CHAPTER III

Kerala, the land of charity, is rich in folk culture, visual arts and festivals. Different religions, groups and communities in their historical evolution have subscribed to the growth of a dreamlike panorama of dance and visual art forms in this region. Some of them are religious and highly ritualistic, but incorporate dance and music and colors and light. Even the geographical isolation of Kerala had not denied her the chance of inheritance of a common cultural heritage of India. As such the major developments in the cultural history of India had significant impact on the formation and organization of Kerala society. Although it is a compact cultural linguistic area, it was exposed to external influence both from land and the sea. The indigenous tribal culture and language, defined and
categorized by the scholars as Dravidian, were nourished by the Āryan culture and the Sanskrit language. The Buddhists, the Jains and the Brahmins had liberally contributed to the religious and social life of the country. Therefore the so-called Hinduism, the religion of the land, was characterized by much synthesis. This particular aspect could be traced in the traditional culture of Kerala.

From the very olden days, arts very popular in Kerala, are seen in the Vedas and Itihasas. For the narration of Vedas, and for praying god, people used Music, Dance and Arts and Sculpture. In Ṛgveda 14 arts, in Yajur veda 30 arts and in Kūmaṇḍūtra 64 arts are seen described.
FOLK ARTS OF KERALA – CLASSIFICATIONS

What were the folk arts that existed in earlier times in different parts of Kerala; of them how many are extant now, and what are they; where did they originate from; which communities handled them; what are the peculiarities of each of the folk arts; to what extent do they influence people – such and related issues have not so far been subjected to a systematic and comprehensive study.

Taking into considerations the geographical and cultural peculiarities of the existing folk arts, it is possible to classify them under five separate zones: North Malabar (excluding the district of Wayanad), South Malabar, Kochi, Travancore and Wayanad. Other kinds of classification could either put folk arts under three categories: coast, high ranges and hinterland or under three heads: North Malabar, South Malabar and
Travancore-Kochi or into another set of three: rural, tribal and urban.

The difficulties that confront a researcher in this field are formidable. Most of the folk arts of Kerala are closely associated with rituals. In some, like Kotamūriyāṭtom, Pūrakkāli, etc. the theatre element predominates. Others which are performed as part of rituals, like Payyannūr Kolkali, Tiruvatirakali, etc., can boast of independent status as art forms. Still others, like Teyyam and Mutiyettu, have the ritual and art elements beautifully intertwined. Some magical rituals, like Kolamūtullal and Sarpaśātullal, do not have performers that are comparable with the rest. A few others are performed to propitiate Gandharväś or Nāgäs, or for obtaining children. In some folk arts, the elements of drama and dance are so intermixed that it is difficult to classify them. Teyyam, Mutiyettu, Pūrakkāli, etc., are at once ritualistic performances,
folk drama as well as dance. There are others like Tīvṛṭṭu, Kolaṁtullal, Sarpaṁtullal, etc., which combine music, painting, drama and dance. If examined objectively however, these ritualistic folk arts come through as excellent pieces of performing art.

The folk arts of Kerala can be broadly classified under two heads: ritualistic and non-ritualistic. Ritualistic folk arts can be further divided into two: devotional and magical. Devotional folk arts are performed to propitiate a particular God or Goddess. Tevyam, Tira, Pūtamātira, Kanyākali, Kummāṭṭi, etc., are some of them. Forms like Pāṇāmpāṭṭu and Tottaṁpāṭṭu are composed in the form of songs. In Kolkali, Mārgaṁkali, Dappumuttukali, etc., the ritualistic element is not very strong.

Magical folk arts seek to win general prosperity for a community or exercise evil spirits or to beget children.
Gandharvās and Nāgas are worshipped in order to win these favors. The magical folk arts include Pāmbintullal, Puppādatullal, Kolatullal, Malayankettu, etc.

Non-ritualistic folk arts can be divided into theatre arts, painting, architecture, sculpture, handicraft, folk music, etc. and theatre arts can be further classified under folk drama and folk dance.

Folk art can be described as the simple art form of the common man. He is its creator and at the same time he is its sole consumer. As an artistic version of folk culture, folk art pulsates with human life. Christopher Caudwell sees it as the "switch board" of the instinctual forces of ancient human community. Folk art has its origins in society and therefore does not give importance to personal emotions. Simplicity and directness are its special features and it eschews technical complexity as well as rigid structure. Folk art aims at instant
communication and as it speaks of social themes, the common man finds it easy to identify himself with it. Besides, folk art is imbibed almost unconsciously; it does not demand a disciplined, systematic approach or constant practice.

SOCIAL ASPECTS

Folk arts have always had an organic link with the community life of the prevalent age. Most of them originated from rituals that are part of magical and religious rites undertaken by man to overcome crises, gather courage and confidence and ward off despair. The 'potato dance' of the Maoris, is an excellent instance of this. At one time, the inhabitants of the Polynesian island were under threat of losing their potato crops due to stormy winds. In order to stall it, a group of women wearing loose garments danced in the fields. The artificial wind generated by their quick steps, they
believed was the storm wind and this ritual of imitative magic would prevent natural catastrophes. Similarly, villagers in Kerala danced with the taikkolaris of Bhagavati and Vasűrimala in a bid to dispel smallpox and reach succour to the patients and give courage to their relatives as well.

In Kerala, folk arts flourished under the shadow of feudalism. It attempted to raise voice against the social and economic inequalities of the time. As it was satirical in tone, the ritualistic element was relatively less. Theatre forms like kākāraśśinātakam, porāṭṭunātakam, kurattiyāṭtam, etc. echo the feelings of discontentment in life and register protest of the oppressed classes against the rules.

People in ancient times believed that enactment of various rituals before village temples and other public places would solve all their problems. The 'low' caste people even took advantage of the special status that the rituals temporarily
accorded them. With elaborate designs on the face, attractive ornaments and heavy headgear the performers tried to make everyone-including the higher caste Brahmans-accept their divinity. Such an atmosphere even permitted them, to question their superiors, helped trace stolen goods, give fitting punishments to the wrong doers, and settle domestic quarrels. The bhairavi kolam of padhayani and Kali of mutiyettam, teyyattam, etc. performed these functions. The contribution of such art forms to the maintenance of the social fabric was considerable.

RITUAL ARTS-ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT

Primitive man's knowledge of nature was limited. He had to find a way to defend himself against ferocious animals, thunderbolt, rain and other undefined calamities of nature. In course of time, he found that he could interfere with natural
phenomena with the help of sympathetic magic. He began to depend on rituals for success in hunting, cultivation of crops and acquiring the basic needs of day-to-day life. These rituals, involving certain dances and utterance of vague sounds, became diffused during the Neolithic period when agriculture began to make progress. A number of fertility rites were performed to reap rich harvests and to get rid of floods, droughts and famine. Spring festivals as well as harvest festivals were celebrated. All this was closely associated with his social life.

