ramachandran, FrontLine; 4th April 1998:17). Namboothiripad, an atheist believed in social equality and equi-distance towards all religions like Nehru. The Guruvayoor Devaswom was taken over by the state after the formation of Kerala. The role of the communist leaders, especially Namboothiripad in shaping the relationship between the state and management of temples, is an important area to be understood. The discussions points out especially in the context of Kerala being the first state in the world to democratically elect a communist government which introduced many economic reforms such as land reforms (Khilnani;2004:79).

Land reform laws introduced by the communist government six days after it was installed in 1957 to narrow the gap between the land lords and land less was an important initiative. However, land reforms did not help Kerala economy in any significant way (ibid:79). The agricultural base of Kerala weakened in later 1970s and Kerala economic conditions deteriorated and agricultural production declined considerably in the 1990s (ibid:79).

The economic scenario of Kerala is also considered in this chapter to understand the state’s relationship with the management of temples. Paddy is the most important produce of the state, the area and production of paddy declined from 21,11,471 hectares in 1975 to 2,75,742 hectares in 2006 (Mathrubhumi;30th June 2006:14). Out of the total Indian production of
91.79 million tones of paddy in 2006, Kerala’s share was only 0.63 million tones (ibid:14). The requirement of the state in an year is more than 2.1 million tones it is evident that Kerala is facing agricultural crisis and this was a process that started from 1980 (ibid:14). Sivadas (2008) points out that the state was without revenue from agricultural sector since 1980. Today Kerala’s agricultural sector is facing the most serious threat from ongoing process of conversion of cultivable agricultural land into other uses resulting in degradation and depletion of land and its productivity.

The industrial sector is also weak like agriculture. Issac (2008) says that there is hardly any revenue from industrial sector for the state. The state depends on gulf countries and other states for employment and remittances. Since the agricultural and industrial sectors are not generating revenue for the state, it has to be seen whether temples are an important source of revenue. The nature of state intervention in the management of temples after the formation of the Kerala state is examined in this chapter to understand the economic importance of temples in Kerala.

In the absence of industrial and agricultural revenue, Kerala state shifted its attention on revenue from tourism. In the revenue from tourism industry, revenue from temples is considered very important. The share of pilgrim tourists in the total tourist revenue in the year 2006 is 60% (Kerala tourists’ statistic 2006). Temples under Guruvayoor Devaswom is an important source of revenue from pilgrims. The state’s tourism minister Kodiyeri Balakrishnan informed the state legislative assembly that there is greater potential for pilgrim tourist in the state (Mathrubhumi; 30th June 2008:12). This reference points out the fact that the government considers the temples as an important source of revenue and to the state’s economy.

This chapter enquires into the relationship between the Guruvayoor Devaswom and the temple management. The enquiry is made with regards to the management of finance, human resources, transparency and accountability of the Guruvayoor Devaswom. For that purpose, records pertaining to accounts, personnel management and minutes of the Guruvayoor Devaswom managing committee meetings for a period of 10 years are examined. In financial management, the nature of accountability and transparency that prevail at Guruvayoor Devaswom was the focus. Judicial verdicts, historical events, and political developments in connection with the temple have also been taken into account to decipher the nature of relationship between the state and the temple management.
Guruvayoor Sree Krishna temple (hereafter the Temple) is a very important spiritual centre of pilgrimage, the popularity of which have grown phenomenally over the years like Sree Venkateshwara temple, at Thirumala in Andhra Pradesh. The growth rests on the faith that the presiding deity Lord Sree Krishna bestows blessings on devotees and fulfills devotees’ wishes. The deep faith has spawned remarkable range of literary works in different languages, especially in Sankrit and Malayalam. The Temple is situated in Guruvayoor Municipality in Trichur district of Kerala state. The forty days’ temple festival in the months of November and December every year attracts millions of people from different parts of India and abroad everyday.

Rao (1988) opines that a temple could be rendered important and famous due to various factors. Antiquity and history make some temples such as Viswanath temple in Banares famous. The geographical locale itself could invest a temple with great importance. Yet others become famous, as in the case of Konarak, and Khajuraho, because of the artistic stone carvings in them. The uniqueness of the idol itself could elevate a temple to the highest spiritual glory. The Temple situated on the coast of Arabian Sea is unique in that it derives its mahatmya or importance from all the factors mentioned above (Seth;2009:11).

The temple is of legendary antiquity. Many legends describe the temple’s origins. Although it is not uncommon for myths to contain elements of historical facts, there is no documentary evidence to substantiate any part of the legends associated with the Temple’s beginnings (Ibid:12). The only record which traces the beginning of the Temple is the fact that saint Adi Shankara laid down the rituals in the Temple during A.D.788 and A.D. 820 (Narayanan;1969:27). In the 9th century AD, some of the great Vaishanvite alwar saints patronized certain temples in Kerala and composed songs glorifying the powers of the presiding deity. According to the popular belief one of the songs is in praise of Krishna, the presiding deity of the Temple at Guruvayoor (ibid:28).

Historical facts have played only a marginal role in determining the spiritual importance and powers of the Temple or its origins. As far as the vast majority of worshipers are concerned, all that really matters is the divine presence within its sacred precincts. From this point of view the Temple’s popularity and standing is well established and unassailable. Seth
(2009:29) conjectures that the Temple must have had its existence since 9th century A.D. However the role of the rulers of the region with regard to the establishment of the Temple is not stated in the available official records pertaining to any period of history (ibid:30). The Temple is located in the erstwhile princely state of Kozhikode. Many historical events of different periods establish the relationship between the rulers of the princely state of Kozhikode and the Temple.

State involvement in management of the Temple Prior to State Formation

Calicut or Kozhikode was the major power in the northern and central Kerala in the medieval period. Its rulers known to history as the Zamorins were among the most cultured and accomplished sovereigns of Kerala (Menon.S;1996:186). The relationship between the Zamorin Raja of Kozhikode and the Temple had been long and strong. They managed the Temple with great devotion, since they had great interest in the Temple. The Zamorins believed that they are descendants of Yadavas – the community of Lord Krishna. In 13th century, the Zamorins who established themselves as powerful rulers in the region took over not only the control of the Temple but also many other temples from the local trustees (Ibid:153).

The Zamorins entered into a battle with the chieftains of Valluvanadu known as Vellathiri Raja for the control of a temple in Thirunavaya dedicated to Vishnu on the northern bank of the river Bharatapuzha (ibid:154). The main objectives of the Zamorins was to gain control over a prestigious and famous religious festival held near the Temple once in every twelve years known as Mamangam (Narayanan; 1969:373) which provided opportunities to the local chieftains gain popularity and thus pose a threat to the crown of Zamorin Raja. The Zamorin Raja finally won the battle and took control over the temple and its prestigious festival. Winning the battle enabled the monarch to control important temples in and around the area. This had a marked effect on the Temple’s fame and income. Zamorins continued to enjoy the monopoly in controlling the Temple until Kozhikode was invaded by the Dutch.

The first foreign invasion in Kerala began with the landing of Vasco-de-Gama, a Portugese merchant at Calicut in 1498. The bitter rivalry between the Zamorins on the one side and the ruler of the neighboring princely state of Cochin and the chieftain known as Kolatheri and other
minor feudal powers on the other created conditions favorable for the establishment of Portuguese rule in 1502 (Menon.S;2005:222). The Portuguese king appointed a viceroy to safeguard the interests of Portugal in India in 1505 (ibid:223). The Zamorin rulers of Kozhikode had to take Portuguese king’s opinion into consideration while governing. Direct intervention in the administration by the viceroy influenced the social and religious life in Kerala (ibid:224).

The religious history of Kerala during the Portuguese period is of particular interest with reference to Hindu temples. The Portuguese were followers of catholic faith and they considered it their mission to spread Catholicism and establish the supremacy of the pope in all the countries which came within their sphere of influence (ibid:224). However, the Portuguese respected the religious sentiments of Hindu rulers (ibid:225). But some of the Portuguese governors resorted to plunder and destruction of Hindu temples (ibid:226).

The Temple which was directly under the control of the Zamorin Raja was not plundered and destroyed because they did not want to hurt the feelings of the Zamorins (Seth;2009:29.). Realizing the danger from the Portuguese, the Zamorin encouraged the revival of bhakti movement in Kozhikode. The Zamorin promoted devotional writers especially on the stories of Lord Sree Krishna, the presiding deity of the Temple. It was during this period that the famous devotional work the ‘Narayaneeyam’ in Sanskrit is considered to have been written by Melpathur Narayana Bhattathiri. Even today this devotional poem is considered most sacred. The period also witnessed another great devotional work on Krishna known as Gnanapana by Poonthanam Namboodiri.(ibid:31)

The Zamorin named Manaveda, who lived between 1655 and 1688, spent a large part of his life in the Temple in the company of Melpathur Narayana Bhattathiri, the composer of the great devotional song ‘Narayaneeyam’. Menon.S (2005) states that Zamorins took it upon themselves to promote bhakti movement making Guruvayoor as a centre of Sree Krishna cult to defend against Portuguese invasions into the socio-cultural and religious life in the princely state of Kozhikode (242). The bhakti movement found its supreme literary expression in the Malayalam works gnanappa, Sreekrishnakarnamritham and Santanagopalan. All these literary works on Krishna, the deity of the Temple indicate the Temple’s preeminence.
After the end of Portuguese period, the Dutch rule was established in 1701. The Zamorins continued to fight against the Dutch also. In 1716, the Dutch raided the Temple, desecrated its sacred precincts, looted its wealth, burned the western Gopuram (Gate), and even stripped the Kodimaram (Flag post). The Zamorin Raja renovated the Temple and brought it under the administration of the nearby Thikunavayi Devaswom, which was the only financially sound Devaswom during the period. Thus, for the first time, the Zamorin Raja gave up the control of the Temple (Menon.S;1996:268).

Forty years later, in 1756, the Dutch returned; while they spared the Temple at Guruvayoor, they rampaged the nearby temples of Thikunavayi Devaswom to which Guruvayoor was attached during that period. Since the officiating priest of Thikunavayi temple fled and refused to return even to perform the necessary purification rituals, Thikunavayi Devaswom had to be dissolved. The Zamorin Raja became the supervising trustee as well as the sovereign protector (known as Melkoyma in Malayalam) of Thikunavayi and Guruvayoor temples (ibid:31). In this way the Zamorin Raja returned as the main controller of the Temple.

In the 16th century, the Temple became an important pilgrim centre attracting devotees. With the offerings pouring in, the physical appearance of the Temple began to improve. The Zamorin Raja built the flagpost (Kodimaram) in 1638 and encased it in gold. He also built the main sanctum sanctorum. Seth (2009) says that it was the staunch devotion of the Zamorin Rajas towards the deity known as Guruvayoorappan that motivated them to rebuild the flagpost and the sanctum sanctorum. They performed elaborate and expensive five day rituals known as Viswabali for the well being of the world at the Temple (ibid:29). During the period, the Zamorin Rajas compromised with Mallisseri Nampoothiri family with regard to the role of Ooralan. Senior member of the family was made the Ooralan having the right to participate in the management along with the ruler.

In 1639, Zamorin Raja extended his borders by annexing parts of Cochin State having paddy cultivation. This benefited the Temple because the monarch ordered for a share of paddy from those areas of Cochin State to be given to the Temple. Such an intervention by the ruler helped the temple to improve its revenue. The ruler gave titles like Menon and Sarma to those who contributed paddy and other agricultural produce to the Temple. Conferment of titles was considered a privilege and a status symbol in those days and motivated many to donate paddy to the Temple.
The Mysorean invasion which took place in the later half of the 18th century had many important effects in the role of the Zamorin rulers in the management of the Temple. The Mysorean invasion was during the period of Hyder Ali and his son Tipu Sultan who ruled Mysore during the second half of 18th century and early 19th century. Hyder Ali ascended the throne of Mysore in 1761 and decided to pursue his expansionist aims in Kerala. In 1766, Hyder Ali conquered Kozhikode and plundered many temples. In a desperate bid to stall the impending crisis, the Zamorin Raja met Hyder Ali and offered him all his treasure and property as gift. But Hyder Ali demanded a colossal sum of one crore of gold Mohurs. The Zamorin Raja could not accede to Hyder Ali’s demand. The Mysorean army there upon entered Kozhikode. The Zamorin Raja sent the members of his family to Ponnani, blew up his own palace lest it falls in the hands of Hyder Ali, and committed self immolation. With this, Hyder Ali became the supreme master of Kozhikode. A brahmin by name Madanna, who was an experienced revenue officer in Mysore service, was appointed as civil governor of the newly conquered Malabar province with the headquarter at Kozhikode.

Though Hyder Ali’s troop reached Guruvayoor, the Temple was spared from demolition when a man known as Vadekkepat Warrier paid a ransom of 10,000 panamas, a coin then in currency. The Brahmin governor who was a devotee of Lord Krishna recommended that the Temple be handed over to Vadekkepat Warrier. This ended monopoly of Zamorin Raja and the Ooraalaan, namely Mallissery Namboothiri who were the joint administrators of the Temple and its management.

Since the financial support rendered by both Zamorin Raja and Mallissery to the Temple was withdrawn as a protest against the decision of Hyder Ali in appointing Vadekkepat Warrier as an additional trustee, a sense of uncertainty and insecurity prevailed with regard to the management of the Temple. This created financial crisis for the Temple. In 1780, all that saved the Temple from complete ruin was Sreenivasa Rao’s request for a grant - a Devadaaya, the gift of financial support from a ruler to a deity (Seth;2009:31). Srinivasa Rao was Hyder Ali’s Governor of Malabar. With this intervention by the Hyder Ali’s government, the Temple was able to manage without plunging into further financial crisis. This helped the Zamorin Raja and Mallissery Namboothiri realize the importance of their support and started associating themselves with the Temple management.
In 1788, Hyder Ali’s son and successor, Tipu Sultan, invaded Kozhikode and defeated Zamorins. Fearing total destruction of the Temple in the hands of Tipu Sultan, the Zamorin and Mallissery jointly organized many safety measures. The original idol known as Moolavigraha was hidden within the temple, another important image known as Thidambu (processional image) was shifted to Ambalapuzha’s Sree Krishna temple in Travancore. By the time Tipu’s army arrived and plundered the Temple, the important deities were already shifted to safe hidden places. The Travancore Raja who helped in the safe keeping of the deity and valuables of Guruvayoor, supported the Ooraalaa and encouraged him to become more powerful in the management of the Temple. At this point in time, the ruler of Kozhikode limited his interventions in the management of Guruvayoor temple. In 1792 the combined forces of the Zamorins, Travancore ruler and the British drove Tipu out of Kozhikode. The Moolavigraha (main idol) was then reinstalled at the sanctum, and the Thidambu was brought back from Ambalapuzha. The Zamorins could not support the Temple immediately after the reinstalation of the idols because of the heavy cost incurred for defeating Tipu Sultan’s army. Tipu Sultan’s invasion created financial crisis for the Temple as many of the Temple’s tenants had converted to Islam and refused to pay their rents. Others had fled. The Temple’s income was highly reduced; its rituals and festivals were further affected when Tipu Sultan confiscated the wealth of Zamorin.

During the crisis period of Tipu’s invasion, a prominent family known as Ullanatt Panickers helped the Zamorin in saving the Temple (ibid:32). For 75 years, from 1825, they drew heavily on their own wealth, giving their services free in order that the Temple could survive, perform its daily pujas and conduct the annual festival. Thus Ullanatt Panickers became an important stake holder in the management of the Temple.

