INTRODUCTION

First experience of any is through mother. The earliest memory of any person is that of clinging to the mother’s breast and looking into her love filled eyes. The comfort and security, which the infant gains from this relationship, lasts with him all his life. The concept of mother in a cosmic level is common in all ancient cultures. It is as old as the origin of humanity. Èēvi is the devine mother, the eternal womb of all creatures human, sub human and animal. She cradles her children in her loving arms, suckles them and nurtures them with her infinite love. Where ever you see maternal love, in a bird or an animal or a humanbeing, know that to be the love of the Èēvi for her children, for she is the universal mother.

The worship of mother goddess is time immemorial. The people used to consider the earth too as the mother. The worship of the mother goddess is prominent in Hindu culture. History says that the worship
of mother goddess existed in Mesopotamia, Paschimesia and Egypt, from early times (Vishnu Namboodiri: 2004:5). Nine crores of names are prevailed for mother goddess, in India. The excavations prove that the mother goddess worship was there even during the stone age. The ancient legend of Èēvi, the great mother goddess has been handed down by generations of Hindus and systems from a sacred book that explains śakēa Ėanērās (Elizabeth. U. Harding: 1998: XXIII). Although it is understood that the bewildering gore and sentimentality of the mythology of Kāḥī are allegorical, one still wonders what it means to Hindu society, today. From a religious as well as a social stand point this myth refirms the protective power of the archetypal mother who is an integral part of Hindu households. In the west, the women in the family is mostly seen in her role as the wife, where as in India, the women of the house is always the “mother”. Even an unmarried woman with out children is often addressed as “mother”. It is a gesture of
respect, because Hindus consider the position of mother as supreme.

The tradition of Indian religion is that it perceives nature as mother; even rivers. The temples are known as the centers of aryanaization and as a result non Aryan worships are moved outside the temple. Kāśī has been worshipped in Kāvus, ĖekkaĖus, Muṇippurās, Elenkās etc. But all these centers of worships are transformed as temples and worshipping system also has been changed accordingly, at certain extend.

In the case of Kāśī the etimological ambiquity of the name is highly symbolical. Start with the Dravidian root kāl (black), Kāśī becomes the black goddess, the horrible destroyer who wrecks terror, and kāla, the black god, some times is identified with śiva. The Aryans borrowed the roots kāl, kāl, khāl from Dravidian languages, and then they equated black with distruction, turning the lot in to time, kāla, and the great destroyer (male). However,
neither, he nor $Kā\frac{1}{2}i$ – the black one- has a Vedic origin; No references are there in $Rigveda$.

The goddess $Kā\frac{1}{2}i$ is almost always described as having a terrible frightening appearance. She is always black or dark is usually naked and has long disheveled hair. She is adorned with several arms as a girdle, freshly cut heads as a necklace, children’s corpses as earings, and serpents as bracelets. She has sharp, long fangs, is often depicted as having claw like hands with long nails and is often said to have blood smeared on her lips. Her favorite haunts heighten her fearsome nature. She is usually shown on the battle field, where she is a furious combatant who gets drunk on the hot blood of her victims, or in a cremation ground, where she sits on a corpse surrounded by jackals and goblins. Many texts and contexts treat $Kā\frac{1}{2}i$ as an independent deity, unassociated with any male deity. When she is associated with a god, however, it is almost always $śīva$. As his consort, wife, or associate, $Kā\frac{1}{2}i$ often plays the role of inciting him to wild behaviour. $Kā\frac{1}{2}i$’s association
with Śiva, unlike Pārvathi’s seems aimed at exciting him to take part in dangerous, destructive behaviour that threatens the stability of the cosmos. Kāḷi is particularly popular in Bangal and Kerala, although she is known and worshipped throughout India. In Bengal she is worshipped on the eve of Dīpāvali. In this festival and throughout the year at many of her permanent temples, she receives blood offerings. She is also the receipient of ardent devotion from countless devotees, who approaches her as their mother.

The Hindus in Bengal worship the great mother with ceremonies of great splendor. Once a year during an autumn festival called Ėurga pūja too, they re enact the story of the fierce protectress and, side by side intellectuals and illiterates worship the mother in temples, homes and in make shift pandals in the street. In return for their efforts, the great mother reassures them every year that the good will always overpowers the bad eventually. The Bangali people believe in a myth of its own. That is as follows: when the gods lay
exhausted after warring with the demons, the evil natured demon king MahiÅśuµa took the opportunity to assemble an army and declare himself lord of heaven, ruler of the Universe. This blasphemy reached ViÅnu’s ears and, in anger, he shot forth a terrible light from his forehead. Šiva, too was angry. He descended from his lofty state of meditation and beamed a sharp ray of blinding light in the same direction as ViÅnu, Brahma, InÈra, and the other mighty gods did likewise, each issuing forth piercing rays of light. All the God’s rays joined at one point and slowly, the blazing concentration of light took shape in the form of a woman.