Experience, however convinced him that he could not subdue the forces of nature by magic alone. This gave way to rituals of nature worship. The worship of Gods thus came to existence due to the helplessness experienced by primitive man. Elliot Smith observes: "the gods as creators of mankind are regarded as the source of man’s life, and their chief
purpose in primitive religion is to preserve and safeguard the life they created”. The most primitive form of religious belief is totemism. Malinowski considers totemism as an instrument to tame and subdue nature. Even though the term ‘ritual’ or ‘rite’ does not yield itself to easy definitions, it does not connote man’s collective and social effort to escape the calamities of life. Durkheim defines ‘rites’ as follows: Rites are ways of behaving which only came into being at the heart of assembled groups and whose function is to create, maintain and to re-establish certain mental states within these groups.

Prof. Radcliffe-Brown argues that rites are symbolic representations of certain sentiments and every rite has its own inner meaning. However, it is difficult to believe that rituals had any relation with religion in olden times. Nor did they originate as art. These were only later developments.
As an art form, rituals have three components: myth, ritual and theatre. Whereas the basic structure of each of these does not change, alterations and improvisations have always been accommodated. For instance, the singers of the myth have the freedom to delete certain sections, sometimes create new myths or connect the existing ones with contemporary social life.

Similarly it is possible to reduce the duration of the ritual. The repetitive parts can be removed to avoid monotony and make it look more attractive, the ritual object can be replaced, etc. For instance, teyyattam in Kerala requires toddy as one of its ritual objects. At one time when prohibition came into force, toddy was replaced with tender coconut water.

Over the years, the theatre component has also undergone many changes. Earlier, it had the form of a procession (kettukazha) where people carried objects like
coconut, banana, jackfruit, tender coconut leaves, red flowers, etc., to temple and shrines. Of late, devotees have included decorated chariots, tableaux and illumination to increase its visual appeal. The ritual arts like teyyam, mutiyettu and patayani now accommodate elaborate make-up, colorful costumes, detailed angikabhinaya, acrobatic displays, etc.

The evolution of ritual arts into performing arts was gradual. Earlier, the ritual art was never performed before an audience. The performers were not treated as artists either. Rather they were looked upon as deities. The performer too tried to identify himself with the God or mythical character he represented. Thus, in teyyam, the cutting of a live chicken’s head was symbolic of the killing of the demon Darika; walking on live embers was symbolic of Viṣṇumūrtis attempt to destroy the fire God-Śaiva’s ego, etc. For these very reasons, the skill of individual performers was never compared with
one another. Nor was there any element of disbelief. In modern times, however, the devotees who assemble before a temple or a shrine do not participate in the ritual but remain spectators. Further, sponsored dramas and ballets have come to accompany the ritual.

FOLK THEATRE

It is generally believed that folk theatre evolved out of religious ceremonies. However, there are indications to know that theatre is older than religion. Very ancient magical rituals could not have been connected with religion. Man must have performed ‘rain dance’ and imitation of ‘animal hunt’ as part of his daily ritual. Elliot Smith has established that the origins of drama and dance can be traced back to primitive man’s rituals that were aimed at maintaining a secure social life. Even today dramatic performances exist among primitive
tribes that live by hunting. The main plot of these performances revolves around animal’s fights and hunting. Adya Raṅgācārya’s view that Indian drama, in its ritual stages had no connection with religion, rather it was only part of man’s social, cultural and economic life, is therefore acceptable.

When these rituals became more and more polished with repeated performances, they evolved into art. Mulk Raj Anand is of opinion that it was by adopting the organized movements; sounds and gestures of rituals and adding symbols as well as beautiful images to them that drama came into being.

A similar development—though not evolving from the imitation of ‘animal hunt’—can detected in Kerala also. The folk drama, kotāmūriyāṭṭam, might have come from fertility rites like gopūja. M.D.Rāghavan has pointed out that
that has a heavy Tamil cultural accent. The kurattiyāṭṭam of Kanjūr has resemblances with the lives of the nomadic Kuravās and Kurattis of Tamil Nadu. Paṅkāli, a version of porattunāṭakam, exists only in Pālakkād. So also aryamala with its Tamil influence. What is not worthy is that all these theatre forms are only of recent origin.

The folk theatre of Kerala that is of special significance is the ritualistic drama. It is in them that we find the special features of the artistic traditions of Kerala. A compact plot with a definite beginning, middle and end, antithetical characters, logical and orderly development of the plot, four styles of acting, audience participation, environmental acting, improvisation in acting, creation of specific moods, etc., are some of the unique features of the ritualistic theatre of Kerala. The acting is most often realistic.
koliyattam is one among the few fertility plays that are still prevalent in north Malabar. The folk drama of Kerala is closely bound to religious rituals. Pure theatre forms are very rare. Although kaikottikkali, kolkali, dappumuttukali, etc., are art forms that seek to entertain, they are still performed as part of some ritual. Kaikottikkali is related to tiruvātira, kolkali is part of the religious festivities at veṭṭakkkorumakan temple and dappumuttukali is performed as a ritual in mosques.

There are some folk dramas like kurattiyattam, porattunātakam, kākkāraśśinātakam, etc., that are not associated with the rituals or even the artistic traditions of Kerala. Their plot structures, manner of presentation, linguistic expressions and characters show the influence of Tamil culture and are popular in those districts that lie close to Tamil Nadu. The porattunātakam of Triśūr shows features that are strikingly similar of the porattunātakam of Pālakkād
There are some folk dramas that require only one style of acting vāṇāṅkūṭtu, malayikūṭtu, etc., of Kaṇṭpur adopt the narrative mode of acting. The plot of malayikūṭtu-which provides an entertainment interlude in teyyāṭṭam with women narrating and enacting stories behind the wall of the snake shrine—is taken from the Mahābhārata. The vāṇāṅkūṭtu adopts a different style. In it, two characters Āṅkūṭtu and Peṅkūṭtu, appear on the stage and recite slokas as well stylized prose in chaste Malayālam.

Poraṭṭu is an important component of the folk drama of Kerala. It is performed as part of the ritualistic dramas like patayāṇi, kendronpāṭṭu, pūrakkāli, etc., but has an independent existence because it is totally free of ritualistic elements.

Although Kerala boasts of several types of folk theatre, very few of them can be technically called drama. At the same time, there are other forms that have several qualities of the
FOLK DANCES

Most folk dances of Kerala involve only men. Women perform only in such folk dances like kuravaikūṭtu that trace their lineage to the devadāsi tradition. Tribal dances, however, are performed by both sexes. This could be because of the relatively greater freedom that tribal women generally enjoy. Men and women dance together in urālinrattam, pāṇiyamṛttam, irulanrattam, etc. whereas mutiyāṭṭom involves only women.

