Chapter I

Introduction
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

India is well known for its cultural plurality, strange traditions and customs. Influence of myth, legend and rituals could be seen in every walk of life. In this case, Kerala, one of the southern states in India, is also not an exception. The northern part of Kerala known as, Malabar is very rich in rituals, lores and arts such as, teyyam (thira or kōlam), kothamuriyāttam, vedanāttam, önathar, karkidakothi, kannerupāttu, manpāttu, seethakali, kūthu, poorakali, vadakkanpāttu, mappilapāttu, oppana, mārgamkali, etc. Among this, Teyyam, popularly known as one form of the ‘folk arts’ of Kerala, is the most important and unique ritual performance, which attracts many a tourist from all over the world.

This thesis is intended to exemplify the social-cultural significance of teyyam with regards to one of its performers, Malayan. It seeks to present the basis of teyyam, as well and presumes a little knowledge about North Malabar, within the general framework of anthropology. This study is brought about by a realization that the anthropological approach to the study of human beings has much to offer to look at their relationship to the surrounding world. It is not intended to be a manual for anthropologists; rather, it is meant for a general interest too. At its best, the present study is an attempt to unravel the wonderful world of teyyam and its eco-cultural significance, and understand the life of its performer. By providing a window to the world of teyyam and its performer, as viewed through anthropology, it can help anybody to find the world a more interesting and more wonderful one, and to appreciate us, the world’s people, for the differences that we exhibit.
The Problem

The present thesis, *The Malayans of North Malabar and their Teyyam* is an attempt to study the culture, the 'ethnography' of a Scheduled Caste group called, Malayan, and their marvelous ritual performance *teyyam*.

As a part and parcel of the society, the cross-section of the Malayans culture shows all elements and essentialities with all its differences. As a community, the Malayans keep continuing the identity and integrity, and as an individual the Malayan express each and every pulse of the society. Malayans are a specialized caste performing *teyyam*, magic and midwifery. The people are the masters of *teyyam* performance. Traditionally, only the members belonging to the 'low castes', including the Malayans, perform *teyyam*. 'Upper castes' never performs *teyyam*, but provides necessary facilities. The Brahmins, and the other castes and tribes said to come under the Hindu religion, believe and worship *teyyam* as a symbol of god.

The Malayans of North Malabar, forming an important caste among *teyyam* performers, stands was a segment of the socio-cultural milieu of the region in the past, and the same is true even at present. The *teyyam* performance exhibits extraordinary features of differing meanings against the ideas of cultural 'diffusion'. The historical existence of *teyyam*, its survival and continuity, through the ages, with more and more popularity and improvement, that are in sharp contrast to the philosophy of 'diffusion'. In the light of this formulation, *teyyam* and its social role demands an increasingly important attention and a very careful study. The present study is, therefore, a historical necessity because, the socio-cultural life and performance of Malayans need an analytical study. Further, their interactions with the other groups, and the categories of the society,
culture, and environment bring the portrait of North Malabar in totality.

**Objectives of the Study**

The objectives of the study are as follows:

i. To study the present culture of Malayans and their cultural adaptation with respect to *teyyam*;

ii. To problematize the various traditional and ritualistic practices at the time of *teyyam* performance;

iii. To find out the social implications of the relationship between *teyyam* as a traditional performance, and the role of Malayan as a performer;

iv. To analyse the interactions between Malayan and other *teyyam* performers; and

v. To study the origin and evolution of *teyyam* in the Malayan society.

**Operational Definitions**

'Malabar' is an old concept. It referred to a geographical area comprising the northern part of the present Kerala State. According to Logan,

> The name by which the district is known to Europeans is not in general use in the district itself, except among foreigners and English speaking Natives. The ordinary name is *Malayalam*, or, in its shorter form, *Malayan* (the hill country). The word *Malabar* is therefore probably, in part at least, of foreign origin; the first two syllables are almost
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certainly the ordinary Dravidian word *male* (hill, mountain) and *bar* is probably the Arabic word *barr* (continent), or the Persian *bar* (country). From the time (AD 522-547) of Cosmas Indicopleustes down to the eleventh or twelfth century A.D, the word *Male* was applied to the coast by Arab navigators, and the sea faring population, who flocked thither subsequently for pepper and other spices, called it *Malibar, Manibar, Mulibar, Munibar, Malivar*. The early European travelers followed suit, and hence come the other forms in which the name has been written *Melibar* (Marco Polo), *Minibar, Milibar, Minubar, Melibaria, Malabaria*, etc. Malabar may therefore be taken to mean the hilly or mountainous country, a name well suited to its physical characteristics. (1951:1)

Malabar is composed of 'South Malabar' and 'North Malabar'. North Malabar was once an area consisting of the present Kasargod, Kannur and Wayanad districts and the northern parts of Kozhikode district.