In 1800, Kozhikode became a part of British residency. Thereafter the region was known as Malabar. Malabar region was made a part of the Madras province. The financial situation of the Temple improved by 1841 since the government of Madras started funding the Temple (ibid:32). This is another important development in the role of the state vis-à-vis religion. In 1900, the appointment of a full time manager by the Madras government for the Temple is an important milestone in the relationship between the state and what is considered as religion of the majority of the original native people. The duties of the manager was to ensure that the Temple conducts its daily worship and rituals without any interruption, maintains the premises
well, regulates the hours of worship and other aspects of management. Such state intervention by the Madras government reduced the authority of Zamorin Raja which resulted in the Zamorin Raja moving the court for the restoration of his monopoly right to control and manage the Temple taken away by the Madras government.

In 1916, a court of wards assumed management of the Temple since it was seen as being part of the Zamorin estate; and by 1928, the Raja was made responsible for its administration. In 1930, the Madras High Court formulated a clear administrative pattern and confirmed that the Zamorin Raja was in charge of the Temple (ibid:33). The Madras High Court accepted the role of Mallissery Namboodiri brahmin family as the Ooraalaan, the traditional owner of the Temple. In that administrative pattern directed by the court, Zamorin Raja was made as the head of the trustees whereas the senior most member of the Mallissery Namboothiri family a member of the management committee of the Temple. In other words, the court had accepted both the Zamorin and the Mallissery as the administrators of the Temple (ibid:35). In this way, the state’s recognition of the stake holders of a temple became a necessity to gain legitimacy.

A comparison can be drawn between the temple reform movements that were taken place in Tamil Nadu with that of Kerala during the independence movements. Modern temple reform in Tamil Nadu began in late 19th century with the activities of social and political elite in Madras city. Many leading members of this elite were Brahmin lawyers and administrators who were actively involved in the early nationalized movement under Indian National Congress (Fuller;2003:82). They took up the issue of Brahmin monopoly over temples and successfully worked towards the formation of Hindu Religious and Endowment Board to control the temples in Tamil Nadu. In Kerala such movements where absent during the days of independence movements. The only movement was led by Kellappan to get the temple thrown open to all Hindus regardless of caste.

The most remarkable state intervention during the days of princely state under the British period was the passing of the historical law. By introducing the Madras Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowment Act in 1951 (MH&RCE) that brought all the temples in the province including the Temple (Remeshan;2004:07) under its ambit, certain continuities were retained while certain old practices were changed. The Act allowed the former Zamorin ruler of Kozhikode and the senior member of Mallissery
Namboothiri Brahmin family continue as hereditary trustees of the Temple (ibid:08). Even after the formation of Kerala state in 1956, thereby making Malabar region a part of Kerala, the law was retained without any change.

Throwing the Temple open to all Hindus regardless of caste on 2\textsuperscript{nd} June 1947, just two months before Independence. The Madras government under whose control the Guruvayoor Devaswom was during the period formally passed a resolution to the effect. This state intervention brought an end to the discriminatory practice of preventing backward castes from entering temples. Kelappan led the social movement against such discrimination. Since this historic reform (ibid:10) took place during the British rule when Zamorin Raja was in charge of the Temple, the credit for bringing about this reform goes to them. Even after independence, the Malabar region continued to be under the British Madras Province. The temple entry for all Hindus in the Malabar region resulted in the increase in the volume of pilgrimage to the Temple.

Major state intervention in the post independent era was in 1971 following a major fire that destroyed the entire structure of the Temple outside the sanctum sanctorum. The Kerala government took over the administration of the Temple through an ordinance in 1971 (ibid:224) stating that the hereditary management failed to protect the Temple and its valuables. The state take over of the management of the Temple underwent a series of events at different stages. The Kerala High Court struck down the ordinance of 1971 (ibid:225) because the court felt that just state taking over the Temple was not sufficient to regulate the management practices of the Temple. The High Court directed the state to make a permanent organizational structure to govern the Temple. During the period between 1973 and 1977, the Temple was supervised by a receiver appointed by the court. In 1977, a new Law was legislated by the state government - the Guruvayoor Devaswom Act - giving a formal structure to the Devaswom management.

Political changes after the State formation and its impact

The state of Kerala has been ruled by a coalition government since its formation in 1956. The two important political coalitions the Left Democratic Front (LDF) and the United Democratic Front (UDF) have ruled the state alternatively. The Communist Party of India Marxist is the main constituent of Left Democratic Front and the Congress is the main party in
the United Democratic Front. In the seventies, along with political competition between these coalitions, caste and communal politics also grew in the state.

It was during the UDF regime in 1977, for the first time after independence a statutory body – Guruvayoor Devaswom Managing committee – was constituted to manage temples. In that statutory body, the important thing was that the Zamorin Raja and Mallisseray Namboothiri – traditional managers were retained as permanent members. Both of them belong to the upper caste. The National Democratic Party, a political outfit of Nair (upper caste) community was a permanent constituent of the Congress led coalition at the time. The UDF was also known for its support base among the Schedule Castes. Not surprisingly then, a Schedule Caste member was included in the managing committee. A series of meetings were organized by the Schedule Caste forums and associations in the state to appreciate the then leader of the Congress K. Karunakaran. This was a departure from the practices adopted by the rulers of the princely state immediately after the independence. The Travancore and Cochin Devaswom boards do not have Scheduled Castes as members. The compulsions of democratically elected government that was dependent on coalition partners, it can be stated, were responsible for these changes in the composition of the Guruvayoor Devaswom managing committee.

The Communist Party Marxist which was in the opposition during the period did not object to the changes in the composition of the managing Committee. Commenting on the role of Communist Party of India Marxist politics in Kerala, Balakrishnan (2004) says, CPI (M) that objected to any new initiative of the ruling UDF whenever the latter was in power, on this is one occasion, the CPI (M) openly supported the changes in the composition of Guruvayoor Devaswom managing Committee having both traditional trustees and Schedule Caste members, as it did not want to offend the feelings of the Hindus (Balakrishnan; 2004:82). In the backdrop of the caste and communal politics of this period, secularization of a kind unknown before took place, and political consensus could emerge on the issue. Forward castes in this way were made to share power in the control of the management of the Temple. State interference in the management of Hindu temples came to be accepted while ruling class subscribed to the status quo regarding management of places of worship of other religions.
Both the UDF and the LDF became careful in handling sensitive issues pertaining to religion. It became evident in the case of nomination of a person called Thampi in 1990 by the LDF government led by the CPI (M) leader E.K. Nayanar. Thampi was in charge of CPI(M)’s cultural wing in the state. He was the party’s nominee to the Rajya Sabha in 1989. But he had to give up the nomination in favour of another person because of the compulsion of coalition politics. The CPI (M) government compensated the loss of Rajya Sabha seat by making him a member of Guruvayoor Devaswom Managing Committee. Appointment of Tambi, a Scheduled Caste Christian convert and a leader of CPI (M) was not accepted by the Nair Service Society (NSS) and the Sree Narayana Dharma Paripalana Yogam (SNDP) (ibid:83).

The Hindu Munnani, the Viswa Hindu Parishad, the NSS, and the SNDP jointly organized protest against making Thambi a member of Guruvayoor Devaswom Managing Committee. Initially the CPI (M) defended its action saying that Tambi was a Hindu though not a devotee. The Hindu Munnani leader Rajashekharan produced a copy of the third page of Thampi’s SSLC book which clearly showed his Christian identity. During all these developments, the Congress did not get into blame game. Later, in response to resistance from caste associations, the LDF government withdrew Thampi’s nomination to avoid communal polarization paving the way for the growth of politics of religion.

The state intervention in temples in Kerala is compared with that of the neighboring state of Tamil Nadu. There, the state intervenes in the sacred area of management. It is evident in the case of Chidambaram temple where the state appointed a commissioner to manage the Nataraja temple against the objections of Dikshitars who were claiming to be the traditional owners of the temple (Dorai Roy, Frontline; 23 Oct 2009:26). The state intervention is on the ground that Tamil is not used for reciting hymns inside the temple (ibid:27). The long history of legal battle with Dikshitars and the state for control of the temple still continues. The state of Tamil Nadu and its H.R & C.E have a greater political space to intervene in the sacred area of temples is evident from this case.

In Tamil Nadu, the H.R & C.E act controls all the temples (Fuller;2003:155). There is no right for any private group or trust to appoint the priests and conduct the poojas as they wish in temples where the public worships (ibid:155). The state takes initiatives and controls the affairs of the
sacred area of such temples. There was a debate in Tamil Nadu regarding what is a private temple. Fuller (2003) says that, the issue of private-public temple was settled after independence when the state government introduced laws separating private and public temples. In 1969 the DMK government introduced a law stating that public temple means those temples where the public offers worship and private temples are those where only the families owning those temples offer worship (ibid:115). State after the introduction of the act in 1969, the H.R & C.E department controls all the temples in Tamil Nadu where public offer worships (ibid:115).

From the survey of literature it is seen that, in Kerala such an intervention is absent. There is no debate on what constitutes public worship and private worship. Whether temples are public or private in Kerala is based on the ownership. In both cases, state keeps away from intervening in the sacred area as discussed in the second chapter. All the temples, irrespective of who worships in them, who owns them - state or private individuals matters in classifying the temples is an important conclusion of the second chapter.

The only type of state intervention in Kerala after independence is to ensure communal harmony. The case of appointment of Thampi a Christian convert as the member of the managing committee and later withdrawal of the appointment when the public demanded it is an evidence of state governments decision to remain equi-distant from religion and avoid communal conflicts in the state. It is a very important perspective of secularism practiced in the state.

Temple entry of non-Hindu devotees continues to be an issue. Many, including leaders of caste organizations, argue that a temple is not a place for rivalries and non-believers. They argue that a temple should be open to all the believers irrespective of their caste, religion or nationality. Writers like Sukumar Azhekode demanded introduction of a law governing all temples in the state so that non-Hindu devotees can enter temples for worship. The minister of Devaswoms in the state, Sudhakaran stated “This obscurantist policy of restricting the entry of non-Hindu devotees is a stumbling block for religious harmony, spirituality and the real interests of Hindu religion” (Mathrubhumi:13 March 2008;11). Congress leaders like A.K. Antony argue that there is no mass support for allowing of non-Hindus’ entry into temples. Consensus on the issue is yet to emerge. Till then, no change can be introduced.
Balakrishnan (2004:96) is of the opinion that CPI (M) mainly depends on Hindu votes. The percentage of minority support for CPI (M) is only one-fourth of the total minority population (ibid:97). The CPI (M) does not want to lose the upper caste support either by supporting the entry of non-Hindus. Similarly, the Congress coalition also does not want to lose the support of the 25% of the Hindu voters. Growth of BJP is another important factor which makes both Congress and CPI (M) remain non-committal on the issue. This is an example of major role played by caste and communal politics in the relationship between state and management of Hindu temples in Kerala. It must be noted that non-Hindu and Scheduled Caste members were included as members in the statutory bodies which manage the day-to-day conduct of temple affairs for the first time. By this strategy, all the political parties were able to fend off criticism at the same time retain their vote banks.

**Stakeholders in the Temple**

From the very beginning of the history of the Temple, the number of devotees was large. Many monarchs’ chieftains and prominent scholars lived in Guruvayoor and contributed towards the promotion of the Temple. Some of them were beneficiaries of the Temple. Many events ended the role of few beneficiaries; these events contributed to diversification of beneficiaries and inclusiveness. Among such stake holders the most important are Ooraalaars, the traditional owners of the Temple.

Seth (2009) says that as per records kept in the temples, the Temple has been in existence since 9th century A.D (29). The Temple grew in fame and the original Serene was managed by 72 Namboothiri Brahmin families from the beginning (ibid). Since the surrounding land was saline and the area scarcely populated, all those who officiated within the temple originally came from elsewhere (ibid). No one knows who those families were except that seven were still in existence in the 17th century. A hundred years later, only one remained namely Mallissery Namboothiripad (ibid:34). Today Mallissery Paremshwaran Namboothiripad the senior member of the present generation known as Karnavan continues to be the Ooraalaan, the original traditional owner of the Temple.
Table 3.1
Seven families who were the Ooraalaars of Guruvayoor temple till the 18th century.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the family</th>
<th>Place</th>
<th>Current Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chomana</td>
<td>Guruvayoor</td>
<td>Extinct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jnelliyyur</td>
<td>Malappuram</td>
<td>Extinct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trithala</td>
<td>Palakkad</td>
<td>Extinct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tathamangalam</td>
<td>Palakkad</td>
<td>Extinct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pillanazhi</td>
<td>Kozhikode</td>
<td>Extinct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arimpur</td>
<td>Malappuram</td>
<td>Extinct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mallissery</td>
<td>Guruvayoor</td>
<td>Current Ooralan</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Field survey

The above seven families were in charge of the administration of the Temple and its sub temples since 9th century A.D (ibid:34). It was during that period the organization of Guruvayoor Devaswom came into being. A formal structure of Devaswom having two separate divisions namely Pathivu, meaning routine rituals under the control of Tantri Namboothiri and Janmam meaning funds and wealth under the control of the administrator (Gopalakrishnan;2008:255) was created. It is inferred that the organization of Devaswom, a structure which is in existence even today came into being much before the arrival of Christians and Muslims to Kerala; institutionalization of and the organizational structure of temples in Kerala developed without the influence of the places of worship of other religions.

Punathur Raja was the chieftain who controlled the area around the Guruvayoor temple; he and his heirs had sufficient power to voice their opinion, both as rulers and devotees in the mid 18th century. The Punathur Raja made many attempts to take over the management of the Temple but the powerful Zamorin who ruled the Kozhikode princely state did not allow him to be a part of the management of the Temple. The Zamorin’s forceful intervention eliminated the role of Punathur Raja family. The conflicts for the control of the management of the Temple was not only limited to the Zamorin and Punathur Raja families but it also involved the Ooraalaan.

As far back as the 15th century, the Zamorin of Kozhikode was successfully casting an eye on the Temple; as a result, the relationship between the Ooraalaan and Zamorins was always an uneasy one. On 9th March 1971, the state took over the management of the Temple ending the monopoly of Zamorin and Mallisserry Namboothiri over the Guruvayoor
Devaswom. Seth (2009) says that the last two hundred years from 1771 – 1971 witnessed many conflicts between them for gaining control over the Temple. Some of the important events that led to the conflict between them led to state intervention. Their causes are to be identified and analyzed in order to understand the issues between ruler(s) and administrator(s) of the Temple.

In the ongoing struggle to define the ownership of the Temple, Seth (2009) explains many incidents (ibid:36). When in the 18th century Tipu Sultan made incursions into Malabar, there was justified fear that he would loot the Temple. The Ooraalaan and the priest took either the Thidambu (Processional idol) or the main idol to Sree Krishna Temple at Ambalapuzha in Travancore State for safety. The Ooraalaan took with him, as the Custodian of the temple, the belongings, the jewels and the ornaments of the Temple deity (ibid:36). He handed over the items to the Maharaja of Travancore for safekeeping and received a receipt to this effect. This receipt is used as a record by the Mallissery family to establish the family’s right to the ownership of the Temple’s valuables and therefore of the Temple itself.

During 1900, the Zamorin wanted to conduct the Utsavam (Festival) of the Temple. Realizing that he would be unable to prevent this, Mallissery decided to discredit the rituals by polluting the proceedings (ibid:36). A dead cock was hung on the golden Kodimaram (flagpost) to desecrate the Temple in connivance with Thiruvenkitan Warrier and Muthedath Nair, the men employed to actually climb the Kodimaram and place the dead bird. Though the ashudham –the desecration – had created the desired effect, it resulted in dire consequences. The Zamorin Raja failed to conduct the festival and decided to give importance to Ooraalaan. But the Mallissery family regretted later for the mistake and feel that they suffer from the deity’s curse even today. However, this case explains the struggle for supremacy between the Ooraalaan and the ruler. Out of fear of intervention from the Travancore Raja, the Zamorin Raja conceded the supremacy of Ooraalaan in those days. In late 1920’s, the fortunes of the Mallissery family were at its lowest ebb. The sole surviving heir of the Mallissery family was excommunicated – along with several other Namboothiris – for their involvement in a local scandal. At the same time since he had no children, the family’s woes were compounded, not only was the family disgraced but also faced extinction.