Of the other types of folk dances, tiruvātirakali, kummi, kolāttam, oppana, etc., have women performers. The more active forms like kolkali, pūrakkali, dappumuṭṭukali, kaṁbadikkali, etc., are performed by men. Only rarely as in cavittukali do women and men dance together.
Ritualistic dance forms also have only men performers. Most of them fall under folk dance category. Mariyāṭṭam, kolarntullal, tidambunṛttam, pulikkali, teyyam, tira, etc., are at once dance and drama.

PATAYANİ

When the sunshine spreads over nature after the monsoon, the festival season arrives in Kerala. It is the time for celebration of fertility and happiness. After the harvest, the people give a share of it to the gracious deities who protect them. Thus, a number of ritual art forms and celebrations are born. Patayaṇi is such a ritual art form that has been performed year after year during the time of festivals in Kerala. The ritual art forms all over the world are related to the land and the climate. Hence Patayaṇi is also no exception to this universal fact. Patayaṇi is performed in two districts
viz. Pattanāṛiṭṭa and Alappuzha of central and Southern Kerala. Alappuzha is coastal and Pattanāṛiṭṭa is mountainous regions. Patayaṇi is natured by the mountains and the ocean. It is the festival of a people who believe that their lives are the gift of the great mountains.

To have some kind of control over the unknown forces of nature man began to worship the divinity of nature itself and the seasonal changes brought about by it. These enquiries were resulted in certain rewards. Its endless repetitions would become part of protected assets and ultimately all over ritualistic actions would emerge from them. Stories that explain the mysteries of nature were generated. They were the first myths that provided energy for later day's creative work. As a mark of respect to nature, man personified the natural forces in characters that danced and sang according to the primal rhythms. These became expressions of the basic
emotions in man. The primitive man had the power to express these basic emotions through his expressions in the raw form. Most of these expressions became theatrical.

Patayani is a ritual art form related to the Devi temples (temples of Mother Goddess) in Central Travancore, Kerala. It has tremendous theatrical value and very evocative language. It represents nature in its varied form of North Kerala like teyyam and tora super human characters. This ritual art possesses the sense of rhythm, vision, aesthetics and power of infinitive quality of people, who are directly involved with nature. It elaborated man’s relationship to nature. For the ordinary people, it is the epitome of life. The text of this is derived from our tribal ethos and culminated in the Siva cult. In short, the hidden text of Patayani is rooted in the Siva and Sakti cult, which have all tartaric rituals. It is ritual sacrifice performed by the village before the primal Goddess.
Patayani is the simple and at the same time complicated compilations of assumptions. It surpasses time. It is attached to the archetypal tendentiousness. Patayani has the interdependence of absolute glamour of adornment, costume, dance and theatrical languages.

Patayani is usually performed ceremoniously in the ritual areas of central Travancore. One can perceive a collectivist in it rarely seen in the modern Aryan culture. There exists a mixture of the life style of the people whom are in various strata of society, their dialects and their special hereditary culture. It is an embodiment of Malayali's nature that is highly deep rooted in their religion, art aesthetics, etiquettes and body culture, because Patayani is not merely an art form but it is mode of factual culture.

Any myth worth the name is the essence of a multi racial society. Patayani is the theatrical representation of this myth.
Religious rituals or ceremonies are media for communication. The cardinal element is favoritism to the life. The activity of training the unnatural powers can be visualized through the extra body fitting for decorative attire and masks to reveal super-human appearance (Kolains). We experience the dreadfulness and magnanimity, which play a great role in our village life. In it's intricate and escalatory footsteps with it's varied reverberations provide an eternal and emotional impression to the spectator a sense of bio-physical force which all inspires them to be with the Performer. Here the lyrics eulogize the transparent love, courage, heroic deeds and all the other human emotions in its rustic purity. The chorographical elements beating of drums and the modulated recitation of poetic verses all reveal a robust purity of the fertile soil and the village.
Rural areas are considered as endless resources of potential energy. Patayapa is performed with all its riot of colors, extravagant expressions of visual relations which all confluences in their painting techniques, artistic posters, architectural poses, haunting music, rich literature, scintillating dances and rhythmic movements. It is also a fusion of sixty-four different art forms. The participants are with earnest devotional flow of nectar, apart from the differences of cast and thus proclaim the equality of an era also.

The Kolaris who dance in frenzy on the stage of Patayapa are its main characters. During the performance a number of realistic characters also appear and disappear on the arena. Kolaris dance according to the tune of songs, but songs do not accompany the realistic characters. They provide improvised dialogues. Their primary aim is to add amusement. The characters that perform comedy provide a
highly theatrical story. This is illustrated in the presentation of "partadeśis" (exiles) to the Kolam. They appear in different opportunities, and their actions vary from place to place. These characters are on a par with the ‘Pāla Kolaris’ in significance.

Patayani performances last for twenty-eight days in the courtyard of Kali temple. Its make-up materials are taken from the nature, like Spathe of Areca palm (pala in Malayalam, Terra-cota powder, and charcoal and turmeric powder. There are different varieties of effigies to represent like Yakṣi palkši, kālan, kutira mādana maruta, Pisac, Gaṇapati, Bhairavi and kajiramāla. There are effigies with masks and crowns. Patayani is replete with human creativity and nature’s bounty, which will leads to excellent aesthetic extravaganza.
In good old days there were eighteen types of musical instruments used in the Patayanï performances. Today the most important instruments are ‘Tappu’ (A percussion instrument with a wooden ring covered with leather on one side). Another speciality in Patayanï is different rhythmic ensemble. They are the rarest of the rare “Talás” prevalent only in south Kerala. Some of the major Talás are ‘Marma’, ‘Valiya Laksmi’, ‘Ceriya Laksmi’, ‘Campa’, ‘Karika’, ‘Kumba’, and ‘Adanta’, for all these rhythms there are corresponding stylized body movements. They are not only important in rhythm but represent the characters with moments of acting which all basically based on rare rhythms. All these rhythms start mainly from a wider canvas and recede towards a conical structure.

The symphony and rhythm of Patayanï reflect the rhythms of rural life. The footsteps of the Patayanï artist
imitate a farmer carrying bundles of paddy on his head and movements of a lonely boat in the backwaters. It reaches ecstatic heights slowly but gradually. The classical rhythms are in arithmetical progression, but in Padayāni it is like the structure and form of a mountain. The audience who participate in Patayani moves towards the submets where the spiritual force of the divine mother is showered on them.

Humor is widely used in Patayani. Comic interludes that sketch the village life are performed in the skits. These comic strips point to a time before the advent of castesm. The character titled paradeši (Other-Lander) though a villager, is supposed to be coming from outside. Paradeši appears with dual function, i.e. he is Parama Śiva (almighty) as well as Paradeši (outsider). When he comes on the stage, we witness the conflict of a person entering into an alien tribal culture.
Patayani portrays stories with historical background also. For e.g. Horse Kolams. The story goes like this: the King of Madura in Tamil Nādu is about to attack Travancore of Kerala. The King of Travancore enquires his minister about the preparation for the war. The Minister informed that everything was ready except horses. The envoys of the King go to Arabia to buy horses. Their dealings with the horse trader are narrated here dramatically.