The light of šiva formed her face, Yama gave her hair and ViÅnu her arms. From the light CanÈra, the moon God, her two breasts were formed. InÈra modeled her wasit and Vaµuµa her thieghs. Earth gave her lips and Brahma feet. The light from forhead, Agni fashioned her three eyes. Thus all gods contributed their power to manifest the auspicious Èêvi, the great mother goddess. As soon as the Èêvi was fully formed the immortals
prayed to her and worshipped her with praise, ornaments and weapons. Śīva gave her a trident drawn forth from his own, Viṣṇu a powerful discus and Inārā, the king of the gods, gave her a thunderbolt identical to his own. Śūrya, the Sun god, bestowed his rays on all the pores of her skin, and Vaṣṇu, god of the ocean, gave her a divine crest jewel earrings, bracelets and garland of unfading lotus.

“Victory to the mother” shouted the gods as they watched the demon battalions approached with the beating of drums, battle cries and the blowing of conches. Since the Ėvī was of enormous size and highly visible, the demons marched straight towards her, attacking from all sides with arrows, clubs, swords and spears. Unperturbed, the Ėvī roared loudly and laughed in a frightening, defiant manner again and again. And then her ten arms rotated, alternately smashing weapons of the demons and hurting them back at her attackers. With great ease, she picked up dozens of demons at once, killing them with her sword. Some
demons she didn’t even bother to pickup. She stupefied them with the tremendous noise of her bell and then crushed them with her mace.

The demon  patiëntakābīja  gave the fierce mother goddess a fair amount of troubles. He possessed a special magical power which allowed him to create new demons from his own blood. Whenever the goddess wounded him, each drop of blood that spilled to the ground sprouted another demon full of strength and brutality. But in the end the mother outwitted him. She picked up  patiëntakābīja  and lifted him high in to the air to avoid spilling his blood on the ground, and then gnashing him between her teeth, she drank his blood and swallowed him whole. Other demons too tried to confuse the goddess with their magical powers. Whenever they were threatened by the Ēēvi, they changed their form and colour. But no one can escape from the great mother. Bound by her noose and spilling blood, those demons were soon caught by Ēēvi and like a child pulling a toy train; she dragged him over the battle field where crores
of demons already lay split in to two by the sharp slashes of her sword. Snatching some elephant with one hand, the Èēvi flung them in to her mouth and together with the demon drives; she furiously ground them up with her teeth. She seized one demon by the hair and another by the neck. One she was crushed by the weight of her foot and another with her body.

The mother’s terrible presence filled even the sky. Black clouds gathered and terrifying lightning lit up the ghastly shapes on the ground. There were demons without arms, without legs, demons torn as under in the middle of their trunks.

When MahiĀisūṣa, the king of the demons, saw his army devastated by the blows of the terrible mother goddess, his fury knew no bounds. He expanded his body to take on the fierce shape of a giant buffalo. Intoxicated with his own strength and valor, he roared and charged toward the Èēvi. The earth began to trumble under the stamping feet of the goddess. Mahishāsūṣa fought with
all his might but could not conquer the Èêvi. So he appealed to her sense of justice, complaining that she fought in an unfair way. The Èêvi, he claimed, received help from so many fierce goddess- Èurga, Cāmun-ā, Ambika and others- and he, Mahiśuṣa, had to fight all by himself.

The savage fight continued, and the great demon attacked the mother goddess with showers of arrows. He hurled discuses, swung his clubs and mace to no avail. The Èêvi killed him with her spear, releasing the soul from its evil natured body and mind. Dust clouds carried the stench of signed skin and rotting flesh to the blood red horizon. The demons had been killed, and their blood flowed, accumulating here and there in small pools around carcases of elephants and horses. Only some headless, torsos of demons who refused to give up life still fought the Èêvi. The battle shrieks had died and the only cries now were those of jackals and hynas. There was nothing left to kill, but the blood intoxicated mother
in the form of Kā́śi continued the carnage—smashing and slashing the dead demons all over again.