The then ruler of Kozhikode could have taken revenge by appointing a new Ooraalaan. The Kozhikode ruler desisted from state intervention and
left it to the Mallissery family to take an appropriate decision. The Mallissery family humbled by disgrace sought the co-operation and permission of the Kozhikode ruler to adopt a male child from a Namboothiri family, having blood relationship. Since the Zamorin did not object to it, a boy called Krishnan was adopted by the Mallissery family. At that time Malabar was a part of British India (Madras Province) and was administered from Madras. The core of the problem had always been the Mallissery family’s relationship with the Zamorins since small but significance irritations caused them to be, at best, highly suspicious of each other. It is evident from the fact that as late as 1920’s, around the time when a child was adopted by the Mallissery family as the legal heir, of the Ooraalaan. This led to filing of a court case in 1921 by a senior member of the Mallissery family to determine the division of power. The judicial intervention gave provisions for the sharing of power. So graded were the provisions that the Zamorin was granted the right to have one clerk and two peons whilst Mallissery has only allowed one of each.

Despite the winds of change altering the system of ownership and shifting of power and control into the government’s hand through the implementation of the Guruvayoor Devaswom Act 1971 and its various amendments, the three hereditary members remain important stakeholders - the Zamorin Raja, the senior member of Mallisser Illam (Namboothiri family), and the Tantri Namboothiri of the temple (ex-officio).

**Other Stakeholders**

Many historical events caused the emergence of many other beneficiaries than the three mentioned above. Administrators associated with the Temple were beneficiaries in terms of power and spoils from the worship practices. They lost their hold over the Temple due to certain events. Such beneficiaries, though not known as Ooraalaan, managed the Temple at different points in history.

During the period of Mysorean invasion, one such important event that gave rise to the emergence of a new administrator of the Temple took place. Hyder Ali invaded Malabar and destroyed many temples. Kozhikode fell to Hyder Ali and the ruler Zamorin had to surrender all his wealth to him. Hyder Ali was after the treasure of Kozhikode and he advanced towards the Temple to plunder the wealth. Though Hyder Ali’s troupe reached Guruvayoor, the Temple was spared when a man known as
Vadekkepat Warrier saved the temple by paying a ransom of 10000 panams (coins that were used at the time). After the event, the Zamorin acknowledged his gratitude by accepting him as an official equivalent to Ooralan. This made Vadekkepat Warrier a defacto administrator of the Temple.

After Hyder Ali’s invasion, his son Tipu Sultan also invaded Kozhikode and the Temple. Vadekkepat Warrier who was managing the Temple had to surrender all the wealth to Tipu Sultan. There was no resource with the Zamorin to manage the Temple. Despite being almost ruined, the Temple was again saved by another rich family known as Ullant Panickers. They were faithful to Zamorins and had great devotion to the deity. Ullant Panickers funded the Temple at this critical point of financial crisis. They looked after not only the Temple with devotion but also the interests of the Zamorin. The Zamorin, realizing the importance of the services of Ullant Panickers, conferred the title ‘Ooraalaan’ on the family. For seventy five years from 1825 to 1900 they drew heavily on the wealth of their own vast estate, giving their services free in order that the Temple could survive, the daily poojas and annual festivals could be conducted uninterrupted. From 1825 onwards, the total number of administrators was four that included the Zamorin, Mallissery Namboodiri, Vadekkapat Warrier and the Ullant Panickers. Seth observes that there was conflict between them. The main reason for the conflict was regarding who should head the trust. The situation eventually reached such a peak that, in 1889 the Temple had to be closed and all the poojas were stopped. Although they were restarted after a week, conflicts continued. In 1900, the Madras government approached the High Court to settle the conflicts. The High Court appointed a manager by name Konthi Menon to manage the Temple and eventually the conflict between the trustees came to an end. The appointment of Konthi Menon as a manager restored a sense of order. It also increased the involvement of one more person other than the four trustees in the management of the Temple.

In 1916, since it was seen as being part of the Zamorin’s estate, a Court of Wards assumed management of the Temple. And by 1928, the Court of Wards was responsible for its administration. Two years later, the Madras High Court formulated a clear administrative pattern and confirmed that the Zamorin was in charge and made Mallissery Namboodiri a joint trustee along with the Zamorin. The role of Vadekkepat Warriers and Ullant Panickers was brought to an end. However, the struggle between the
Zamorin and Mallissery Namboodiripad continued until 9th March 1971 when the Guruvayoor Devaswom Act effectively prevented both of them from holding any real power. After 1971, the management of the Temple was taken over by the state of Kerala and a formal structure - a managing committee of Guruvayoor Devaswom was brought into existence. The structure comprises of three hereditary trustees namely the Zamorin, Mallissery Namboothiri and the Tantri Namboothiri of the Temple, three state nominated members and a representative of the employees. Currently, the Temple has seven members in the management committee.

The gainers and losers right from the beginning of the Temple can be classified into three categories. The first, during the early period of history of the Temple between the 9th century and the 17th century, the original administrators - Ooraalaans - were seventy two Namboothiri families of which sixty five became extinct by 17th century; and by 18th century, only one known as Mallissery Namboothiri survived. During the period, the ruler of Kozhikode – the Zamorin - regulated the Temple and was an important power centre in the management of the Temple. The second, between the 17th century and 1947, three Ooralans Vadekkepat Warrier, Ullant Panicker and Konni Manon emerged along with the traditional owner Mallissery. In 1928 Madras Court made the Zamorins as the head and Mallissery as the sole Ooralan as a second trustee responsible for the management of the Temple. In the process of the judicial intervention, Vadekkapat Warrier, Ullant Panicker and Konth Menon were the losers. Third, after the state took over the Temple in 1971, a new statutory managing committee comprising of three state nominated members along with a representative of employees and three hereditary members was made responsible for its management.

The seventy two families who initially owned the temple from 9th century onwards, whose name is not known except those seven who were still in existence in 17th century, the Raja of Punathur who wanted to regulate the Temple, the chieftain Kolatheri Raja, Vadekkepat Warrier and Konni Menon appointed by the Madras government to manage the Temple were stake holders. The Zamorin Raja, the Mallissery and the director of the Department of HR&CE, Madras were also stake holders. All of them lost their privilege after 1971 – when Guruvayoor Devaswom was brought under the control of the state. After 1971, political leaders and some of the social figures became the new stakeholders in the Temple. Systems of accountability have also changed along with the changes cited above. The stake holders shaped the system of accountability according to the needs
perceived by them.

From the above discussion, nature of state’s intervention can be inferred. First, promotion of religious movements and cults was used to defend against foreign invasion and to retain territorial control. Second, movements and cults facilitated proliferation of devotional literature. Devotional literature and art forms, in turn acted like propaganda machines—the way electronic media act today to reinforce communalism. They helped in popularizing Krishna worship and the Temple. The number of devotees increased and they came from around the world. Third, the local rulers/people built and aggrandized the Temple as a symbol of power vis-à-vis foreign invaders and/or neighbours having predatory intentions. Fourth, state is seen as the vanguard of the identity of majority of the people. Fifth, rulers preferred to leave the actual day to day management of the Temple to Ooraalaans in the case of Hindus and to the clergy in the case of other religious communities; but when circumstances warranted their intervention, the rulers took full responsibility for protecting and managing the Hindu temples. However, there is no evidence to indicate that rulers intervened in the affairs of other religions in the state. Hindu temples and places of worship of other religions gradually became organized and came to be treated as institutions. And lastly, to sustain and develop the places of worship like the churches, the mosques, the synagogues as religious institutions, the temples also were endowed with assets like cultivable land and voluntary donations of perennial nature that had the potential to supply basic necessities for the conduct of daily rituals essential for retaining peoples’ faith and devotion in a sustained manner. In the case of Hindu temples, the rulers who themselves were Hindus took it upon themselves to ensure that the temples as institutions were well managed to earn and retain social capital. Apart from serving the emotional and spiritual needs of the people, political importance of retaining the support of the native people was not missed.

**Systems of accountability in Guruvayoor Devaswom**

Temples are important in the society because they provide a substantial proportion of the religious services, community welfare, cultural education, and contribute to economic growth of the locale. Because the temple managements lord over sizeable public assets, they are not less accountable than either for-profit entities or government sector organizations. Accountability means, the obligation to demonstrate and take
responsibility for performance in light of agreed expectations. There is a difference between responsibility and accountability. Responsibility is the obligation to act; and accountability is the obligation to answer for an action. In the case of a temple, to whom are the temple authorities have an obligation to disclose is an important issue. As far as a company is concerned, it is the shareholders and the public to whom the management has to be accountable. For a temple as an organization, since there are no shareholders, it is to the devotees, the general public and the state to which a temple management and administrators are accountable. If the temple is owned by government by a statute, the temple authorities are accountable to the devotees, the general public and the legislature. As a secular state, there are laws to ensure that the state does not interfere into the affairs of religions. However, from the beginning Hindu religion being the religion of the majority of the people in India, has had the state regulating its affairs. In the case of temples like the Temple, which is owned by the state, it is expected that the state will ensure accountability from the temple authorities.

The history of Guruvayoor Devaswom Management can be divided into three important periods. The first one is pre-Independent era, the second is prior to the formation of Kerala state in 1956 and the third is post 1956. During the pre-independence period, the Temple was managed directly by the Zamorins and the Ooraalaans jointly. During this period, the Temple had 25 priests and 50 helpers, and they were considered as temple functionaries. There were only 18 personnel including the manager for the administration of the Temple and its properties. The administrative division was not well established as it is today and was directly under the ruler. The post-independence period was marked by transition from monarchy to democracy. During the period administrative structure was unchanged. In the third phase, the Kerala state Government replaced the laws of the Madras Government with new ones.

The system of accountability as far as financial and human resources management of the Temple owned by the state have functional and symbolic roles in a complex set of accountability relationships between the state and management of temples. The Guruvayoor Devaswom follows three important operations to ensure accountability (Remeshan;2004:227). First is the preparation of the budget; second, the audit of finances and the properties of the Temple; and third, publication of annual report. The annual report has two sections - the finances and the assets, and the other section
deals with administrative aspects. The financial section describes the income and expenditure, the financial position of the Devaswom and the audit statements. The other section explains the movements of changes in Movable and the immovable properties, transfer of funds to financial institutions (investments) and deposits in banks and treasuries. The administrative section states the personnel practices, new schemes for worship introduced, new facilities created for devotees, etc during the year. The process of preparing these and analysis of the facts contained in them are discussed in the following sections.

**Financial management**

Financial management is concerned with the sources and applications of funds and wealth. Generally, objectives of financial management are profit and wealth maximization (Sarma Guptha;2001:32). But a temple is not a business organization. Temple is considered to be a sacred place and is different from ordinary charitable organizations. It is meant to propagate spiritual and religious values. In the management of the finances of such an organization, profit and wealth maximization are not the main objectives. The funds are to be utilized for the general well being of the society, facilities for the devotees and for the propagation of religious and spiritual values and to promote social capital. Being a charitable organization, charitable projects should also be undertaken. These are the criteria applied in this study while analyzing the financial management of Guruvayoor Devaswom.

The Guruvayoor Devaswom is one of the richest temples in India. Subramanian(2003) states that the wealth of Guruvayoor Devaswom is considered to be the blessings of Goddess Mahalakshmi. Just as in the case of Tirupathy Balaji Temple in Andhra Pradesh, people believe that, by offering prayers to the Lord Guruvayoorappan, all their sorrows and difficulties will be removed. Hence, there are plenty of offerings in cash and kind, and also in the performance of special worships that bring in a lot of revenue to the Temple. These constitute the main sources of funds and wealth for the Devaswom. The Devaswom also receives gifts of elephants, cows, land and gold (Subramanian;2003:71).

The management of finances in the temples under the Guruvayoor Devaswom is a combination of modern scientific management and traditional systems followed in Kerala. All incomes and expenditures are
accounted and statements are prepared. Guruvayoor Devaswom follows the regulatory procedures prescribed in the Guruvayoor Devaswom Act in handling receipts and payment.

**Budget**

The Temple and twelve other subordinate temples come under the Guruvayoor Devaswom. The managing committee of the Devaswom prepares budget for all the temples coming under it for the ensuing financial year and presents it to the Devaswom Commissioner of the state. Section 21 of the Guruvayoor Devaswom Act makes it mandatory for the managing committee to get the budget approved by the Commissioner. The Act also mentions that the Commissioner shall send a copy of the budget as approved by him to the Devaswom Department of Kerala State Government. According to Remeshan (2004), this provision ensures that Guruvayoor Devaswom receives income from public and spends it as per approved budget. This enables the state maintain an oversight over the Temple’s finances and assets and prevent possible irregularities.

**Receipts**

The sources of funds of the Guruvayoor Devaswom from all its temples belong to six groups. They are income from: i) *Bhandaram*(Cash box), ii) Offerings, iii) private worship, iv) income from properties, v) income from elephants, and vi) miscellaneous. The table 3.2 is a year wise break-up of income for five years.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sources</th>
<th>2002</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bhandaram (Hundi)</td>
<td>80.00 *</td>
<td>101.6</td>
<td>123.7</td>
<td>137.79</td>
<td>159.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offerings (In Kind)</td>
<td>21.43</td>
<td>22.43</td>
<td>22.64</td>
<td>22.77</td>
<td>22.91</td>
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<tr>
<td>Private worship (Fees)</td>
<td>16.92</td>
<td>17.55</td>
<td>17.81</td>
<td>17.98</td>
<td>18.03</td>
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<tr>
<td>Income from properties</td>
<td>4.76</td>
<td>4.85</td>
<td>4.97</td>
<td>5.04</td>
<td>5.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elephants (Hire charges of)</td>
<td>0.43</td>
<td>0.54</td>
<td>0.87</td>
<td>1.02</td>
<td>1.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
<td>0.39</td>
<td>0.37</td>
<td>0.42</td>
<td>0.45</td>
<td>0.54</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* amounts are given in crores of rupees.
Bhandaram:

Bhandaram or the metal cash box or the *hundi* is the most important source of revenue for the Guruvayoor Devaswom. Three cash boxes with opening to permit offerings are placed one each in front of the idols of temples, in front of the entrance to the Sree Kovil (sanctum sanctorum) and third at the entrance to the temples (Namboothiri;1998). Most of the devotees put cash and valuables in these cash boxes as a token of their faith, devotion and piety. As there are no receipts given in return to the offerings, there is no way to ascertain the exact amount of cash deposited in the cash boxes.

Till 2001, Bhandaram was opened by the authorized Devaswom officials privately. The High Court of Kerala intervened in response to a prayer by a member of the public and ordered the Devaswoms to open the cash boxes in front of the representatives of the public and account the amount under their supervision. A formal committee comprising of devotees, members of the Devaswom employees’ organizations and vigilance officials was suggested by the court for the supervision during the opening and accounting of the cash box collections. Implementing the court directive in 2001 the Guruvayoor Devaswom constituted a committee as per the court directive.

<table>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>159.5</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>12.7</td>
<td>12.9</td>
<td>13.2</td>
<td>13.6</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>101.6</td>
<td>123.7</td>
<td>137.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* in crores of rupees

SOURCE: Field Survey

The effect of judicial intervention can be seen in the increase in income before and after 2002. It also set a precedent in Kerala for other Devaswoms controlled by the state.

The other receipts are offerings, private worship, income from properties and miscellaneous other income. The accountability with regard to all offerings and receipts under these heads have to be recorded in registers specified by the Guruvayoor Devaswom Act of 1978 (Remeshan; 2004;241). These registers are maintained at the Devaswom office under the direct supervision of the administrator.
The Guruvayoor Devaswom Managing Committee is empowered to fix the rates of private worship from time to time (ibid:241). Elephant hire charges which is an important income for the Devaswom is also fixed directly by the Devaswom Managing Committee. Miscellaneous receipts include interests, rents of buildings, income from guest houses, inns and institutions run by the Devaswoms. The Act provides authority to the Managing Committee to fix rates for rent and receive interest on investments.