Patayani has a therapeutic side as it is said that it can be used to treat epilepsy. The ancient people have carved out a treatment method out of these rituals based on the core life experiences. The Kolam of the demon is used for this purpose. All village Gods and Goddesses are considered to have healing powers. The Maruta Kolam is considered to be a goddess of Small Pox. The Goddesses are thought to be living on mountaintops. They are invoked to the planes of human
existence and they take part in the ceremonial feast the children offer to them. The Maruta Kolam re-enacts these ancient lore's, in theatrical manner.

A scent with beginning, middle and end in unison is enacted in the spectacle of Kalan Kolam (Effigy representing eternity) relates duration or time in its specific purpose. The mask used by Śiva denotes past, present and future. The actor performs many characters at the same time. There are elements of the physical theatre in it. The same actor performs the roles of Citraguptan, Bhūtas, Kāli and Consorts. It is almost like a total theatre. These elements spring from the tribal culture, as is evident from the Patayaṇi performances.

The lore of Patayaṇi believes that the primal Godhead was a bird. The Rg veda imagines the Sun as a God with wings. The mask of the bird is enacted in Patayaṇi in relation to a myth on children. Mādan is Śiva himself in relation to the
ancient culture. **He is the** protecting deity of all quadrupeds. The skies are imagined as Yakṣi in the Antara Yakṣi (a sort of Demy-goddess). In all its elements there is a philosophical dimension of nature, which may appear in the form of Antara Yakṣi and Sundara Yakṣi (charming Goddess). The Yakṣi in Patayaṇi emphasize the intimate relationship between man and nature, which is defining that movement, is self-realization. Then they come as Yakṣīs of beauty, enacted in Patayaṇi.

The mother Goddess like Bhairavi, Kānjiramāla and Sundara Yakṣi are very important in Patayaṇi. They represent the ‘panca bhūtās’ (five facets of nature). Kānjiramāla is the embodiment of ‘Sitala Devi’ who represents winter. Kānjiramāla represents heat also.

Purification of the individual leads to the purification of the whole world. To attain this aim sacrifice on a large scale is
needed. The Puppada (flower offering) represent the self-sacrifice of people performed through the theatrical spectacles of Patayanı. ‘Kara Vanci ’ is the theatrical performance showing the solidarity of the whole village. They recreate the semblance of paddling in water.

Patayanı fulfill the aspiration of the people, their value systems and sense of beauty. Despite the drastic changes that occur in the world, Patayanı holds on to the eternal aspects. The popular subterranean forces of Patayanı gradually ascend to great realm of the spirit and enables the actors and spectators to participate in the dance of the eternal elements. It links the earth and the sky.

One can measure the relevance of Patayanı from different angles. It represents the social ethos and solidarity. It is performed out of a classless and casteless society that is essentially tribal in nature. The class feeling is supreme to
every individual. They worked and prayed in solidarity. Patayani also resembles a streak of light that illuminates the primal darkness. It is a grand spectacle of theatre that uplifts the human hearts to the eternal realms of the spirit that exist in the collective self of man. When we analyze Patayani in a theatrical manner, we understand the following aspects: The methods of actor transforming himself into characters. The performer maintains strict spiritual discipline (vratam) for days prior to the actual performance. By this, the presenter of the character changes his ‘Self’ into the self of the character and analyses the character very deeply before the actual day of the performance.

The made up performer who carries heavy masks and decorative body fitting forgets him and reaches to an unconscious state of affairs—a trance—in its full sense. Here the conscious actor slips into then mental state of subconscious to
unconscious state, which is nothing but a non-performance. One should study properly all these aspects from a modern psychic level so that the transformation of 'Self' to the character is a psychological process which is full and final when it reaches the trance. Another important factor in the Patayani performance is that the performer himself becomes a character in certain sequences and then changes to his 'Self' and then from the 'Self' to back stage worker to looker and vice versa.

MUTIYETTU

It is believed that various forms of arts worshipping goddess Bhadrakali prevailed much before the origin of temples. Once the worship of Gods and Goddesses started at the temples, various types of arts used to be performed to please goddess Bhadrakali at Bhadrakali temples. By and
large, many of them were ruined while others continued to be performed systematically and in a more dramatic manner.

'Mutiyettu' is one among them, a mixture of entertainment and devotion. The period of origin of Mutiyettu is untraceable. This art is more of ritual than dramatic. 'Tiyyāṭṭu' is another ritual performed in Bhadrakāli temples, which is very much interconnected to Mutiyettu. Mutiyettu is the story of the war of Bhadrakāli with the two notorious Asurās Dārikan and Dānaveṇḍran, eventually killing them, while in Tiyyāṭṭu, Bhadrakāli reports to Lord Paramāśīva after the assassination and briefs the whole incident. Mutiyettu, compared to other forms of temple arts, is presented without much of 'mudras', facemasks and facial expressions, but with facial make-ups and 'cutti' (artwork done on face with rice paste), which make the characters simple and more acceptable to the viewers. Originally these characters used to perform
with speech and dance. But later on rhythmic steps were introduced which give more life to the characters and make the performance more interesting.

Mutiyyettu is a ritual art where viewers also participate in the performance. Once the artists get separated, i.e., since they ‘come to the light’, the scene becomes more dramatic. It can be inferred that the character ‘kuli’ in Mutiyettu is the first of its kind to amuse the viewers by comic speech and action.

ABOUT THE STORY

Unable to resist the tyranny of Dārika, the Devas send Nārada as their messenger to Lord Paramaśiva requesting his help. Hearing this, Lord Śiva, flares up with anger and opens the third eye, from which Bhadrakāli emerges; Lord Śiva tells her that her mission is to kill Dārika. So she sets out in search of him. Seeing her roaming in the forest, a Vetal appears in
front of her and enquires about her objective. The Vetal, tells her that Dārika is very powerful and that a new Dārika (or Asura) can emerge from each drop of blood that falls from his body.

The Vetal offers to carry her on his back. The Devi creates ‘kuli’ from her body and the three of them challenge Dārika for a fight. War starts between the Devi and Dārika accompanied by Dānavendra. Blood falling down from the body of Dārika is sucked up by the Vetal, so the emergence of Asurās from it was evaded. In the end Bhadrakāli chases out Dārika and slays him.

KALIKETTU

This is a ritual drama vogue in the Bhadrakāli temples of Trissur district. Kāliyāttam is another name for Kālikettu.
This is a fertility ritual performed just after the harvest. Parayar are the performers of this drama.

The myth of Kālikēṭṭu is the same as Mutiyettu, i.e., the slaying of Dārika. Mahākāli (mohini), Karimkāli, Kutṭidārika, Mukkan and Cattan are the characters appearing in Kālikēṭṭu. The ‘oracle dance’ of Veliccappad is an interesting scene in the drama.