The Gods, who had begun to celebrate victory, was filled with fear. The gods think who can stop her. There was only one who could, śīva, the great god. Besmeared with ashes the third God of the Hindu trinity, went to the battle field and lay down motionless among the corpses while the rest of the gods watched from a safe distance. The intoxicated Ė́vi staggered across the corpses until, suddenly, she found herself standing on top of a beautiful male body nude and besmeared with white ashes. Awed, she stood still for a moment, looked down at him, and saw straight in to the eyes of her husband śīva. When she realize that she was touching her devine husband with her feet— an unthinkably disrespectful act for a Hindu wife — Kā́śi stretched out her tongue in shame and the destruction came to an end.

Among mother goddess of Kerala Kā́śi is supreme and she is believed as the goddess of peace and disaster at the same time. The text, both ritual and myth varied
from place to place. The worship of Kiḷi is based on so many myths. But the Kiḷi Ṇāuka myth is so popular and accordingly so many manifestations are there as performances, all over Kerala. It is believed that śiva gave birth to Kiḷi from his third eye to kill arrogant Ṇāuka. It is interesting to note that Kiḷi Ṇāuka myth also is having many versions.

Many ritualistic performances are there that elaborately enacting the story of Kāḷi and Ṇāuka. Kāḷiyāḻu, Kōlamvetṭu, Mudiyēttu, Kāḻiyārkaḷi, Niḻabali, Padayai, Pūṇānum Īrāyum, Īyyāḻu, Īeyyam, Īöttampāḻu, Īkkam etc. are some of them. The myth behind all of these performances are most the same where as performing texts are different. Why it is so? It is a serious matter to enquire.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

This study “A theme and its diversified manifestations- A study based on Kāḷi concept and performances in Kerala” aims to understand the differed
manifestations of the myth related to $Kā\frac{1}{2}i$ and $Ēāsukā$ through some performances. Though manifestations through performances are different, the theme behind all these performances in $Kāli$ shrines are the same, the $Kā\frac{1}{2}i$ - $Ēāsukā$ fight.

This study aims to understand the reasons, geographical, social and cultural that the one and the same theme gets different manifestations through ritual performances. $Mudiyēttu$ enacts the fight between $Kā\frac{1}{2}i$ and and coming to a close with the slaughter of $Ēāsukā$. Where as $Padaya, i$ is the enactment of the Post war events

**PREVIOUS STUDIES**

Many books and articles are published in English as well as Malayalam on $Kā\frac{1}{2}i$ concept and most of them are either narration of $Kā\frac{1}{2}i$ - $Ēāsukā$ fight or the description of the ritualistic performance.
Kere unprecedented Kālīśa (mal) has written by Chelanattu Achutha Menon (1959) gives an account of Kāli worship in Kerala.

Kālīśangalpam Kēra unprecedented Kērapāśisa (mal) edited by Suresh Eleyavoor (2004) consists of twenty four articles written by different authors on Kāli concept and related performances.


BhaÈrakanāi Mahatmyam Adava Éaśuka VaÈham (mal) written by Swami Mridananda (1979) describes the entire story of Kāli related to Éaśuka.

Kāli -pūja (eng) written by Swami Sathyananda Saraswathi (1997) gives details about Kāli pūja, Kāli sangalpa, Kāli dhyānam, sÉōÉram etc.

Kāli the black goddess of DakÀinēswar (eng) is the book about Kāli concept in DakÀinēswar, by Elizebeth. U.
Harding. The forms of $\text{Kā}^{\frac{1}{2}}i$ worship in that temple, about the history of temple and the rituals related to that temple are narrated in this book.

The content of ‘Songs of $\text{Kā}^{\frac{1}{2}}i$, A cycle of images and songs (eng) written by Ramproshad, transilated by Gayathri Chakravarthi Spivak (2000) is some Bengali songs about $\text{Kā}^{\frac{1}{2}}i$ and Her tremendous victory.

$\text{Èevi}$ goddesses of India (eng) edited by Johns Straton Hawley and Donna Marie wulff (1998) includes details of different goddesses in India. The article written by David .R. Kinsley entitled $\text{Kā}^{\frac{1}{2}}i$ in this book deals with the story and worship systems of $\text{Kā}^{\frac{1}{2}}i$ in North India especially Bengal.

Hindu goddesses, Vision of the devine feminine in the Hindu religious tradition (eng) written by David Kinsley (1987) is a book about different goddesses in India. In this, the author describes about the early history of $\text{Kā}^{\frac{1}{2}}i$ and its significance.
Tantric Visions of the Devine Feminine (eng) written by David Kinsley (1998) is about different goddesses in India, including Kā́li.

Sri Ėvi Līla, the play of the Devine mother (eng) written by Vanamali (2006) is also narrating the story of different goddesses in India. This book takes an ancient quest to unravel the mystery of devine mother in all her manifold aspects. Kāli is narrated with almost all details in this.