Savings of the Devaswom can be invested for the benefit of the temples (Remeshan;2004: 233). The state government has indirect control over the procedure of investment in other than scheduled bank fixed deposits. The Managing Committee has to send the proposal to the Commissioner. The Commissioner after making necessary enquiries forwards the proposal to the Devaswom department of the state government for approval. The Devaswom department is empowered by the Guruvayoor Devaswom Act to verify whether the investment is in accordance with the statute, in keeping with the sentiments of the faithful and for preserving the temple heritage. It has been noted that all the investments made by Guruvayoor Devaswom till date were only those thus approved by the state government.

The Guruvayoor Devaswom Act clearly states that the Managing Committee or the Commissioner or the government cannot be involved in decisions regarding religious or spiritual matters of the temples. The state keeps away from decisions regarding fixing of the types offerings and the rituals; these are considered as religious and spiritual matters and as a secular state, government cannot ‘interfere’ in such matters. They are completely left to the discretion of the Tantri Namboothiris, the religious heads of the temples.

**Expenditures of temples**

An important relationship between the state and the management of temples is defined in the case of fixing scales of expenses in the Guruvayoor Devaswom. The Guruvayoor Devaswom Act, provides enormous scope for flexibility regarding the scale of expenditure. The Managing Committee may fix from time to time and submit proposals for modifying the extent of authority vested in the Devaswom/temple authorities and fixing the scale of
expenditure that each official is authorized to incur for the temple without approval of higher authority. The Managing committee has to publish such proposals at the premises of the Devaswom for a period of one month. Persons having interest in temples are given opportunity to articulate objections or suggestions if any to the Commissioner within the month. After the expiry of one month, the Commissioner is empowered by the Act to accept or modify the proposal taking into account the merits of the objections and suggestions made by public. And the budget prepared by each temple is also open to public scrutiny. Modified proposal is implemented by respective temple officials. By doing so, the state ensures that the devotees and public get an opportunity to have a say in the decisions pertaining to the powers to spend temple/Devaswom funds owned by the state (Guruvayoor Devaswom Handbook; 2005: 118):

1) **Expenses for performing rites and rituals of temples:** Guruvayoor Devaswom Act specifies that the Managing Committee shall not alter or cause to alter the performance of customary rites and rituals of the temples. The state oversees the duties of the Managing Committee with regard to the management of rites and rituals in the temples. The expenditure incurred with regard to the routine rites and rituals has to be according to the budget approved by the Commissioner.

2) **Expenditure on offerings:** The Managing Committee is authorized by the Devaswom Act to fix the rates of rites and rituals and incur expenses for conducting them. In fixing the share of offerings to be given to the priests and other functionaries, the Managing Committee can exercise discretionary powers. In fixing the proportion that should go to the priests, the Managing Committee takes into consideration the market value of articles used for the performance of the rituals.

3) **Expenditure on constructions:** The Managing Committee is authorized by the Act to undertake construction and maintenance of temples and the buildings belonging to the temples. In consultation with the administrator, the temple engineer prepares estimates and it must be passed by the Managing Committee which is forwarded to the Commissioner for approval prior to the commencement of construction work. The Commissioner has powers to stop the work if s/he finds the quality substandard.

Another important type of expense is purchases. The purchase procedure to meet the requirements for the rituals is different from the standard procedures followed by state government. For rituals to be performed as
per the traditions and customs, such items like sugar, jiggery, rice etc have to be purchased from suppliers who satisfy the criterion of purity and hygiene. The system for purchase of other items is on the basis of the directions given by the auditors based on accounting standards.

The administrative overheads are treated as non-sacred expenses. The Local Fund auditors as a part of their concurrent audit examine the routine expenses every day after it is incurred (Handbook 2005:81). This procedure automatically prevents misuse or waste of temple funds without delay. It becomes difficult to locate errors if the annual audit has to be awaited.

Financial management has twin objectives: one, to ensure growth of resources and the other is, to fulfill the temples’ social responsibility towards the faithful. Even in ordinary businesses these two aspects are of equal importance. But in the case of a temple, the latter far out weighs the former. The prime objective of the temple is not to make profit or simply multiply the resources as an end in itself. The temple is a religious institution primarily meant for propagating spiritual values and promoting social capital unlike a for-profit institution. Its resources have to be assessed, if ever, in terms of its success in spreading spiritual values among the devotees, in particular increasing the number of pilgrims year after year. A temple like the one at Guruvayoor is a place where innumerable devotees congregate and their offerings yield enormous income. It is the bounden duty of the Devaswom authorities to spend this income judiciously to the best advantage of the devotees. Apart from maintaining a spiritual ambiance in the temple, the authorities should give top priority to the promotion of physical well being of the devotees who visit the temple. So, the purpose of audit is to ensure greater satisfaction of the devotees – a form of social audit, not merely to see if the temples’ resources have been misappropriated.

**Book-keeping and Accounting**

Guruvayoor Devaswom keeps books of accounts under the double entry system of book keeping. This practice was introduced after the introduction of Guruvayoor Devaswom Act in 1978. Prior to 1978, the accounts were maintained under a traditional system where by only a cash-book used to be maintained. Accounts were not audited and verified as it is done today. The Zamorin Raja and the senior member of the Mallissery Namboothiri family insisted that the accounts (expenses and income) should be read in front of the deity before the closure of the temples. The manger
used to present day to day accounts in front of the deity and it used to be considered that completed accounting formalities (ibid:229).

Remeshan 2004 states that many private temples in Kerala especially those situated in the former Malabar region still practice this traditional system of maintaining accounts in the temple. With the introduction of Guruvayoor Devaswom Act in 1978, traditional system of accounting was replaced by modern system of accounting that include maintenance of cash book, day books, journals, ledgers and registers as directed by the auditors in accordance with the accounting standards prescribed by the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India.

The Guruvayoor Devaswom Act contains many provisions for strengthening accountability with regard to the movement of valuables through a process of maintenance of separate registers. Three registers are kept in Guruvayoor Devaswom under the direct control of the administrator. The first contains description of valuables – jewels, metals, antiques, musical instruments etc. The second contains list of other movable properties – furniture, fittings, automobiles, water pumps, exhausts, generators etc. The third register contains details of immovable properties owned by the Temple. Under the system meant for controlling movement of valuables, entries in these registers are to be counter signed by the Devaswom administrator and a member of the Guruvayoor Devaswom committee. This defines the accountability with regard to valuables and properties owned by the Temple.

The Guruvayoor Devaswom Act specifies that the managing committee has the responsibility to prepare the Income and Expenditure statement and the Balance sheet every year. When preparation and presentation of accounts was delayed in 1992, the High Court of Kerala intervened and directed the committee to present the accounts in the prescribed manner to the commissioner and send a copy of that to the court. The judicial intervention was based on the statutory obligation of the committee. Though this is an important feature with regard to accountability of the Guruvayoor Devaswom Managing Committee and authorities, general public and devotees are not aware about it. As such, only when irregularities come to the notice of the public through media, court intervenes.

The Guruvayoor Devaswom has been preparing the Income & Expenditure statement and Balance sheet for every financial year till date after the introduction of the Guruvayoor Devaswom Act in 1978. The
accounts thus prepared, approved by the commissioner and audited are published in dailies and in the official newsletter of the Guruvayoor Devaswom - **Baktha Priya**. The public gets the opportunity to obtain detailed information about the financial position of the temples under the Devaswom. It is very important in the relationship between state and managements of temples where by public gets an opportunity to monitor accounts of the temples. In 1998, a member of the public got an opportunity to object to the introduction of rent for keeping valuables of the devotees in the cloak room during the devotees’ visit to the temple. The objection was on the ground that Devaswom is financially sound enough to provide free safe keeping of valuables. This demand was favourably considered by the Devaswom.

**Asset Management**

The Guruvayoor Devaswom has both fixed and current assets. The fixed assets include land, building, furniture, fixtures, equipments, vessels, plant and machinery, electrical and water supply fittings, vehicles, computers, investments, valuable metals, jewelry, livestock and costumes. Current assets include work in progress, receivables, cash-on-hand and cash in scheduled banks.

Among fixed assets, the value of land and buildings is the maximum. The total value of land and buildings as on 31st March 2006 was rupees 47 crores. Furniture, fixtures, equipments and vessels were valued at Rs 57 lakhs on that date. The third type of fixed assets in terms of high value was electric and water supply fittings costing Rs 43 lakhs. Vehicle costing Rs 11 lakhs and computers costing Rs 6 lakhs were reported by The Devaswom. The values arrived in the balance sheet was on the basis of the accounting standards prescribed by the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India.

In 1990, when a new audit firm was appointed by the Guruvayoor Devaswom, many important changes were introduced. The first pertained to the valuation of fixed assets. Until 1990, the values of many lands and buildings belonging to the temples were not specified in the financial statements. This was because there was no record to indicate when those lands were acquired, buildings were constructed and valuable metals were received (Handbook;2005:13). A firm of chartered accountants estimated the value of all the lands and other assets belonging to the temples of the Devaswom between 1990-1997. Those fixed assets whose values were not
determined earlier were valued at market price as on 31\textsuperscript{st} March 1990 (ibid:13).

There are many important movable properties such as jewelry, valuable metals and coins in Guruvayoor Devaswom. The accountability about these items is clearly defined in the Devaswom Act. According to the Act, no movable property of a non perishable nature including jewelry which are in the possession of the Managing Committee and the value of which is more than Rs 5,000/- shall be sold, pledged or otherwise alienated unless it is approved by the Commissioner as being necessary or beneficial to the Devaswom. Any exchange, sale, mortgage and any lease of any property belonging or given or/and owned for the purpose of the Devaswom, has to get the prior approval of the Commission – a system which checks loose handling of movable properties.

The accountability is further re-enforced by inviting objections if any from the persons having interest in the temples. For this purpose the Commissioner has to publish the proposed transactions in the media. The Commissioner should communicate to the government before according approval to the Managing Committee with regard to the alienation of Devaswom properties. It gives the government the understanding whether the transactions are in order and in accordance with the Guruvayoor Devaswom Act. In the case of Narayanan Namboothiri Vs State of Kerala (Law times;1985: 629), it was held that the state rightly stopped the sale of antique articles of the Temple. It is evident from this that the system of accountability is capable of checking irregularities in the transactions. In the above antiques case, the state government got an opportunity to check political fall outs of the transaction.

Investment management of Guruvayoor Devaswom is traditional in nature. One of the common practices is depositing the surplus in the treasury every day. This procedure is stipulated by the law. In 2006, there was a total of Rs 125 crores in the form of fixed deposits in the state government treasury deposited by the Guruvayoor Devaswom. Fixed deposit in treasury has two important advantages. Firstly, the amount is safe since it is guaranteed by the state Government. Secondly it yields steady and reasonable rate of interest compared with banks. The rate of interest of fixed deposit with the treasury is not subject to variations as per the changes in the policies by the Reserve Bank of India. In addition to the safety of the deposit and higher rate of return, there is an advantage of providing liquidity to the
state treasury – an important relationship between the statutory bodies controlling the temples and the state treasury. The amount of deposit with the treasury for the past 10 years is listed below.

**Table 3.4**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Serial Number</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>FD as on 31st March</th>
<th>Additions in the Year</th>
<th>% of Increase</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>11,00,00,000</td>
<td>1,00,00,000</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>9,00,00,000</td>
<td>-2000000</td>
<td>-18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>14,00,00,000</td>
<td>5,00,00,000</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>13,00,00,000</td>
<td>-1000000</td>
<td>-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>10,00,00,000</td>
<td>-30000000</td>
<td>-23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>50,00,00,000</td>
<td>40,00,00,000</td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>78,00,00,000</td>
<td>28,00,00,000</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>90,00,00,000</td>
<td>12,00,00,000</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>1,00,00,00,000</td>
<td>10,00,00,000</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>1,25,00,00,000</td>
<td>25,00,00,000</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Field Survey.

The system of deposit in the treasury was started in 1978 after the state took over the Guruvayoor Devaswom. Until then, the Guruvayoor Devaswom deposited funds only in scheduled banks. The interest received from banks and the treasury deposits are exempted from Income Tax. If the tax is deducted at source, the auditors bring it to the attention of the Devaswom authorities who ensure refund of the amount so deducted as it happened in the case of treasury deducting Income Tax from the interest in 1996 which was subsequently refunded by the Income Tax Department at the intervention of the auditors (ibid:14).

The deposits in treasury or banks are not used as collateral securities for government borrowing. This is not only in the case of fixed deposits by the Devaswoms but also in the case of deposits by individuals in treasuries. It is a practice in Kerala that government treasuries accept deposits from public like that of commercial banks to increase the liquidity. Since treasury is not a commercial bank the Fixed Deposit receipts of the treasury are not negotiable instruments. Hence it is not pledged as collateral securities. However by depositing in the treasury the Guruvayoor Devaswom contributes towards the liquidity of the state ex-checker. It is an important aspect in the relationship between the state and management of temples.
Other investments of the Guruvayoor Devaswom are Vazhivadu and endowment deposits, pension fund deposit, security deposit and work deposit. The table 3.5 shows the balance of different deposits as on 31\textsuperscript{st} March 2006.

Table 3.5
Investments as deposits as on 31\textsuperscript{st} March 2006

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl No.</th>
<th>Particulars</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Vazhivadu and Endowment deposits</td>
<td>35 crores</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Pension fund deposits</td>
<td>1 crore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Security deposits</td>
<td>15 lakhs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Work deposits</td>
<td>20 lakhs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Field survey – Balance sheets

There is no evidence to suggest that the funds of Devaswom are directly used by the state. In this context it has to be examined that whether state has any use of those funds. The only use can be that it increases the liquidity of the treasury and the banks of the state. The banks and treasuries can make use of the liquidity to increase its lending limits which will result in greater economic activities. It is to be noted that the state gets the benefit of capital formation through this surplus savings of the temples.

Receipts from lands and guest houses (Panchajanyam, Shree Valsam, Kousthubham, Guest Houses and Satram) are important sources of revenue. The land revenue includes agriculture produce, lease and parking charges. The rent fixed for rooms in guest houses are much below the normal charges prevailing in hotels in the town. The standard of the rooms and its services remain at par with the other private hotels and inns. One of the important objectives of maintaining a reasonable low rent for the inns and guest houses is to provide facilities for devotees whose income is lower. In the management of these incomes care has been taken to strike a balance between income and devotee satisfaction. Thus the temple contributes towards the state economy.

Though the temple’s funds are not used by the state as revenue, the festivals and the religious importance of Guruvayoor temple contribute towards state’s economy in a different way. The pilgrims to Guruvayoor temple generate revenue to the state. In 2006 the revenue received from pilgrim tourists visiting the temples under Guruvayoor Devaswom was Rs 972.76 crores. There was a steady growth of revenue from pilgrims from
2001 indicating the importance of Guruvayoor temple and its sub temples in generating revenue for the state.

### Table 3.6
Income from pilgrim tourists to Guruvayoor Devaswom

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl.No</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Revenue from Pilgrim tourists (Rs in crores)</th>
<th>Total revenue from tourism (State) (Rs in crores)</th>
<th>Percentage on total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>442.00</td>
<td>4,500</td>
<td>9.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>463.50</td>
<td>4,931</td>
<td>9.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>614.90</td>
<td>5,938</td>
<td>10.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>701.50</td>
<td>6,829</td>
<td>10.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>774.13</td>
<td>7,738</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>972.76</td>
<td>9,126</td>
<td>10.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The state has over 21,000 temples. The tourism department has identified 40 important temples attracting pilgrim tourists. The income generated by pilgrim tourists to Guruvayoor suggests that all the temples in the state contribute not less than 60% of the state’s tourist revenue.