Drawing of the Kalam, in the temple premises and sacrificial rituals like Kuruti, Tarpana etc. are the rituals before the performance. As an offering to Kāli children are disguised as Dārika and join the performance.

Centa maram and kuzhal are the musical instruments used in Kālikēttu. This dramatic form is still performed in the surrounding places of Kattakambal, in Triśṣūr.
KALIYUTTU

This is a ritual event in Tiruvananthapuram district. The performers are Nairs. The myth of the folk drama is based upon the fight between the Kāli and Dārika and the victory of Kāli. This could be said as the parallel of Mutiyettu, as the myth and important characters are the same in both forms.

PULAYAR KALI

The Pulayās were considered as belonging to the class of untouchables and were mainly agricultural labourers. Pulayar Kāli is their gay group dance and it is noted for its rhythm, vigor and beauty. Women also participate in this dance which is usually performed after the harvest season. The songs are all based on themes relating to incidents in mythologies like Mahābhārata and Rāmāyaṇa. Instruments like para, vekkkan, cenda, kāvu, etc. are used.
BHUTAM TULLAL

This is a ritual performed in connection with Vela, Pūram, Talappoli, etc., which are special festivals in Kerala Temples. Maṇṭānmārs are usually allowed to perform this dance, and very rarely Pāṇar and Pulayar. The concept is that the devil-aids (Bhūtam) of Lord Śiva are coming to see and enjoy the temples festival. The make-up of the Bhūtams consists of peculiar customer, equally colorful and captivating. Large headgears, projecting rounded eyeballs, high rigid noses, protruding tongue, flowing back hair behind the pleated skirts and overcoats all conspire to make the dancers appear completely supernatural. Each dancer has a girdle of bell. Anklets are also attached to the legs and each dancer holds a shield and club in his hands. A variety of dancers are executed to the rhythm set by an instrument called ‘tuti’.
PARAYAN'TIRA

This is a ritual dance performed before Bhagavati temple in connection with festivals. The concept is that the devil-aid of goddess Bhadrakāli performs this dance after the death of Dārika. The costumes of the 'tira' are colorful and captivating. The large headgears, projecting eyes, high-ridged noses, protruding tongues, flowing back hair behind the pleated skirts and overcoats all make the dancers completely supernatural. For each dancer there is a girdle of bells. Anklets are also tied to the legs. A variety of dances are executed to the rhythm set by different folk dramas. The dance is usually performed by Parayas.
TIRAYĀṬṬAM, TEYYAM

This is a form of unrefined drama current in Kerala. This ancient art originally came into being to propitiate some gods. There are others of this kind like ‘Mutiyettu’, ‘Tīyāṭṭu’ and ‘ayyappan pāṭṭu’ which all belong to a class of ritualistic plays. This folk drama is a colorful pageant devoted to gods. Its artistic value is worth noticing. This is known by different names like ‘Tira’, ‘Teyya’ and ‘Kāliyāṭṭam’. ‘Tira’ in ancient language means ‘devadāśana’ (sight of gods). ‘Teyya’ is the corrupt form of ‘daiva’. ‘Tirayāṭṭam’ is a visible amusement where actors appear dressed as gods. As the actors dance in the dresses of gods, this is called ‘devāṭṭam’ also. ‘Teyyāṭṭam’ is the distorted form of ‘devāṭṭam’. As this is both a kāli (play) and an āṭṭam (dance) this is called ‘Kāliyāṭṭam’ also.

This is held in different parts of Malabar during the period of January to April. It is a programme of three days.
The first programme is to exhibit an Alakolam. This is done on the night of the first day. The second programme is to exhibit the vellāṭṭukolam which will be done on the second day evening. An indication of this is given on the first night itself. The programme of the second day begins with a dance called velakkali. On that day there will be worshipping of gods at intervals. The vellāṭṭukolam begins by five in the evening. The chief actor will present himself before the public in the colorful robes of a god and will begin to dance to the accompaniment of drums and music. As the dance and music continues even those without dresses would start dancing. Gradually sounds of pop-gums and instrumental music will rend air. The chief dancer after dancing for sometime would place a stool before the temple and spread a white cloth on it.

Then the dancer would sit in meditation and do the ceremony called ‘calling the gods’. He would then pray to the
gods to bless the function and appear at the zodiacal sign of virgin. The dance and music start again. Then the people assembled would throw rice and flower into the cloth on the stool. The dancer-god holds a weapon in his hand and changes it often making huge uproars. Then after finishing the ceremonies like 'Kāvūṭṭu' and 'Arulappātu' the vellāṭakkāran retires. The another actor in the dress of another god appears as vellāṭakkāran and repeats the programme of his predecessor. Because the dance (āṭṭam) is done before a white (vella) cloth the dance is called vallāṭṭam.

After the vellāṭṭam before midnight tirayāṭṭam begins. The dresses of the teyyas differ slightly from each other. Some tiris wear jackets and skirts while some wear flower garlands made of tulasi leaves (basil plant) and cetti (jungle geranium). All the tiris rush to the temple in great spirit and they are followed by lamp-holders and torch-bearers to the
accompaniment of loud sounds of musical instruments and uproars from the spectators. When the first round of dances is over, the 'teyya' stands dancing, pouring blessings to the people and deciding ways of atonement for the sins done. The food is offered to the gods and the function ends with a 'vela' circling the temple.

KUMMĀTTI

Kummāttikkali is a mask dance popular in south Malabār. Dancers wear brightly painted wooden masks. During onam season groups of dancers donning masks and adorning themselves with leaves and grass go from house. The songs are melodious and deal with devotional themes. The rhythm is provided by vibrating the string of a bow-like instrument called 'ōnavillu'.
Trissur district is famous for Kummati kali. The parts played in this art are supposed to be Hindu Lords such as Śiva, Kiratamūrtti, Nārada, Hanumān, Dārika, Lord Kṛṣṇa, Kāttāla (forest people). The artificial faces are tied up to their faces and with the base of background music relating purāṇa the dance is performed.

TOLPĀVAKKŪTTU

This is known also as Pāvakkūttu and Nizhalkkūttu. Prevalent in Pālakkādu and Ponnani Taluks. This is handled traditionally by Pulhuvarmars. The Pavakal or puppets are made of deerskin to represent characters in the Rāmāyaṇa epic. The puppets are arranged behind a long curtain. Behind the puppets brightly burning oil wick lamps are kept. The singer recites songs from the Kamba Rāmāyaṇa. To the trend of the song, the puppets are made to move and dance. When the song ends, an entertaining description of the puppets...
characters takes place. A Cenda in the shape of Para (measure) Idora is used to give percussion effects.

**TĪYĀṬṬAM (KĀLĪTĪYĀṬṬU)**

In most villages in central Travancore particularly in Alleppy, this ancient art is prevalent. Nainbūṭiris and Tīyāṭṭuniris perform this ritualistic art. It is said that this is more than one thousand five hundred years old.