Eventhough many books are there about Kā́li and related performance, none of them go in to the deep to understand the fact why the same myth got varied performances.

**RELEVANCE OF THE STUDY**

None of the earlier studies made any serious attempt to cover the area to fulfil the aims and objectives of the present study, which is co relating the performance with the myth. Since the publication ‘Kēṣa√√aÉÉile Kā√√isēva’ so many attempt have been
made to describe or interpret $Kā\hat{\imath}$. All studies usually
generalize the facts through deductive method where as
this is an attempt to enquire into the the reasons why
cultural and geographical specific are in prevalence in
the case of manifestation of the theme, $Kā\hat{\imath} - Ėāṅuka$
fight.

**AREA OF THE STUDY**

Kerala is very rich with ritual and non ritual
performances. The $Kā\hat{\imath} - Ėāṅuka$ myth prevalent all over
Kerala and the performances related to it are found in all
parts of Kerala. So the geographical area of this study
extends all over Kerala. But the special mentions have
been given to the districts which have the specific
performances which are related to $Kā\hat{\imath} - Ėāṅuka$ myth.
So field work is necessary for each and every
manifestation in $kāvus$, where these performances exist.

**CHAPTERS**
Apart from introduction and conclusion the thesis has got four main chapters. Appendix, bibliography, informant list and glossary are also attached with it.

This thesis divided into four chapters (1) \( \text{K}\ddot{a}\text{\ddot{v}}\ddot{i} \) in Kerala- an introduction (2) Manifestations of \( \text{K}\ddot{a}\text{\ddot{v}}\ddot{i} \) theme (3) The concept of \( \text{K}\ddot{a}\text{\ddot{v}}\ddot{i} \) in beliefs Rituals and customs (4) Interpretations.

The first chapter ‘\( \text{K}\ddot{a}\text{\ddot{v}}\ddot{i} \) in Kerala- an introduction’ gives a description of the concept of \( \text{K}\ddot{a}\text{\ddot{v}}\ddot{i} \) in Kerala and various genres related to the concept of \( \text{K}\ddot{a}\text{\ddot{v}}\ddot{i} \). Apart from this it also explains the myth related to the origin of \( \text{K}\ddot{a}\text{\ddot{v}}\ddot{i} \) and its versions that prevailed in Kerala.

The second chapter, ‘Manifestations of \( \text{K}\ddot{a}\text{\ddot{v}}\ddot{i} \) theme’ illustrates different manifestations of the theme through performances. This chapter pays attention to explore how \( \text{K}\ddot{a}\text{\ddot{v}}\ddot{i} \) concept is vivid in various ritual performances such as \( \text{K}\ddot{a}\text{\ddot{v}}\ddot{i}y\ddot{u}, \text{Ka}_{\dddot{x}}\text{y}\ddot{r}\ddot{k}a\text{\ddot{v}}\ddot{i}, \text{K}\ddot{\ddot{o}}\text{lamve}\ddot{l}\ddot{u}, \text{Mudiyettu}, \text{Ni}_{\ddot{i}}\text{bali}, \text{Padaya}_{\dddot{i}}, \text{Paranettu}, \text{P\ddot{\ddot{u}}\ddot{\ddot{E}}\ddot{n}\ddot{u}m \ddot{E}\ddot{r}\ddot{a}y\ddot{u}m, \ddot{E}\ddot{ey}y\ddot{a}, \ddot{E}_{\dddot{\ddot{i}}}\ddot{y}\ddot{a}\ddot{l}\ddot{u}, \ddot{E}\ddot{\ddot{E}}\ddot{k}\ddot{a}m, \ddot{E}\ddot{o}\ddot{t}\ddot{t}\ddot{a}m\ddot{p}i\ddot{l}\ddot{u}, \text{and so on.} \)
The third chapter ‘The $Kā\/āi$ concept in beliefs and customs’ describes people’s belief in $Kā\/āi$ concept and customs related to $Kā\/āi$. Almost all customs and rituals that are prevailed all over Kerala have been included in this chapter.

‘Interpretation’ of the available data is the content of forth chapter. In the light of the intrinsic and extrinsic evidences and with the help of various theories and concepts interpretations are made to prove the hypothesis that vivid manifestations are existing for $Kā\/āi$ - Ēaṅuka in because of the cultural and geographical impact.

The conclusion presents the findings of the study as well as the summary of entire work. It will also give the implications and suggestions for the further research in this area. Appendixes, bibliography informant list and glossary are also given in the end.