The importance of temples in Kerala with regard to the revenue of the state is evident in the statements of two successive ministers for Tourism, K.V. Thomas (LDF) and Kodiyeri Balakrishnan (UDF). Kodiyeri Balakrishnan informed the state assembly that the state is not fully utilizing the potential pilgrim tourism to temples at Guruvayoor, Sabarimala and Chottanikkara (Malayala Manorama; 30th June 2008:9). Thomas said “The state has much more than just places of worship to offer the tourists” (Mathrubhumi; 17th April 2003:11). From the statements of the ministers it is inferred that temples are vital to states economy especially in the context of the decline in agriculture production and continuation of industrial backwardness.

The growth of pilgrim tourism depends very much upon the development of infrastructure such as transport, boarding and lodging facilities and security requirements. Both the Guruvayoor Devaswom and the state government jointly have developed the infra structure for pilgrims in Guruvayoor (Information & Public relation department, Kerala government 2006).
Table 3.7
Distribution of tourist infrastructure facility at Guruvayoor

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.No</th>
<th>Particulars</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>Devaswom</th>
<th>Private</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Boarding &amp; Lodging</td>
<td>3 guest houses</td>
<td>7 guest houses</td>
<td>47 hotels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Restaurants</td>
<td>5 Restaurants</td>
<td>4 Restaurants</td>
<td>122 Restaurants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Transport</td>
<td>191 buses</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>271 buses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Electricity &amp; Water Supply</td>
<td>KSEB &amp; KWA</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Source: Filed survey

Guruvayoor Township is coming under Guruvayoor municipality and is subject to the rules and regulations of Kerala local bodies. Both rural and urban local governments also earn income from pilgrim tourists. Small and medium enterprises that cater to the pilgrim tourists also contribute to the economic growth and development of the region.

Management of liabilities

The liabilities side of the balance sheet contains items of heads, namely Capital Fund, Pension Fund, Endowment Vazhipad Fund, advance for Vazhipad Fund, Provident Fund, Security and Tender Deposits and other liabilities and Family Benefit Scheme. As per the Balance Sheet as on 31st March 2006, the following liabilities were mentioned: Capital Fund: Rs 3,865,418,539.78, Pension Fund: Rs 37,355,730.00, Endowment Vazhipad Fund: Rs 50,637,657.64, Advance for Vazhipad Pooja: Rs 85,185,725.07, Provident Fund: Rs 29,147,833.50, Security and Tender Deposits: Rs 9,892,391.53. Other liabilities and Family Benefit Scheme: Rs 3,842,900.75. Among the liabilities Capital Fund is the highest. Every year surplus is added to Capital Fund. The strength of Capital Fund is an important financial aspect of Guruvayoor Devaswom. The Managing Committee has no role in deciding up on the percentage of surplus to be transferred to the capital fund (Handbook 2005:37). Entire amount of surplus received has to be transferred to Capital Fund. According to Guruvayoor Devaswom Act of 1978 the Managing Committee has to seek permission from the Commissioner for converting savings into any form of investments other than specified in the Act. It is an important check to avoid diversion of temple funds.
Pension Fund is created for the payment of pension for employees. Endowment Vazhipad Fund is the amount deposited by individuals, trusts and organizations for conducting rituals. The interests of such deposits are used for this purpose. Vazhipad Pooja fund is a huge amount because many people book Udayasthamana and many other poojas in advance. Like many other organizations, the Provident Fund is a big liability indicating large number of employees and reasonably good pay scale. The Guruvayoor Devaswom Managing Committee doesn’t have the power to appropriate these amounts without the consent of the state government. The Provident Fund increased because of the introduction of new pay scale for the employees in 2005.

The auditors report 2006 states that the capital increased steadily during the period 2002 - 2006. This is because the excess of income over expenditure has increased considerably during the same period and the surplus of income is transferred to capital fund. These increases indicate perennial character of the temple revenue.

**Management of charitable institutions**

The Guruvayoor Devaswom Act permits management of charitable institutions such as hospitals, educational institutions and training institutions - an important means of utilizing the revenue of the temple for charitable purposes. The Guruvayoor Devaswom derives the benefit of Income Tax exemption based on its status as a religious non-profit institution. It is to be noted that the annual income of the Temple is 2nd or 3rd largest among all the temples in the country among all the sub-temples coming under the Devaswom.

Out of two schools run by the Guruvayoor Devaswom, one is self financing institution and does receive support from the Devaswom every year. The college run by the Devaswom also charges fees from non-Scheduled Caste students. The audit reports of the Devaswom do not contain information about these institutions. They are mentioned in the administration report of the Devaswom. The income generated by the educational institutions is used for the maintenance of the respective institutions. As the hospitals provide free health care services, they are funded by the Devaswom. The two training centers are also funded by the Devaswom.
Table 3.8  
Non religious institutions under the Guruvayoor Devaswom

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl.No</th>
<th>Name of the Institution</th>
<th>Year of origin</th>
<th>Source of Funds</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Sree Krishna College, Aided by the state</td>
<td>1956</td>
<td>State Government Aid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Sree Krishna School, Malayalam Medium (Aided)</td>
<td>1964</td>
<td>State Government Aid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Sree Krishna School, English Medium</td>
<td>1964</td>
<td>Self Generated funds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Sree Krishna Hospital, Modern Medicine</td>
<td>1969</td>
<td>Guruvayoor Devaswom fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Sree Krishna Hospital, Ayurveda</td>
<td>1969</td>
<td>Guruvayoor Devaswom fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Krishattam Kalari</td>
<td>1954</td>
<td>Guruvayoor Devaswom fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Vadhya Vidyalaya</td>
<td>1967</td>
<td>Guruvayoor Devaswom fund</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Field survey*

Sree Krishna College and Krishnatta Kalari were started before the formation of Kerala state. All other institutions were started after the formation of Kerala state and before government took over the Guruvayoor Devaswom. The initiative for organizing these institutions was taken during the period of the Guruvayoor Devaswom when it was under the control of private trustees namely the Zamorin Raja and Mallissery Namboothiri. However it is noted that all the charitable institutions were started prior to the introduction of government control in 1971.

An important means of utilizing the revenue of the temple is to spend for charitable purposes such as for the running of hospitals and educational institutions. Guruvayoor Devaswom derives the benefit of Income Tax exemption because of its stature as a religious institution. This is to be viewed with the fact that the income generated by the temple stands 2nd or 3rd among temples in the whole of India. Out of two schools run by the Guruvayoor Devaswom one is self financing meaning not a charitable one. The one college run by the Devaswom also collects fees from non schedule caste students meaning that it also don’t fulfill the principles of charity. Any of the audit reports do not mention about the conduct of the charitable organizations. They are mentioned in the administration report of the Devaswom.
Livestock management

Kerala has been endowed with rain forest and elephants have been in the forest from time immemorial. Potential damage from elephant herds was perhaps a reason for the elephant being considered as a sacred animal and came to be worshipped by people. The dedication of elephant is an important offering in the temples because of the belief that offering elephant most pleases the deity. As the temples accept the elephants offered by devotees, there are many elephants under the Guruvayoor Devaswom. Now the Guruvayoor Devaswom owns 64 elephants (Seth;2009:159). This huge number is a fairly recent phenomenon as can be seen in a 1999 pilgrim Pamphlets statement that the Guruvayoor Devaswom has an impressive array of forty-five whilst, in 1959, there were only 16 (ibid:160). Certainly for centuries the temple had no more that three elephants since there were evidence that when, for festival processions they needed two more, they were provided by the Punnathur royal family along with the necessary ornaments (ibid:159).

System of Audit in the Guruvayoor Devaswom

The Finance Department of the Guruvayoor Devaswom managing committee keeps regular accounts under double entry system of accounting for all receipts and disbursements (ibid:28). The accounts are subject to concurrent audit (ibid:28) - the audit take place as and when expenditure is incurred. The concurrent audit is done by the auditors appointed in the prescribed manner in accordance with the provisions of the Guruvayoor Devaswom Act. The office of the Local Fund which is a state department system is the body which conducts concurrent audit in Guruvayoor Devaswom.

The office of the Local Fund has a division exclusively for conducting concurrent audit of Guruvayoor Devaswom and is headed by a Joint Director with 13 personnel to assist her/him. After completing the audit for the year or shorter period or for any transaction or series of transactions, the auditor sends a report to the Commissioner. The report shall specify all cases of irregular, illegal or improper expenditure or of failure to recover money or other property due to the Devaswom or of loss or waste of money or other property their off, cost by neglect or misconduct (ibid:228). The report also contains matters relating to the accounts as may be prescribed or on which the commissioner may require her/him to report.
The Guruvayoor Devaswom managing committee started the practice of appointing a firm of qualified chartered accountants for the audit of accounts of the Devaswom from 1990 onwards. This is in addition to the Local Fund audit which is a statutory requirement. Remeshan (2004) states that the main reason for such a move is to strengthen the system of accountability (ibid:229). In the annual report presented to the Commissioner in 1989 the Guruvayoor Devaswom committee stated that the volume of transactions of Guruvayoor Devaswom is so huge that it requires the assistance of a full-time professional chartered accountant firm.

The Guruvayoor Devaswom is an institution formed under the provisions of the state legislation namely Guruvayoor Devaswom Act of 1978. It is a religious charitable institution. The annual audit by the qualified chartered accountants fulfills many of the objectives. The objectives mentioned in the annual report of 1989 recommending for the introduction of such an audit are:

1) The audit ensures whether the Devaswom is being managed in the manner contemplated by the provisions of the Act.

2) Examines the system of internal check, especially as regards the accounting of amounts received under various heads such as Bhandaram (hundi - cash metal box), Vazhipadu (offerings), grants, rents, interests, endowments etc.

3) Verifying in detail the receipts and confirming that the amounts received have been deposited in the bank regularly and promptly.

4) Verifying whether official receipts are given to those who give money for offerings and for specific type of worship.

5) Examines the incomes with regard to the provisions of Income Tax Act though the Guruvayoor Devaswom is fully exempted from the payment of Income Tax.

6) Vouching payment of grants to ensure grants are paid only for the charitable purposes as provided in the Guruvayoor Devaswom Act.

7) Ascertaining that funds contributed for the poojas or any other special purposes have been utilized for that specified purpose only.

8) To ensure that the movable and immovable assets are valued as per the accounting standards prescribed by the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India.
Audit by both the office of the Local Fund and a professional auditor are important in the relationship between the state and management of temple with regard to accountability. Both involve the examination of transactions from the viewpoint of whether or not they have been in order. The audits also examine the functional areas of the management such as finance and human resources in accordance with the provisions of the Guruvayoor Devaswom Act.

**Human Resource Management in Guruvayoor Devaswom**

The Guruvayoor Devaswom Act governs both the traditions followed in the sacred area and systems followed in the establishment section. In the sacred area the Guruvayoor Devaswom Act ensures the continuation of traditions and customs with regard to the selection of priests, temple functionaries and maintenance of family hereditary rights in certain services to the temples.

**The traditions followed in the selection of priests**

Guruvayoor’s temple officiating priests are organized along lines that are both structured and hereditary like most of Kerala’s traditional society. The Temple priests’ role gradually evolved as the temple grew in size and importance (Seth, 2009: 52). Namboothiri Brahmin families have hereditary rights in conducting poojas in most of the temples in the state. Although, at one time, most priests, at least in central and northern Kerala, were Brahmins originally from Tulunadu (Coastal region of Karnataka) known as Embrandiris – those now officiating at the Temple are all Kerala Brahmins, now known as Namboodiris (ibid: 52). Three types of priests, namely Tantri Namboothiri, Melsanthisi and Keezhansanthisi conduct the rituals in the Temple (ibid: 52).

**Tantri Namboothiri:** The Temple’s priestly community consists of three groups: The first and the most spiritually important of these is the family whose men head the temple’s religious pyramid and have hereditary right to be called the Tantri Namboothiris (ibid: 52). Though as with all such families, the eldest male is by default the chief Tantri Namboothiri, it is the birth right of every man in the family to call himself a Tantri Namboothiri provided he satisfies his elders that he is capable of performing poojas.
There is no hard and fast rule about who performs a particular ritual; who performs which ritual is decided among them. It is a general understanding that any decision made by a particular Tantri Namboothiri - for instance the necessary step to deal with pollution – will be upheld by others.

Madhavan (1985) says that a Tantri Namboothiri can be regarded as the father of the deity since it is installed by him. As with everything concerning the Temple, making definitive statements about a Tantri Namboothiri’s role and significance is unadvisable. Exceptions appear when least expected. And when recording facts, it must be stressed that not everything always follows the same rule or logic. It is the Tantri Namboothiri who knows everything about the procedures to be followed while installing the idol and their purpose and significance. In essence, it can be said that a Tantri Namboothiri is someone who, in the most complete sense of the word, knows the deity and is therefore qualified to conduct the temples’ most complex and important rituals (ibid:192). The Guruvayoor Devaswom Act accepts this theory and specifies in the Act that Tantri Namboothiri is empowered to specify the procedures for the conduct of the rituals.

The Tantri Namboothiris of the Temple belong to the Chennos Namboodiripad family who, though they originally came from Vannery near Ponnani in south Malabar, now identify themselves as the Puzhakkara Chennos family, referring to the position of their ancestral home on the banks of river Bharatapuzha (Seth;2009:53). The senior member of the Tantri Namboothiri family is the head of Tantri Namboothiris and directs other members with regard to the conduct of rituals (contradicts what was stated earlier!!!). The duties of a Tantri Namboothiri are to be present on important occasions, guide and/or conduct important poojas, officiate all monthly shuddhi (Cleansing) rituals, annual draviya collection, other cleansing rituals, annual Saharshakalasam (ritual with one lakh pots of water) ritual and the annual utsavam for lord Guruvayoorappan ( ibid:53). The Managing Committee and the administrator of Guruvayoor Devaswom monitors the working of the Tantri Namboothiris. Information about Tantri Namboothiris’ assignments and work is reported in the administrative reports. Such reports are the sources of information’s for the government to understand the performance of Tantri Namboothiris in temples owned by the state.

The Guruvayoor Devaswom retained the system of rituals conducted under the oversight of Chennos Namboothiripad family even after the state
take over of the temple. In the selection of the Tantri Namboothiri only one criteria is followed that is only member of the Chennos family is accepted as the Tantri Namboothiri. Guruvayoor Devaswom Managing Committee verifies the appointment of a Tantri Namboothiri made by the administrator and passes a resolution confirming that the appointment is in keeping with the tradition.

**Melsanti:** Melsanti, the chief priest is in charge of day to day poojas. The difference between the Tantri Namboothiri and Melsanti is that, the Tantri Namboothiri’s appointment is by heredity and is not an employee. Whereas, Melsanti, whose appointment is not by heredity and is an employee. A Melsanti is appointed by the Guruvayoor Devaswom Managing Committee. As with so much of traditional life within the temple, there are restrictions and conditions that govern who can and cannot apply for the job of Melsanti. The candidates must be Namboothiri Brahmins, between 35 and 65 years of age, and belong to certain families from either Sukapuram or Peruvanam grammams (Brahmin settlements). If they come from Sukapuram, they must belong to one of the 82 Illams (Namboothiri families) holding the right to perform an agnihotra - a vedic ritual; whereas, if they come from Peruvanam, they must belong to one of the 60 Illams which not only hold the right to perform the agnihotra but either the candidate or his ancestor should have been conferred the title of Bhattavrithi also recognizing him as a vedic scholar who has participated at the annual Vedanta sessions known as ‘Revathy Pattathanam’ organized by the ruler of Kozhikode.