**THE THEME OF THE TĪYĀṬṬU**

The burden of the theme is the story of Kāli, after the slaying of Dārika demon Dārikas wife, learning the tragic fate of her husband prays to Lord Śiva in order to wreak vengeance on the killer. Śiva gives her his perspiration drops and enjoins her to fulfill her aim with the help of this. Manodari meets Kāli on her way and pours the sweet, obtained as a boon on
Kāli. Kālis body gets severe burns (this is supposed to be the origin of small pox). Śiva was struck with sorrow at the affliction of his daughter. He created a messenger named Khantākaṇṭha. He with the help of his tongue licked up all the burns except those on the face. Kāli thinking that it is not correct to make her own brother lick her face did not allow him to do so. That is why the scars are seen always on Kāli’s face alone. After cursing Manodari, Kāli sets off for Mount Kailās. In order to cool her anger, Śiva dances in the nude. Kāli circumnutates Kailās and her anger cool down.
DĀRIKA VADHAM

This is in vogue in the western regions of Palakkad district, in central Kerala. This dance is performed by members of the Pariah community, and is ritualistic in nature. This is traced back to one century. Separate Kalams are delineated for Bhadrakāli and Dārikan.

The pūja is offered. The dance of Kāli and Dārikan, their fight and the beheading of Dārikan form the theme. In between Śiva appears and tries to protect Dārikan. But he does not succeed.

Bhadra kāli has a costume and make-up of terrifying effect. Make-up on the face, and reddened lips with tongue out-thrust. This is her make-up. Dārikan has a pleated cloth at the waist and carries a mace in his hand. There would be vaji round the waist and the face is made up to project
comemtpuous expressions. Īivas costume is on the basis of
 descriptions in the Purāṇa.

**GARUDAN TUKKAM**

Vaikam, Udayanāpuram, Vadayār, Elankāvu, Muttedatt kāvu, Mankompu, Allepy, Vāranataribalam, Vatakkan Paravūr, Brahramaṅgalam, Kīzhkkāvu, Trippūnittura and in some other temples where the installed deity is Bhadrakāli, this dance form is presented.

Exclusively any particular community does not perform this ritualistic art. The exact age of its origin could not be traced. While Goddess Kāli was fighting with the Demon Dārika, Garuda the vehicle of Lord Viṣṇu, flew round and round and viewed the scene. Even after slaying Dārika, the flaming anger of the Goddess was not assuaged. She turned against Garuda. Though he pleaded a thousand times for
pardon, the terrible Goddess calmed down only after drinking three drops of Garuda’s blood. This art form, a votive offering revives this theme.

PĀNA

This is seen in Central Kerala, particularly in Trissur District. This is a ritualistic art. This is performed as an offering to propitiate Bhadrakāli. This is staged by individuals and by the community too. An Aṣṭakam Kalam is depicted employing five different colored powders. The characteristic eye like design seen on peacock’s tail feathers is depicted all over the Kalam. The performance takes places around this Kalam.

PŪTANUM TARAYUM

This is performed, as a ritual in Devi temples, during festivals there. Though this is meant for exhibitions at the temples during the festivals, yet, a few days prior to the
festivals, the performers don the garb of ṗūtām and do a token dance in houses near temples. This is to commemorate the Bhūtāṁś who accompanied Bhadrakāli when she sallied forth to slay Dārikan aristocratically, since pūtanum and tara go through only some ancient dance steps. This is common place art. But the costume is unusual.

KURUNTINI PĀṬTU

This is widely prevalent in Kaṭṭūr District. Those belonging to the Peruvanṭān community perform this ritualistic art. This art form is dated back to 800 years. The exact period of origin has not been determined yet.

A Pandal (a roof of palm leaves supported on bamboo or areca nut poles) is built up in the courtyard of the house. This Pandal is decorated with bright yellow coconut fronds etc. In the center of the Nāgakalam (an intricate device
wrought with powdered rice, turmeric charcoal, etc. according to traditional pattern) depicted on the Pandal floor, the woman without issues, is made to sit.

Songs dealing with the birth of Garuda, the poisoning of King Parikṣit etc. are sung. At the end of the song, dancers representing Kuruntini Goddess, Kāmadeva, dance around.

VELAKALI

This is a group dance performed during the festivals at certain temples in central Trāvancore area. This is not connected to any particular community. Many sects of Hindus perform this.

This ritualistic art, Elder’s believe that it has reference to the war between Devās and Asurās (representing the good and bad among celestial beings) from the Hindūs epics.

Dancers dressed in the garb of traditional soldiers go through war like steps. Two or three emerge out of the line of
dancers and coming forward display-fighting techniques with the variety of its choreography. Including stances steps and warlike gestures this is an appealing form of art.

**AYYAPPANPĀṬTU (ŠASTAMPĀṬTU)**

Devotees of Lord Ayyappa, all over Kerala, stage this in general and in Kottayam District particularly.

In these ṁṭṭu (song) the story of Pandalam Raja and his family, before the birth of Šasta, is incorporated. In addition, the fight between Devas and Asurās, the churning of the celestial ocean Pālāzhi are detailed in these songs that also acclaim the character of 'vāvar' as a tough man with immense physical skills.

**ARJUNANRĪTTAM (MAYILPĪLINṆṆKAM)**

This is peculiar to Kottayam and Alleppy districts. This could be seen in Arpūkkara, Kunakari, Kidānnūr, Matakara.
Putiyakāvu, etc in Kottayam, Alleppy and Cheṅganāssery talukas. At one time this was used to be performed in most Devi temples in central Trāvancore. This is the ritualistic art of Hindu devotees. This is as old as the Bhadrakāli (Devi) temple of Kerala, i.e., merely two hundred years. Either single or in pair this dance is performed with songs based on the epics. The songs are known as “Kavi: tangal”.

TIRUVĀTIRA KALI (KAIKOŤTIKKALI)

This is popular all over Kerala. The main ritual of this is performed on Tiruvātira day, in the month of Dhanu. This is also, performed during the time Īnam and during marriage celebrations with out distinction of caste or creed. All sections perform this.

Tiruvātira day in the month of Dhanu is supposed as the birthday of Paramāṣiva. Legend has it that this was the dance form presented by Pārvati, in honor of the birthday.
**VETANTULLAL**

This is an art form prevalent in Kannur district, performed by those belonging to Vaññān and Malayan communities. This is ritualistic in nature.

It is difficult to fix the period of origin. Anyway, this is a very ancient art form.

The theme of the song relates how Lord Śiva came in the guise of a Vetan (hunter) and confronts Arjuna, who was doing penance.

**KURATTIYĀTTAM**

An ancient dance form performed in some temples in Kerala, during festivals. In the Southern style the number of participants is three and in that of the Northern style the number is eight or more. Two actors, dressed to represent the wives of Viṣṇu and Śiva respectively, appear first. Songs to
the accompaniment of rhythm are sung. To this background
the two in female garb dance. The dance is highlighted by
expressions and gestures. This is presumed to bring into
Kerala from Tamilnadu, by Kuravas who migrated from
they’re to this stage.

KALAMPATTU

This art form is seen in Kannur Taliparamba, Hosdurg
and it is known in these regions as Kalampattu while in central
Kerala, in Ponnam Taluk, Cavakkadu Taluk and
Perintalmanpa this is known as Kalamezhattupattu.

This had its origin around the first half of the thirteenth
century. It could be deemed to be around six centuries old.

Five to Fifteen people participate in this.

In central Kerala, apart from the delineation of
BhadraKali such characters as Veṭṭakkorumakan, Ayyappan,
AntimaBakalan are also depicted, for the Kalampattu.
The songs are in praise of specific deities. Uccapāṭṭu, Kalamezhuttupāṭṭu, Sandhya Vela (drumming) puja songs and oracle's dances form the sequence of the entire ritual. This is known as Kalamezhuttupāṭṭu. The dance of the oracle is a highlight of the performance.

KYĀTAMKALI

This is a ritualistic art. This is said to be more than four hundred and fifty years old. A group consists of four
performers and two singers. A woman dressed in the garb of goddess Pārvati comes and dances to the rhythm of the Udukku. When the singers, through their songs announce Lord Śiva, a performer in the garb of Śiva comes on stage and dances. After the dance, Śiva tries to woo Pārvati. At the behest of Pārvati, two women appear on the stage and begin Mutiyāṭṭam pleased. Śiva blesses the two dancers and leaves the stage along with Pārvati. This is performed to get rid of various evils from the families. From the day of Āttam in the Malayālam month of Dhanu, the Vedars perform this from house to house.

KAMBAḌIKALI

This is in vogue in Tiruvananthapuram district. This is a community entertainment of so called upper class.

Eight participants stand in a circle surrounding a lighted lamp and after reciting dedicatory lines, they move clockwise
round the lamp performing movements known as ‘Vilakai’ and ‘titaka’ recite songs in praise of Gaṇapati and Saraswati and to the rhythm of these songs go through movements and steps specified in such traditional forms known as ‘Pativota’, ‘Randota’, ‘Mūnota’, ‘Putukarāba’ and ‘Etalu’, all traditional folk art forms. The songs are episodes from Rāmāyana and Mahābhārata. There are no evidences available to fix the origin of this art. No musical instruments or lighting are needed. Only one Nilavilākku would suffice. This could be performed on any level space. Dhoti, a sash round the waist and around the head and sandal paste on the forehead, form the make-up costume effects. Legend has it, that this art is in memory of the Paṇḍavās, who during their exile in the forest, stood round a lamp and using such staves as ‘Etupūṭu’ and ‘Kaṭkāra’ performed a similar dance and enjoyed themselves.
PALLUKALI

This is a ritualistic art. The exponents say that this is 250 years old. But experts believe that this is at least 350 years old.

The Male characters have costumes similar to those of Kāṭakali. The female characters worn Dhotis and upper cloth. Facial make-up is used. The male characters wear crown as in Kāṭakali. The female characters tie up their hair. In addition there is also a belief that this art form is based on the mythology that narrates the story of Paramaśiva and Subrahmaṇya.

According to experts, this art form is found only in Pālakkād district. The originators of this belong to the Kaṇakka community residing in Tenkurussi in Pālakkād district. It is said that this is being performed on the basis of the palm leaf manuscripts written by them.
This has many musical songs and occasions, which give ample scope for acting some exponents of this.

Pūrakkāli

This is a dance drama, popular in Kannur district, North Kerala. This is presented as a ritual in Devi temples, and as an entertainment. This is claimed to be around 1000 years old, considering the language of the prose and verse in this. This estimate is warranted. The literary portion relating to Lord Śiva is called Śaivanātakam and those portions dealing with Pārvati is known as Śaktinātakam. The show ends by dawn. While Lord Śiva was immersed in penance (tapas) in the Himalaya he opened his third eye and burnt to ashes Kāmadēva for disturbing his mind. In order to win her husband back, the grief-stricken Rati Devi, approached Śiva. Softened by her entreaties, Śiva suggested to wayout. If during the month of Caitra, from Kārtika Nakṣatram to Pūrāṇ
Nakṣatram (star), spanning nine days, maidens, observing strict abstinence, offer pūjas to the figure of Kāmadeva, he would come back to life. Rati performed this and got her husband back. At these functions 18 maidens (virgins) donning costumes of 18 different colors sang and danced and expressed their joy. The Pūrakkali is supposed to commemorate this event.

MALAYANKETTÚ

This art form is in vogue allover Kaṇṇūr district. This is full ritualistic in scope. This is presumed to be about 700 years old. This is usually performed for the sake of those women who have miscarriages. For performing this ritual, under a decorated ‘Pantal’ Kālam are drawn with the help of rice flour, charcoal powder and turmeric powder. The pregnant woman sits in front of this Kalam. Actors in the garbs of deities like Rakteswari, Guličan, Yakśan, Yakṣi, etc.
come and dance in front of the Kalam. A performance connecting at 10 p.m. goes on till 10 a.m. of the next day. The stage is made up of the decorated 'Pandal' and 'Kalam', beneath its roof. Four hanging lamps and one Nilavilakku provide lighting. The pregnant woman, after her bath, dons new cloths, before coming to the stage. The costume of artists mostly is made up of tender coconut palm fronds and splices of the plantain tree. Exponents of the art of Teyyam, Malayars, are proficient in this art.

KAIKOTTIKKALIPPĀTṬU

This art is a local Kali usually by the women of the house and the story adopted is Mahābali Caritam.

KOLKALI

With the help of two sticks, usually performed by poor classes. The base is Purāṇa poems.
ôNATTULLAL

In the central Travancore the ôNattullal is presented by Vela caste. The basic story is Mahābali Caritam.

ŚURAMPORU

This is in vogue in many villages in Pālakkad district. This is not confirmed to any particular caste or community. This is a ritual and no age limit is there fore the participants.
The period of origin has not been fixed accurately. The village leaders conduct this.

The villagers make effigies of Asurās and that of benign Arumukha (Lord with six faces) and carry these, on beams, to the road. With the effigies born on beams, the villagers run to and fro to create the impression of fight between Arumukha and the Asurās. The sound of shouts and those of percussion instruments enliven the scene. With the destructions of the asura effigies, by the Arumukha effigy, the show comes to an end. The theme is the destruction of the Asura Śūrapadman by Śanmukha. The name Śūramporu is derived from this. It is “Based on Skanda purāṇa”.