Until the formation of Kerala state in 1956, it was the Zamorin Raja who appointed the Temple’s Melsantis (see Appendix I). During those days an applicant had to submit a letter stating that he was knowledgeable regarding the Vedic rituals and fulfilled the eligibility requirements to the Zamorin Raja. If the Zamorin appointed him, then, his term would be for a year. Things changed in 1956 when, Guruvayoor Devaswom was brought under the regulatory control of Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowment Board of Kerala subsequent to the formation of Kerala state. Since then the selection of Melsanti is the Lord’s hand. When there are several applicants, lots are drawn. By doing so, it becomes obvious that no favouritism or bias has been used in the selection. Since then, Melsanti’s term of office has been reduced to six months.

The procedure of appointment of Melsanti was changed after the Guruvayoor Devaswom Act 1978 came into force (see Appendix I).
Namboothiris who meet the necessary criterion are eligible for the post. On behalf of the Devaswom, the Tantri Namboothiri scrutinizes the applications and anyone known to be proficient in conducting the poojas and rituals is accepted as an applicant without any further ado. If he is not known, the Tantri Namboothiri will assess his proficiency in poojas and determine his knowledge. If deemed suitable his name is included in the list of the other hopefuls. Seth (2009:58) describes that the Tantri Namboothiri, the Ooraalaan, the administrator and various other Devaswom officials will be present at the time of drawing lots from a silver pot containing the names of the applicants for selecting one as Melsanti. The devotees are also allowed to witness the selection procedure in order to ensure transparency. This involvement of Tantri Namboothiri, the presence of Devaswom officials and Devotees at the time of drawing lots is an important system of accountability introduced after the implementation of Guruvayoor Devaswom Act.

Melsanti’s six months term starts on the 1st of April or October. The selection process takes place at least two weeks before the date. An incoming Melsanti must be present at every ritual (pooja) for twelve days before he takes office. This is treated as training period for the Melsanti. The ceremony of assuming office is performed after Trippuka (divine smoke) the last ritual of the day. A Melsanti of the Temple must stay within the four walls of the temple for the entire six months of his tenure, a condition known as ‘Purappuda Santhi’ (ibid:59). The Devaswom has the bounden duty to ensure that the priests observe the traditions. The Managing Committee seeks the report from the administrator in every meeting. This report is included in the annual reports sent to the Commissioner and the state government.

Keezhhsantis: Keezhhsantis literally mean the ‘lower priests’. The complexities of the rituals required in the Temple demand that they are performed either by the Tantri Namboothiri, the Melsanti or an Othikkan. Since these three have no time for any other work than their specified tasks, other tasks must be carried out by others who can provide necessary backup and ensure the smooth running of the temple’s many poojas and rituals. The men empowered with the right to do these tasks are the Keezhhsanti’s (ibid:60). A Keezhshanti’s duty- is to assist the Tantri Namboothiri, the Melshanti and Othikkans when they perform the poojas. The Keezhshanti’s work demands physical stamina. Everyday, orders worth at least Rs.50000 are received for nivedyams from the devotees. The Keezhshanti’s job is to prepare the nevedyaam. They must stand near the intense heat of the hearth,
stir the large cooking vessels with long handled laddles, carry at least 12 large vessels of rice into the sanctum sanctoram, prepare nivedyams that are offered to the lord during different poojas. Another duty of the Keezsantis is grinding refresh sandalwood paste. These jobs require physical stamina

Human Resource Management involves selection of Keezhsantis according to the tradition. It is observed that the state does not interfere in these matters lest the feelings of the devotees are disturbed. Keezhsanti’s are selected from 13 Namboothiri families only as it is their hereditary monopoly once in six months (See Appendix I). The 13 families are: Vengiri, Nageri, Thelampattu, Cheruhayoor, Kizhiyedam, Meledam, Manchira, Mechery, Moothedam, Moolamangalam, Kodekkad, Akkarappilly and Thiruvaloor. All thirteen Keezhsanthi families now holding the right in the Temple are descendents of those appointed in the 15th century by the Zamorin Raja. Each Keezhsanti family continues to worship the same family deity and all the families belong to a place called Mukkam in Kozhikode district (Seth;2009:61). Two men are selected by a rotation system to be a Shanti Eta Namboothiri meaning the Brahmin holding the post. Two outgoing men suggest their successors. Their appointment must be approved by the Tantri Namboothiri. Throughout their appointment, which runs from either the first day of February or August, they are required to stay inside the temple.

Traditionally all boys from these families have the right to work in the temple and get one Nazhi (about 1/3 of a liter) of cooked rice twice a day plus a certain quantity of oil twice a week provided they are more than eight years of age, have studied pooja and ceremony confirming them as Brahmins (thread ceremony) have been done. However, the number of eligible men has grown and nowadays more than 80 of them are in a position to exercise their right.

Even Keezhsantis are paid in the traditional way - a percentage of the day’s offering. Seth (2009) says that the Keezhsanti’s often complain that they are paid less when compared with the physical labour involved. Though all the boys in those families can assist in poojas, only those who are officially appointed as Keezhsantis are entitled for remuneration from the Temple.

The Guruvayoor Devaswom Managing Committee monitors the appointment of both Melsanti and Keezhsanti. The provisions of the
Guruvayoor Devaswom Act ensure that traditions and customs are continued and un-necessary controversies are avoided.

The table 3.9 is an account of the judicial interventions in the case of Guruvayoor Devaswom appointments during the period of 1996-2009.

Table 3.9
List of cases filed in the High court of Kerala during the period from 1996 – 2009 in which Guruvayoor Devaswom is a party

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.No</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Decision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>Managing Committee Vs Chairman</td>
<td>Selection procedure</td>
<td>Managing committee has to nominate a selection committee.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>Subramaniyan Vs Guruvayoor Devaswom</td>
<td>Civil service rules</td>
<td>State civil rules, 1960, are applicable to Devaswom employees other than priests.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>Krishnankutty Vs Guruvayoor Devaswom</td>
<td>Deposit of money in bank instead of treasury.</td>
<td>Managing committee is authorized to deposit in nationalized banks or treasuries.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>Raveendran Vs Guruvayoor Devaswom</td>
<td>Guruvayoor Devaswom employees regulations</td>
<td>Committee shall decide the method of appointment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>Mohandas Vs Guruvayoor Devaswom</td>
<td>Guruvayoor Devaswom Act, 1978</td>
<td>Committees’ functions can’t be exercised by commissioner or administrator.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>Guruvayoor Devaswom employees association Vs State of Kerala</td>
<td>Guruvayoor Devaswom Act</td>
<td>Right to elect the members to the committee is vested with the members of the cabinet or the legislative assembly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Vijayan Vs Guruvayoor Devaswom</td>
<td>Government servants conduct rule, 1960</td>
<td>Government servants conduct rules are binding on Devaswom employees.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Rajendran Vs Guruvayoor Devaswom</td>
<td>Counting of receipts from Bhandaram</td>
<td>Constituted committee for monitoring receipts from Bhandaram.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Guruvayoor Prathikaran veedi Vs Secretary to government</td>
<td>Guruvayoor Devaswom Act, 1978</td>
<td>Employees can give appeal to the managing committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Case</td>
<td>Court</td>
<td>Jurisdiction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>President, Poornathrayeesa seva sangam Vs K. Thilakan</td>
<td>Constitution of India</td>
<td>Management of a temple governed by the provisions of a statutory enactment - the statute governing it is final.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Gopalakrishnan Nair Vs State of Kerala</td>
<td>Guruvayoor Devaswom Act 1978</td>
<td>The Hindu ministers who nominate members of the managing committee need not be believers of God.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Sreedharan Vs Guruvayoor Devaswom</td>
<td>Recovery of irregular payments</td>
<td>Local fund audit can recommend for the recovery.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Krishnan Namboothiri Vs Guruvayoor Devaswom</td>
<td>Constitution of India</td>
<td>Irregularities or misconduct committed by Keezhsanti’s (priest) have nothing to do with religious faith - punishable under constitution.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Krishnan Namboothiri Vs Guruvayoor Devaswom</td>
<td>Constitution of India</td>
<td>The post of Keezhsanti is hereditary as per the Guruvayoor Devaswom Act.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Jayarajan Vs Special Tahsildar</td>
<td>Guruvayoor Devaswom Act</td>
<td>Devaswom can spent its funds for educational purposes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Kerala Law digest: Vol 1 - 9

While there has been no legal conflict regarding the appointment of both Melsanti and Keezhsanti, the only case filed was a public interest litigation by Krishnan Namboothiri seeking judicial intervention in favour of continuation of hereditary monopoly of Brahmin families. In contrast, Tamil Nadu government took it upon itself to allow a dalit monk to recite Tamil hymns in the temple saying that none of the sacred books bar a dalit from reciting hymns inside the Chidambaram temple. The hereditary priests called Dikshitars took the matter to court saying that the Constitution prohibits state intervention in the sacred area. But the High Court upheld the government’s decision and permitted the dalit monk to recite the hymns inside the temple. Dikshitars were planning to appeal in the Supreme Court (Frontline; 23 Oct 2009:26).

Such judicial interventions as in the case of the Chidambaram temple shed light on not just the relationship between the state and management of temples but also on what is sacred area and secularism. It also gives the state powers to introduce reforms. Such cases legitimize state intervention in the
management of temples. In Kerala, however, the state has not taken such initiatives. This is an important feature of the relationship between the state and management of temples in Kerala compared to the neighbouring state of Tamil Nadu.

**Othikkans:** There name comes from othuka, meaning to recite Vedas specifically. Othikkan is one who recites Vedas. Othikkans are specialists traditional masters in performing rituals. Namboothiri families employ or seek the service of a local Othikkan family to conduct their family’s rites of passage, and the belief is that the ancestors of the four families now holding priestly rights as Othikkans at Guruvayoor performed such services for the 72 Namboothiri families who, many centuries ago, looked after the temple. This makes the present othikkans family’s presence in Guruvayoor a very ancient one (ibid:54).

Guruvayoor temple is aware of the need to maintain daily cycle of poojas without disruption and the likelihood of ashudham (Pollution). When there is a death or a birth in the families of the Tantri Namboothiri or the Melsanti, they are considered to be polluted and are barred from entering the Temple for 12 days. The concern is that daily cycle of poojas cannot be conducted because the Tantri Namboothiri and the Melsanti are polluted. When this happens, however, the Othikkans have the authority to substitute for either or both of them. The four Othikkan families are not inter related (without any family relations between them). So even if one Othikkan family is polluted the next family can substitute. Othikkan families provide the backup should something happen in one of the families. Keezhhsantis assist all of them conducting poojas. Even after the introduction of Guruvayoor Devaswom Act in 1978, these traditions are continued.

**Selection of other staff of the Temple**

There are non-priestly functionaries of the Temple who hold hereditary right to perform specific duties within the temple (see Appendix II). They are divided into four categories, namely Kazhakam, Atiyamtharam, Adichuthali and Nadakaval.

**Kazhakam:** Kazhakam is also a hereditary right of certain families in the Temple. All these families belong to the high caste called ‘Ambalavasi’ - temple servant community. They are sub-divided into finely nuanced gradation-seven warrier families, four pisharodys and three Nambisans -
whose occupation is making garlands and maintaining temple lamps not just in the Temple but also even other in small temples. As in the case of all other temples in Kerala, the work of Kazhakam in the Temple is carried out by a caste known as the Warriers.

Regarding the appointment of such traditional families having inherited right, the Devaswom has no role except to monitor whether they change duties by rotation without causing any disruption in supply of garlands and other services. Remeshan (2004) says that there was no instance of any situation requiring the state or Devaswom intervention in this area of work.

**Atiyamtharam** : It is common practice in all temples to make use of a variety of musical instruments like *chenda*, *idakka* and *maddhalam* (different type of drums), and *nadaswaram* (a form of wind instrument) during worship. The Temple is specially noted for its profuse use of musical instruments. The persons playing these instruments during rituals are known as Sampanthis – doing atiyamtharam. At the time of all the rituals different traditional functionaries play their assigned musical instruments. Those authorized to do Sampanthi are also required to sing Ashtapathi (a devotional song) in front of the sanctum sanctorum at the time of important poojas. Like that of Kazhakam, the performers of Sampanthi are also paid a salary by the Devaswom. The Sampanthi is a hereditary right of a caste known as Marar in the Temple.

There are two families namely Padinjappat Marath and Kadavillur Marath, both belonging to the Marar community whose traditional occupation is drumming Kerala’s drum known as Chenda. They also play traditional percussion instruments in the temple. Seth (2009:101) says that the expertise of Marar’s is an important feature in Kerala’s distinctive style of worship for without which a strange and unnatural silence would descend on every temple.

In addition to the monthly salaries, Marars receive special payments-Dakshina-for particular services for specific rituals throughout the year. Other families also receive regular salaries and additional Dakshina for each ritual throughout the year for the hereditary services rendered by them(see Appendix II). Certain individuals and members of these families also receive a specific percentage known as ‘Kooru’ in Malayalam meaning share in the cost of particular offering. The ‘Kooru’ for the hereditary services rendered
by the families and the priest are fixed by the state in percentage and the rates were fixed before the takeover of the Temple. The percentage applicable are - Melshanti 15%; Othikkkan 8%; 2% each for the Kazhakam families including Marars and others. The remaining 75% goes to the ‘Muthalkootuu’ (additions to the wealth of the temple). This system of remunerating all the hereditary families and priests were accepted by the High Court in 1982. In addition to the cash revenue, those who work in the sacred area are also entitled for a portion of the Nivedyams offered to the Lord.

Every year between 50 and 60 men apply to become Koyema, whose non-hereditary duties are almost an extension of the work done by the Warrier families (Kazhakam). After being interviewed, the selected men working for a year, beginning on 1st April keep accounts of all activities within the ‘Nalambalam’ (inside the temple and outside the sanctum sanctorum). It includes the accounts of all those items such as flowers and leaves supplied to the warriers (Kazhakam), the day to day expenses for worships and miscellaneous expenses incurred in respect of washing of clothes, cleaning, etc. The salaries of Koyema are paid by Devaswom and they are not entitled for Dakshinas.

It may be noted that the duties associated with the job of priests, Kazhakam and Athiyantharam are all related to the sacred area of temple administration. Because these are hereditary, these services fall in the “sacred” category. Because it is in the sacred area, the hereditary monopoly of the priests, Kazhakam and Athiyantharam continues in Guruvayoor temple even today. These posts are not filled with untrained persons. The works of the other two categories namely Adichuthali and Nadakaval have no connection with the sacred area. To these two posts appointments are done by the Guruvayoor Devaswom.

Adichuthali: Literally means sweeping and spraying. The job consists of cleaning the premises except the portion around the sanctum sanctorum. It is treated as Class-IV officer (attenders) of the state government.

Nadakaval: It is the fourth category of job. Nada means ‘gate’ and kaval means ‘to guard’. Nadakaval person is responsible not only for the gate-keeping but is in charge of overall supervision and control of the movements of the devotees, and have to assist the Temple functionaries, including the priests, in the conduct of their duties.
The Guruvayoor Devaswom can appoint any person to these posts of Adichuthali and Nadakaval (there is no hereditary monopoly right). But in the case of Nadakaval there is a reservation of 10 percent for the scheduled castes (Remesan, 2004: 234). Their status is equivalent to that of Class-IV employees of the Kerala Government Service and Kerala State Rules are applicable to them. Their retirement age is 55 (see Appendix II). They are paid a salary, but unlike the Priests and Kazhakam categories they have no additional source of income.

The auditors verify whether the appointments are in accordance with the provisions of Guruvayoor Devaswom Act rules. The hereditary monopoly right of the priests, Kazhakam and Athiyantharam are protected in the Guruvayoor Devaswom Act.

From the above discussions regarding the management of human resources in the sacred area it is understood that, in the Temple monopoly of caste is maintained in the appointment of priests and temple functionaries. There are two types of monopolies: 1) caste monopoly and the second, is family hereditary monopoly. In the first case, the only criterion is that the incumbent should belong to a particular caste. He can be from any family. The second one is that the post should be held by only a member of a particular family of a caste identified for it. The table 3.10 explains the hereditary rights practiced in the sacred area at Guruvayoor temple.