KAṆYĀRKALI

This art is in vogue in The Pūlakkad district and contiguous areas (Kākayūr, Pallayūr, Cītūr). The Nair community handles this.
This is an admixture of rural and entertainment. No age limit is there for the participants. This is an old art form. In terms of six, eight, etc. up to 20 could participate in a performance on the ritual plane, come Vaṭṭakali, and on the entertainment plane, this is followed by purāṭṭukali. The actors come to the arena without any particular costume and sing in praise of God. Then begins the performance. To the rhythm of songs and drums, the participants take stylized steps bow down and leap up as they go through it. The steps are reminiscent of these employed in Kali akali. The actors carry sticks on which there would be bells. After this ritualistic dance they switch onto the Purāṭṭukali for entertainment. Different types of Purāṭṭu are presented, to represent the lower class like Cerumars, Malayārs, Cakiliyārs, Pandalams, all in different styles. In this Purāṭṭu, there would be a comic
character who renders facetious narrative. This is "based on Agni purāṇa".

BHADRAKĀLI TULLAL

This is an art form, in vogue in Pandalam, and Kāyaṁkulam regions. Pulayās handle this ritualistic art. To present this, four performers on percussion instruments and two dancers are needed.

The face and chest would be beautifully decorated with turmeric powder and rice flour. Apart from being performed as part of temple festival, this is conducted to end small pox epidemic. The period of its origin is unknown.

TEKKANUM TEKKATTIYUM

Popular in Pālakkād and Malappuram districts, this is handled by Pānārs. This is performed both as a ritual and as entertainment. This is more than three hundred years old.
Two characters (one male and one female) and two percussion instrumentalists form a troop. The characters sing, exchange dialogues and perform stylized movements, through well-defined steps. The instrumentalists repeat the songs and put questions to the characters some portions from the Rāmāyaṇa form the theme of the play. Some times the accompanist keeps time with tiny cymbals (Kuzhitādam).

This art is the presentation of characters in such drama-oriented art forms as porāṭṭunātakam and Paṅkāli. This will be presented only in Hindus homes with in the precincts of Devi Temples.

**BHAGAVATI PĀṬTU**

A visual art performed usually in Brahmin households and temples and central Kerala. This is still displayed at Kozhimānp araṁbu Temple in the Putusseri region of Cerurutuṭṭi Township in Triśkūr District. The members of the
caste named Kuruppan are the exponents of this ritualistic art they are the traditional practitioners of arts similar to this like Bhagavati Pāṭṭu. It is not possible to determine the age of this form of art.

The proceedings start with delineation of the deity’s Kalam by the Kuruppanmārs. Songs in praise of the presiding Goddess of the temple follow this. A separate stage known as pāṭṭu kottil has been set apart for this. After the narrative songs commenced and go on for some time, the oracle enters and dances round the Kalam. The oracle speaks forth the commands in the name of the Goddess with this the show ends.

KĀṆṆĀRĀṢŚI NĀṬAKAM

A community entertainment form in Karunāgappalli, Pandalam, Aṁbalappuzha, in east and central Trāvancore area and in Kiliṁānūr, Netumāṇād regions of Tiruvananthapuram
district. The style of presentation in the two main regions shows differences.

In central Travancore, generally Pāṇārs, Kāṭṭālars, low castes are the main exponents of this.

To the south, in Tiruvanantapuram district, this is popular generally among Ezhavās and Kuruvās. There is no clear evidence to fix the time of origin of this art. The artists claim a tradition of 300 years for this but this seems to be an exaggerated assessment. Śiva and Pārvatī and Gaṅgā, in the garb of Kākkān and Kākkātti (male and female) made their ‘avatāras’ in the world to put an end to evil. This is the belief in Tiruvanantapuram area.

According to the Southern mode, the play begins with Nāradān going to Mount Kailās, the abode of Śiva and his consorts and requests the Lord to end the evils on the earth. This followed by the dance of Kākkāṭīs, who invoke the
presence of Kākkan. With a lighted torch in his hand he appears and executing dance steps, goes through the audience onto the stage with Nyttam (dance). music and acting, this art form is a fetching combination of all the three.

NĀTOTIPPAṬTU (FOLK SONGS)

Every literature has a section known as nātotippaṭṭu (folk songs). In Kerala (Malayālam) literature the period of folk songs was a golden era. Worship of devatas, honoring heroes, entertainments, philosophy, science, caste professions, morals, ethics, etc., generally formed the themes for folk songs. There are a number of folk songs in Malayālam called Saṅghakkali, Tiyyṭtu, Ṫlappavakkūṭṭu, Ezhāmatu–kali, Kānippaṭṭu, Nāṭṭuṭṭu, Vattippaṭṭu, Pūrabkālippaṭṭu, Ataccuturappaṭṭu, Pulluvarpaṭṭu, Nizhakkūṭṭupaṭṭu, Bhadrakālippaṭṭu, Tirayṭṭu, etc. All these songs are reflective
of the spiritual thoughts and ideas of the masses. Also, there is a special series of folk songs called Vatakkanpattus (songs of the north). All the Vatakkanpattus are heroic songs. They are folk songs eulogizing the heroic deeds and achievements of certain heroes and heroines of exceptional courage and prowess who flourished in olden day in north Malabār. Though there are more than four hundred such songs, only thirty-five of them have been printed and published yet. These songs, which call for no special training or gifts for their singing or require any special knowledge in music for their appreciation, take their roots in the hearts of the common people. Almost all these songs are connected with Kalaris (schools where gymnastics are taught), Atavu (strategic feats of the duel fight), Payattu (Physical training) and Ainkattu (fight). Descriptions of the challenges by heroes, clashing of arms and the way how youngsters get out of danger by their intelligence and prowess are really exciting and exhilarating to read.
CHAPTER III

References

1 P.E. Page 514, Vettam Mani, Current Books, Kottayam. 2001
2 FAD Page 228, Kerala Saṅgīta Nātaka Akādami, Trichūr 20, 1986
3 Ibid Page 165 Kerala Saṅgīta Nātaka Akādami, Trichūr 20, 1986
4 Ibid Page 6 Kerala Saṅgīta Nātaka Akādami, Trichūr 20, 1986
5 Ibid Page 32 Kerala Saṅgīta Nātaka Akādami, Trichūr 20, 1986
6 Ibid Page 170 Kerala Saṅgīta Nātaka Akādami, Trichūr 20, 1986
8 PE Page 1038, Veṭṭam Mani
Current Books, Kottayam. 2001
9 Ibid Page 398, Veṭṭam Mani
Current Books, Kottayam. 2001
10 Ibid Page 1015, Veṭṭam Mani
Current Books, Kottayam. 2001
11 Ibid Page 1013, Veṭṭam Mani
Current Books, Kottayam. 2001
12 Ibid Page 1276, Veṭṭam Mani
Current Books, Kottayam. 2001
13 FAD Page 119, Kerala Saṅgīta Nātaka Akādami, Trichūr 1986
14 Ibid Page 176, Kerala Saṅgīta Nātaka Akādami, Trichūr 1986