### Table 3.10

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl No.</th>
<th>Post</th>
<th>Type of Caste</th>
<th>Caste Monopoly</th>
<th>Family Hereditary Monopoly</th>
<th>Nature of Job</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Tantri Namboothiri</td>
<td>Brahmin</td>
<td>Namboothiri</td>
<td>Chennos</td>
<td>Control of Rituals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Melshanti</td>
<td>Brahmin</td>
<td>Namboothiri</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Chief priest controlling daily poojas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Kizhashanti</td>
<td>Brahmin</td>
<td>Namboothiri</td>
<td>13 families</td>
<td>Assisting and substituting chief priest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Asst Priest</td>
<td>Brahmin</td>
<td>Namboothiri</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Helpers in rituals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Othikans</td>
<td>Brahmin</td>
<td>Namboothiri</td>
<td>4 families</td>
<td>Substituting Tantri Namboothiris and Melsantis</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Coalition governments led either by the Congress or the Communist parties, who alternately rule the state have not disturbed the criterion of selection of the above personnel in the temple. The question of the continuation of the hereditary monopoly was an issue raised by social leaders like Sree Narayana Guru and Mannath Padmanabhan and Ayyankali. It is interesting to note that there has not been any judicial intervention in this regard until 1999. In 1999 quoting the Supreme Court verdict in a Tamil Nadu temple issue, the High Court of Kerala suggested the inclusion of non-Brahmins in temples owned by state for the post of priests. However, the court left it to the state government to resolve the issue through consensus. Both the Congress party and the Communist Party of India Marxist and their coalition partners had agreed in principle to remove the caste monopoly in all temples in the state. But, irrespective of the governments in power, when it came to the breaking of caste and hereditary monopoly in temples, the policy adopted by both has been to maintain status-quo. So caste and hereditary monopoly in the Temple continues even today.

**Human resource management in non-sacred Area**

The administration, control and management of Guruvayoor Devaswom are vested in a committee constituted according to Guruvayoor Devaswom Act 1978. The composition of the committee is defined in the Act. It comprises of five members nominated by the Hindu members from among the council of ministers in Kerala; a representative of the employees of Devaswom nominated by the Hindus among the council of ministers and three permanent members namely: the Zamorin Raja, the senior member of the Mallissey Namboothiri family at Guruvayoor and the Tantri Namboothiri of the Temple (see Appendix III). The appointment of these members, their removal, their term of office, nomination procedure and their remuneration are governed by the provisions in the Guruvayoor Devaswom Act, 1978.

The day to day management of the temple is headed by an administrator, not below the rank of Deputy Collector (Remeshan;
Selection to the post is by the Guruvayoor Devaswom Managing Committee from a panel submitted to it by the Kerala Government. It is mandatory that the person should be a Hindu and a believer in temple worship (ibid:241). There is no bar for a women being appointed as the administrator. The management of the entire Guruvayoor Devaswom is vested with the administrator. S/He has a statutory obligation to the Government and Guruvayoor Devaswom Managing Committee (ibid:262).

The procedure of selection of the managing committee members and the administrator are important in the relationship between the state and management of temples. Every member of the committee shall before entering upon his office make and subscribe in the presence of the commissioner of Devaswoms an oath in the following words “I ___ do swear in the name of God that I profess the Hindu religion and beliefs in temple worship and I don’t believe in untouchability”. This procedure ensures that only believers become members of the Devoswom Committee. religious freedom. By continuing the traditions in managing the temples the state also ensures that the political changes will not hurt the feelings of the devotees. If the state is ruled by LDF consisting of communists and others who do not believe in God will not force their ideology of atheism in the management of temples owned by the state.

The duties of the Managing Committee and the administrator are also defined in the Act and leave no space for confusion. The committee has the duty to manage the entire activities subject to customs and usages in the temple. The administrator who is appointed by the Managing committee is an important link between state and the managing committee. The Guruvayoor Devaswom Act defines administrator as a secretary to the Managing committee. He has also the capacity as the chief executive officer under the Managing committee. S/He has statutory obligation to both the state and the Managing committee. The administrator continues to be the state government official until his retirement - at the age of 55 for state government officials and 60 for Indian administrative service.

The appointment of other officers and employees are also made in accordance with the Guruvayoor Devaswom Act. 10% of the posts in each grade of officers and other employees in the establishment section is reserved for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (ibid: 231). Schedule Tribe gets a share of 1/5th of that 10% where as the remaining 4/5th goes to the schedule caste. The duties, designations, grades and salaries of
officers and employees are fixed by the Guruvayoor Devaswom managing committee subject to the approval of the commissioner (ibid: 231). The Managing Committee is also empowered to revise the salaries and other benefits of the employees. The state doesn’t intervene in the decisions of the Managing Committee with regard to the emoluments of the employees of the Devaswom. The pension system in the Guruvayoor Devaswom Act is another important dimension with regard to the working conditions offered to the employees of Guruvayoor Devaswom – the pension rules are formed in accordance with the Kerala State government employees’ pension scheme.

The commissioner is also given power to cancel any appointment if the appointment is found to be against the provisions of the Guruvayoor Devaswom Act later. As is held in the case of Narayanan Namboothiri Vs State (Kerala Law Times; 1985:629). The Managing Committee had to direct the administrator to rectify the mistakes and defects in the appointments. The commissioner has the authority to identify defects and mistakes in the appointments. Thus the state oversees the appointments without affecting the autonomy of Guruvayoor Devaswom is an important relationship between the state and management of temples.

**Chart 3.1**

**Organisation of Departments of Guruvayoor Devaswom**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Establishment</th>
<th>Section</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Finance Department:</strong></td>
<td>It deals with budget, records of transactions, assets and liabilities, and preparation of the final accounts. The finance department is headed by a finance manager. There are two officials on deputation from the accountant generals office to assist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Administration Department:</strong></td>
<td>The department is in charge of administration. The secretarial work, personnel management, public relations, management of other institutions and promotion and protection of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Livestock Management:</strong></td>
<td>Guruvayoor Devaswom is justly famous for its elephant yard at Punnathoor Kotta. The Devaswom has the single largest herd of elephants in Kerala, which at the moment numbers 64. The Guruvayoor Temple gets its elephants by way of the special offering known as ‘Nadayiruthal’ (dedicating the elephant to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Maintenance Department:</strong></td>
<td>The department looks after the civil, mechanical, and electrical maintenances of the temple. A civil engineer in charge of civil maintenance, a mechanical engineer in charge of mechanical maintenance and a electrical engineer in</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Annual Administrative Reports

Annual reports are widely regarded as an important means of acquitting accountability in the corporate and government sectors. It can be one of the means by which temples can improve stakeholders' perceptions about the temple managements.

The Guruvayoor Devaswom submits an annual report every year after the introduction of Guruvayoor Devaswom Act in 1978. The Temple observes April to March financial year as its accounting period. According to section 28 of Guruvayoor Devaswom Act, the managing committee is bound to submit the annual report to the Commissioner on the administration of the affairs of the Devaswom relating to each calendar year within 3 months of the completion of the calendar year. The commissioner forwards such a report, with her/his comments, to the Kerala state government within 30 days of its receipt by her/him.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source: Field Survey</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>the financial manger in the preparation of accounts. The deputation of government officials started only from 1989 on the request of the managing committee for training the staff of the finance department. The deputation of the officials continues even today. This system of seeking assistance from the experience staff from accountant general’s office is a precedent set for other Devaswoms owned by the state. The Travancore and Cochin Devaswom boards have also adapted the practice in later years.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the temple and its premises as well as valuables are the functions of the department.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the Lord). It is a ceremony in which the elephant is brought to the temple and handed over to the authorities in front of the Deity, after performing certain rituals by the Tantri Namboothiri. The Department dealing with the herd of elephants and the personnel connected with their feeding, medical treatments and management is known as ‘Anavicharippu’ (elephant management). The department has under it, one full time qualified veterinary surgeon, mahouts, and their assistants.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>charge of electrical maintenance are specialists working in the department. It is evident that the Guruvayoor Devaswom has given the priority for specialization when ever it comes to the management of technical areas: a contribution of the Guruvayoor Devaswom Act of 1978 – an important feature in the relationship between state and management of temples.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
On examination of the contents of the annual reports during the period 2001-2006, it is noted whether it contains the working of the Temple is according to the Act, whether amenities are provided to the pilgrims, whether the construction and maintenance work undertaken have been undertaken, whether the festivals conducted according to tradition, whether any special features or incidents took place during the year, whether subordinate temples are also working according to the Act, whether report of the institutions under the Devaswom (schools, colleges, hospitals, museum, training centers, goshala and elephant yard) have been received and such other matters of public interest.

The annual report is published on the notice board of the Devaswom and in the Kerala Gazette. Abstract of the report is published at least in one Malayalam daily having wide circulation in the state. A copy of the annual report published is sent to the Kerala High Court (Remeshan; 2004:241). Special features or incidents during the year stated in the report are discussed in public by the media and consensuses are arrived at on issues having social and political importance. Important issues which came for discussions in the media, state assembly, and social forums during the period 2001-2006, includes temple entry for non Hindus and the dress code for women for entering the Guruvayoor temple (Survey of Annual reports, 2001-2006).

On scrutiny of the annual reports published for a period from 2001-2006, it was seen that many important issues were brought to the notice of the public and the government. Important decisions were made by the state and Management Committee resolving such issues. Prominent among them are the changing of the dress code of women entering the Temple, introduction of coupons for Annadanam, acquisition of land around the temple for providing space for the festivals and cultural programs, introduction of new security system with modern metal detectors, and ending the system of special dharsan for VIPs.

Commenting on the above mentioned changes made by the Devaswom, Sudhakaran Minister for Temple Affairs in Kerala government, stated that those reforms were made in response to specific public demands (Mathrubhumi 21st May 2007: 3). It is evident from this statement that annual reports are important not only
in the relationship between the state and management of temples but also in regard to public-temple management relationship in Kerala.

Based on the reports, accountability of the Managing Committee with regard to the reforms introduced is brought into the notice of the public. The reports also identify the lapses in Guruvayoor Devaswom Act. It is noted that the Tantri Namboothiri unilaterally decided that entry of non-Hindu devotees for worship in the temple is against the practices of the temples and hence it will affect procedures to be observed in different temple rituals. Guruvayoor Devaswom Act defines that Tantri Namboothiri is the final authority regarding these matters. This provision is the reason stated by the Guruvayoor Devaswom Managing Committee as the reason for not permitting non-Hindu devotees in the Temple in its report.

The Annual report explains the role of the administrator and other officials in ensuring implementation of various provisions of Guruvayoor Devaswom Act. It specifies the working of the Act and states who is responsible for the lapses. Annual report is an important system of defining accountability. The state government and the public evaluate the performance of the administrator and his assistants with regard to the duties and responsibilities. The Annual report thus has become an important instrument in ensuring accountability.

Guruvayoor temple is a temple with a very long history but its existence as per records is only since 9th century. The temple was managed by the Ooraalaaars and the ruler of Kozhikode, Zamorin Raja until 1971. There where many events which led to state intervention in Guruvayoor temple. Notable among them were the foreign and Mysoorian invasions on the princely state of Kozhikode.

Though there were many stake holders in the Temple prior to 1971, by 1978, Zamorin Raja and Mallissery Namboothiri obtained permanent membership as hereditary trustees in the Managing Committee. The Temple’s Tantri Namboothiri also was made a permanent but as an ex-officio member. Reservation was introduced in the management of temples in Kerala for the first time in 1978. One member from Scheduled Caste is appointed by the state government for a specific period. Conferring permanent or hereditary membership in the Devaswom Board and/or the Managing Committees and
making the composition of the Managing Committee inclusive are in the hands of the state government. Four members under the general category and the lone Scheduled Caste member are nominated by the Hindus among the council of ministers in the state. One member among the general category is a representative of the employees. The Managing Committee is an autonomous body having statutory commitments. However, in all these matters, there is certain conservatism and lack of sensitivity regarding gender justice.

After the formation of new management committee in 1978 the systems of accountability changed. Under the system of accountability in the Guruvayoor Devaswom there are three operations: i) preparation of annual budget, ii) getting it approved by the Commissioner and iii) forwarding the approved budget to the State government form the first part of the system. By doing so a budgetary control under the supervision of the state is introduced. Maintenance of accounts under the double entry system of accounting, conducting concurrent audit and external audit by a chartered accountants firm is second part in the system of accountability.

The third part of the system of accountability consists of the preparation and publication of the annual report. It contains financial statements, administrative report of the year, events associated with the temple during the period and the suggestions and recommendations. The budget, the audit report and the annual report are submitted to the Commissioner of Devaswoms and they are forwarded to state government. The budget, standardized accounts and audits and annual reports control and evaluate the performance of the persons in charge of affairs of the temples and the organization making it possible to understand the lacunaes in the functioning of the organization.

**Entry of Non-Hindus in the temple**

According to the traditions of Guruvayoor Devaswom only Hindus are allowed to enter the temple. There are many non-hindu devotees of Guruvayoor temple. It includes prominent persons like K.J. Yesudas, the renowned playback singer of South India, and many famous cine artists. Many of them tried to get their formal entry to the temple. The Devaswom authorities denied their entries on the ground that they are not Hindus. In Kerala the rules for the entry of devotees
to the temples controlled by the statutory bodies vary from temple to temple. In Travancore Devaswom Board many temples do not permit the entry of non-hindus. Many temples allow the entry of non-hindus among them Ayyappa temple in Sabrimala which is considered to be one of the top five pilgrim centers of South India allows entry of all devotees irrespective of their caste and religion. Temples coming under Cochin Devaswom board have a uniform norm regarding the entry of devotees. There only Hindus are allowed to enter the temples. Temples under the HR & CE in the Malabar region is also like Travancore Devaswom board where some of the temples allow the entry of non-hindus and others do not.

In the Guruvayoor temple the issue of the entry of non-hindu devotees was raised several times by social organizations, politicians and eminent personalities from different walks of life. It was brought into the attention of both judiciary and legislature. The court directed the Guruvayoor Devaswom to give a clear policy on the matter in consultation with the Tantri Namboothiri of the temple. The Tantri Namboothiri argued for the maintenance of the tradition of restricting the temple entry only to the Hindus. The court finally accepted the viewpoint of the Tantri Namboothiri on the ground that matters of temples especially when it is sensitive should be kept away from controversial debates. So court agreed for the continuation of the tradition. The issue remains the same as it was at the time of the independence.

**Political affiliation of the members of the managing committee**

Being a highly politicalised state, it is noted that the selection to the Guruvayoor Devaswom managing committee under the coalition politics of the state have political overtones (see Appendix II). The political affiliations of the members of the committee are often issues discussed in the media and the public. As in the case of the members of the cabinet sharing power, here also the members of the Guruvayoor Devaswom committee share power. The table 3.11 states the power sharing that has taken place from the very beginning of the formation of the committee till date.
Table 3.11
Managing committee members and their political affiliations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl.No</th>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Congress/ Marxist</th>
<th>Other Coalition Partners</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>1978-1982</td>
<td>Congress 4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>1982-1986</td>
<td>Congress 3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>1986-1990</td>
<td>Congress 3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>1990-1994</td>
<td>Marxist 3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>1994-1998</td>
<td>Marxist 3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>1998-2002</td>
<td>Marxist 3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>2002-2006</td>
<td>Congress 2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>2006-2010</td>
<td>Marxist 4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Field Survey

Political affiliations of the members of the committee are openly acknowledged by the political parties selecting them for nomination to the Devoswom Committee by the Government. Before the state takeover the Guruvayoor Devaswom was managed by Zamorin Raja and Mallissery Namboothiri. After the takeover of the temple by the state these two trustees were retained as the permanent members of the committee in order to maintain apolitical link in the management as well as continuity.

Many issues have taken place because of the political nominations to the managing committee of Guruvayoor Devaswom. One instance is the nomination of Thampi, a Christian and a leader of Communist Party of India Marxist; he was initially party’s nominee to the Rajya Sabha in 1990 and had to give up the seat in favor of another person under coalition compulsions. Thampi was given the post of Guruvayoor Devaswom managing committee as compensation. This decision of the government was questioned by opposition leaders on the ground that Thampi was a Christian. The CPI (M) defended this action saying that Thampi was a Hindu though not a devotee. This gave an opportunity for Hindu Munnani leaders to organize agitations against a Christian being appointed to manage a Hindu temple. The CPI (M) withdrew his nomination in order to check the growth of Hindu Munnani on the issue. The party also acknowledged while selecting the member under political consideration. The religious affiliation was ignored. This is an evidence to prove that political considerations are given priorities in
the selection of nominees to the managing committee of Guruvayoor Devaswom.

**Politics in Nomination of Members to the Devaswom Committee**

An important issue with regard to the nomination of temples to the managing committee of Guruvayoor Devaswom is that many loyal followers of the leaders of ruling parties are rewarded either by making them the member of Guruvayoor Devaswom managing committee or by giving them suitable employment in the Devaswom. According to Keshavan (2002:67) the post of the member of the Guruvayoor Devaswom committee is, when it come to the question of perquisites, as good as that of a minister so there is a great demand for the political leaders who have interest in temples to get accommodated in Devaswom managing committee.

This argument is substantiated by an instance in 2002. K. R.Gowri the leader of the Democratic social party, and a minister in the coalition Government at that time said that she needed her party nominee as a member of Guruvayoor Devaswom managing committee (Malayalam Manorama, 27th Sept; 2002:5). When her nominee was not nominated she threatened to pull out from the government (ibid: 5). Fearing the fall out from her withdrawal the coalition decided to agree to her demand. It is an evidence for politicians influencing the government nominations to the apex body of the Guruvayoor Devaswom.

There are many other instances to substantiate the argument that the nomination to the managing committee members is influenced by political considerations. In 2005 the congress led coalition Government nominated P.T. Mohanakrishnan as the President. This was done after he lost his by election to the state Assembly in Feb 2005. In 2006 June the Thottathil Ravindran Corporation Mayor of Kozhikode who is CPI (M) leader was appointed as the President of Guruvayoor Devaswom managing committee. These are instances which establish the political influence in the management of temples.

The second method of accommodating political followers is by giving appointment in the bureaucracy of Guruvayoor Devaswom. Appointments to Guruvayoor Devaswom have become so easy, simple and flexible so that political favourism can be done. The argument is based on the method of recruitment followed by the
managing committee of Guruvayoor Devaswom. Under this system the posts are not advertised in any of the daily newspaper. It is put up on the Devaswom notice board and will be exhibited only for three days. The minimum qualification for the post of lower division clerk prescribed by the Devaswom is a pass in SSLC (10th Std). The Devaswom conduct a written test and interview for the selection. The marks for the written test and interview too will be fixed arbitrarily by the managing committee.

Since the norms, procedure and the period of selection are flexible it is argued that the Devaswom managing committee will get enormous discretionary powers to make appointments. From all these inference is inescapable that the appointments in Guruvayoor Devaswom are open to favouritism. The politicians being influenced by the compulsions by coalition’s politics and electoral gains will be forced to accommodate their followers. It is an important issue in the relationship between the state and the management of temples.

**Politics and religion:**

The politics of religion in Kerala was closely connected with the rise of Hindu nationalism and its ideology of Hindutva in India in the late 80’s and early 90’s. The formation of Hindu Munnani as a political ally of BJP in 1987 had a definite impact on both the Left Democratic and United democratic fronts led by CPI (M) and Congress. Reforms are stymied by the political parties to avoid polarization of votes on Hindu lines. The two major caste organizations in Kerala namely the Nair Service Society (NSS) of Nairs and Sree Narayana Dharma Paripalana Yogam (SNDP) of Ezhavas maintained links with Hindu Munnani. Nairs constitute 21% and Ezhavas 27% of the population in Kerala. Both the Congress and the CPI(M) desisted from introducing reforms in the Guruvayoor temple such as the entry of non-hindu devotees, removing of monopoly hereditary rights to conduct rituals and introducing reservation in the sacred area fearing a backlash from upper caste Hindus who have already established link in Hindu Munnani.

On the contrary to the stand of the democratically elected Government which maintained status-quo after the formation of Kerala state with regard to reforms, the rulers of the princely states implemented many reforms and asserted their supremacy over the
Tantri Namboothiris. It is because their position was not dependent on the whim of the voters. So they introduced the reforms such as abolition of animal sacrifices, Devadasi system, temple entry for lower caste Hindus and removal of certain Namboothiri families from priesthood. These things were done against the will of the Namboothiri Brahmins who control temples. After the end of princely states, the democratically elected Government did not intervene in any important sacred area. The inference is drawn that the parties ruling the state Government does not want to loose a portion of Hindu votes. The fear is that the Hindu Munnani or any of such Hindu organizations will rake up the issue and polarize votes on Hindu lines evoking religious sentiments.

Foot Notes

i That was the reason why Navab Rajendran, had gone for public interest litigation in connection with the *bhandarams* of Guruvayoor. He had filed a case in the High Court of Kerala praying the court to evolve a suitable mechanism for supervising the accounting of the hundies. It was alleged by the petitioner that many mal practices were carried out on a routine basis by the unscrupulous Managing Committee and the corrupt Devaswom officials. According to him the commonest form of swindling by the Devaswom officials in Kerala was by not recording all the contents of the bhandarams in the official ledger account books. Thus crores of rupees offered by the public were siphoned off by the corrupt servants of Krishna (Guruvayoorappan) and other deities.

Granting the prayer of the petitioner the High Court of Kerala appointed a committee, in March 2002 comprising six members, to supervise the counting of bhandarams in the Guruvayoor temple. It included two nominees of the High Court of Kerala, the manager of the bank which receives the cash deposits, one official from the vigilant department of the state, a nominee of the devotees, and another one of the employees of the Devaswom. As a result this order of the High Court the total volume of receipts from the bhandarams has gone up phenomenally. Table 8, is the one which shows the effect of the verdict. This conclusively proves that the Devaswom officials had in fact been swindling the Devaswom and fattening themselves with the filthy lucre.

ii *Offerings*: Only cash and valuables of extremely small size of a coin can go into the cash boxes. The second major type of income is made up of offerings which could include gold, silver brass and items made of them which the devotees place in front of the deity. Donating of elephants is known as “nadayaruttal”. Donating of lesser animals is known as “nadatallal”. Agricultural produce also are offered to the deity. These consist mainly of paddy, banana, vegetables, and sugar. These offerings are known as “kazhcha”. Silk and linen known as “udayada” are also offered. All these offerings keep flowing in, and they come not only from the common people but also from eminent people from politics and the film industry.

The elephants are added to those at the Punnathurkotta elephant yard of the temple. Valuables are added to the reserves known as “pandam- patram- reserve” (reserve of jewelry and vessels). The perishables among the offerings are auctioned off, and the cash received there from is accounted. One notable fact about this entire process is that it lacks public scrutiny.

*Private worship*: The third type of income for the Guruvayoor Devaswom is from the private worship offered by the devotees. It includes ‘*Udayasthamana Pooja*, ‘(the ‘Dawn to Dusk’ pooja), the *Thulabharam* (offering to the deity, grains, sugar, banana, etc equal in quantity to one’s body weight), *Nivedyam*(offering food rice pudding, sugar, banana and other fruits to the deity),
Annadanam (providing meals to the devotees who visit the temple on specified days). Anayoottu (feeding of elephants), Kalabham, (smearing of sandal paste on the idol), and Archana or Pushpanjali (showering the deity with flowers).

Of these Udayasthamana Pooja is the most important and expensive form of private worship. The fee for Udayasthamana Pooja as on 31st March, 2006 was Rs.50,000. Only one such pooja can be conducted in a day. On receiving prescribed payments the Guruvayoor Devaswom issues tickets for each type of worship. Advance booking for different forms of worship described above is allowed. As on 31.3.2006, all dates up to 2050 have been booked for Udayasthamana Pooja.

The rate of Udayasthamana Pooja at the time of booking in 1980 was only Rs.600, but actual cost incurred for conducting it in 2006 was Rs.48000. The loss on such a pooja was a massive Rs.47,400. The same method of booking still continues without anticipating the future increase in the cost. The current rate of booking for the pooja is Rs.50,000 which is the actual cost. A devotee who pays this sum now can get the pooja conducted in 2050.

Thulabharam is getting oneself weighed in front of the deity using some valuable item one has vouched as an offering as counter weight. The devotee will sit on one pan of a common weighing balance and the specific item will be placed in the other. She has to take a ticket for the Thulabharam and if the required item is among those fixed items in the stall of the Devaswom like sugar, jaggery, rice, wheat, banana, edible oil, ghee, etc. The item will be supplied at cost price. On the other hand, if the devotee wants an item which is not in the temple store, s/he has to buy it from outside. The cost of the ticket is the same in both cases. One of the important financial advantages of this form of worship is that the same item is repeatedly used by the Devaswom. To give an example, the sugar used for the thulabharam of a particular devotee could be again used for the next devotee as well. But each devotee will have to pay for the item as per the market value.

Nivedyam is offering of food to the deity by the devotee. The most important item offered in this worship is pudding made of rice and milk (palppayasam), which is considered a specialty in the Vishnu / Krishna temples. In the Guruvayoor temple, this item is offered by many devotees. This offering constitutes 40% of the food offered to the deity. Other food items offered are neipayasam - a pudding made of rice, jaggery and ghee; sugar and banana known as ‘kadalipazham and panchasara’, pure milk, pure butter, dry fruits, honey, and sugar candy. One important feature of this worship is that tickets are taken by the devotees from one counter and items are immediately supplied from another. This is contrary to the general practice in which the items are first offered to the Lord at the time of poojas and then given back to the devotees who have offered them. But, interestingly, here they are given as ready made items across the counter immediately after the purchase of the ticket.

Kalabham is the pouring of sandal paste on the image of the deity. This is yet another form of private worship. Only one kalabham can be done in a day. The rate of kalabham as on 31st March, 2006 is Rs.12,000. This private worship is also booked for many years in advance. However, to be specific, it is not like udayasthamana pooja which is booked for a longer period in advance. Kalabhabishekam, which is the popular name of the pooja, is conducted to enhance the power of the deity. The Devaswom supply the best sandal available for this purpose. The deputy Administrator, stated that it is purchased directly from the Mysore Sandal Factory which is the most popular organization selling pure sandals.

Annadanam is another important private worship. Anyone can offer it by taking a ticket for Rs.12. In Guruvayoor Temple Annadanam starts at 10.30 in the morning and it continues till all those who want to have it as prasaadam are fed. Annadanam of Guruvayoor Temple is so popular that even Ministers, social workers, popular cine artists, and men of eminence from different walks of life can be seen participating in it. One of the revolutionary reforms introduced in this worship was in 1970 when it was opened for the people of the SC/ST communities by the then Trustees of the Guruvayoor Devaswom.

Anayoottu, the feeding of elephants of Lord Guruvayoorappan is yet another form of private worship. The cost of one anayoottu is Rs.4000. The elephants are given cooked rice, sugar cane and jaggery. This particular worship has two important angles. One is that it is an important revenue for the temple. The second is that the elephants of the Guruvayoor Devaswom
are properly fed through this system. They are fed in accordance with the standard set by the State Forest Department. The people offering worship can go directly to the elephant yard at Punnathoorkotta and participate in the feeding ceremony. It gives an opportunity for the public to watch and understand the life of elephants kept there. This makes the dealings in elephant yard highly transparent.

_Hrishnanattam_ is the only form of private worship done through the performance of an art form. It is a kind of musical dance drama based on the story of Sree Krishna. _Hrishnanattam_ is traditionally performed on the northern side of the temple after its closure at night. It ends about at mid-night. There is a Hrishnanattta Kalari meaning the performing arts training institute maintained by the Devaswom which houses both the actors and their costumes. The cost of performing _Hrishnanattam_ is Rs.4000. The artistes are paid by the Devaswom for each performance.

**Income from Elephants:** Income from Elephants is another source of revenue for the temple. Forty two elephants are rented for festivals in other temples religious places and receptions. Guruvayoor Padmanabhan is the tallest and the number one elephant of Guruvayoor Devaswom which earns more than 15 lakhs of rupees annually. It has recorded the highest receipts of rent in 2006 from a single festival in the whole of Kerala: Rs. 2,22, 222 was the hire charges paid to it by the Nenmara festival committee in March 2006 which is a record high, as it is the hire charge for a single programme for a single elephant in a day.

iii The expenses of the temples falls into two categories: one is routine expenses known as ‘pathivu’ and the other is establishment expenses. “Pathivu” is the traditional accounting term referred to for temples in Karalla with regard to daily expenses for rituals.

iv Sugar is purchased from the state of Tamil Nadu. When asked to explain the reason Guruswamy (Deputy Administrator , Guruvayoor Devaswom) said that there is a history behind why this is done. In 1967, when there was a shortage of sugar in the country the then Guruvayoor Devaswom trust, under the Zamorin Raja requested the Kerala Government, for sugar at the Government rate for the temple. The state Governor turned down the request on the ground that the volume required for use in the Guruvayoor Temple was large and that such a large quantity could not be provided at the Government rate as it was against the socialistic principle of the Government. The Guruvayoor Devaswom trust then approached the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu Mr.Bhakthavalsalam and requested him for a quota of sugar at the government rate on the ground that the Guruvayoor Temple was under the jurisdiction of the Malabar province which was a part of Tamil Nadu (then Madras). The Tamil Nadu Government accepted the request and granted the quota of sugar. Later when control over sugar was lifted in 1970 the Guruvayoor Devaswom continued to buy sugar from the sugar mills of Tamil Nadu because beet sugar was available only there.

v Originally, there were sixteen Kazhakam families. The Warrier families are: Vadakkeppat, Thiruvenkitam, Chowallur, Kizhakkepat, Parangod, Kolazhiyam, Akathiyyoor and Aundad. The Pisharodys are: Puthiyedath, Nharekkad, Kalat and Thekke. The Nambisan families are: Kizhakke, Moorivedu, Kizhakke Kandiyoor Pattathu and Patinchare Kandiyoor. Although Thekke Pisharam is now extinct and Aundad Warriam left the Kazhakam some decades back, their Kazhakam rights remain in their names despite now being held by other families.

By and large, the negative connotations of caste have faded away in modern democratic India, especially as far as Kerala is concerned. Yet, where the holding of ritual rights is concerned, most temples still follow the traditional system of maintaining the caste categories created in the days when the Brahmin hegemony had power over all rituals and forms of temple worship. The mention of high caste here is only in this context and does not imply a contemporary Hindu consciousness of social hierarchy

A family is known by its name, and the word identifying their community, that is Pishram for Pisharodys, Warriam for Warriers and Pushpakam for Nambisans.

Among them Puthoyedath Pisharam family is the oldest holding right in the temple. The other three families having similar right for the making of garlands for the deity are
Thiruvencitam, Vaddakkeppat and Chowallur Warriam families. They in addition to their general duties (Kazhakam) work in rotation for ten days, every month, supplying the temple with various commodities. Those arrangements were made during the days of Zamorins and are continued even today.

vi Although the term Kazhakam can be translated, there is another word applied to those and other families which inherited roles in the temples-atiyamtharam-which though it actually means either an urgent matter or a religious ceremony that must be observed, more subtly suggests the distinction that their relationship with Guruvayoorppan (lord) goes far beyond the usual concepts of employment.