The Malayan of North Malabar is one of the castes 'scheduled' by the Indian Constitution. They were socially and economically poor, and live by performing *teyyam*, and magic and midwifery in olden days. The people occupied a rather lower status in the social set up of North Malabar. The upper caste people considered them as 'polluting untouchables'. According to their myth of origin and belief, the *Malayans* had originated on the legendary hill, *Mahameru* from the sage *Aghasthyan*. The people worship local as well as Hindu deities in the form of *teyyam*, and also believe in spirits and ancestor worship. Practice of *teyyam* and magic places them in a position, somewhat a 'middlemen' in between man and the supernatural.
Etymologically the term, *teyyam*, is a linguistic corruption of *daivam* (god). Through *teyyam* the people of North Malabar worship nature, spirits, ancestors and gods as their sacred deities. As a part of this unique worship, the devotees also arrange performances of *teyyam* deities, whenever needed. A performance consists of combinations of symbols and rituals on the basis of local myths. The society sanctions certain `low caste` people to perform *teyyam*. Upper caste people never performed but worshipped it as their protector and savior. Usually, the performance is conducted in sacred centres such as, *kāvu* (sacred grove), *ara* (holy chamber), and even houses [eg: *kottil, padinjatta*, etc]. The performer is dressed in a peculiar manner by using attractive, colourful and magnificent attires. In this regard the performer make use of natural materials such as, tender coconut leaves, ixora flower, and planks of light and softwood and artificial materials like mirror, plastic beads, pearls, etc. The disguised performer exhibits certain rhythmic dance (*kalāsam*) and rituals according to the right and rules of *teyyam*. Male and female deities are performed in as many as three hundred to five hundred different forms. Females are the dominant ones at least in number.

*Teyyam* also relieves the tension of people by performing counseling and guidance. The possibility of conversation between deities and believers during *teyyam* makes a big difference in comparison with other modes of worship. It is through such practices and close-interactions with the believers that *teyyam* attains and maintains a socio-political significance.

**Hypothesis**

According to Theodorson and Theodorson, “a hypothesis is a tentative statement asserting a relationship between certain facts” (cit. Ahuja 2001:70). In the opinion of Peter H. Mann, “it is in putting
forward new ideas, derived from theoretical bases, that the hypothesis has its function" (1968:45). For Kerlinger, hypothesis is, "a conjectural statement of the relationship between two or more variables" (cit. Ahuja 2001:70). Based on these viewpoints, I have made an attempt to test two propositions in the present study.

First, on the context of theoretical formulation, 'nature-man-spirit complex', by Vidhyarthi (1963), which is backed by Sahay (1975), Mann (1978), etc., the teyyam is subjected to close study and analysed here. Teyyam has brought into existence by the mutual interaction between nature (the eco-systems) and culture (the performers and beneficiaries), and persists on 'nature-man-spirit' interaction.

By using the concept, 'nature-man-spirit' interaction, Vidhyarthi explored the interaction between man, their habitats, and the supernatural spirits. According to him, man interacts and depends on nature for survival and subsistence. And also, the spirits and the supernatural world are believed to guide man's destiny. So, Upadhyay and Pandey write as,

Thus, Vidyarthi evolved a methodological approach (Nature-Man-Spirit complex) to analyse the tribal way of life in terms of their ecological setting, social institutions and spirit world. (1997:451)

Further, I wish to quote the comments of Saheb, on the concept of Vidyarthi, regarding this interaction as being complex in nature:

He came to the conclusion that the sacred complex is formed as a three interrelated phenomena of sacred geography, sacred performance and sacred specialists. (2004:266)
Mann says that,

> The cultural traits are conditioned by the environmental pressure, and later are the determinants of the same. At another times, it appears as a simple case of adjustment and adaptation. (cit. Vidhyarthi 1981)

Secondly, I have been trying to test one way or the other, the structural-interaction between the people laid on *teyyam*, the *religion* of North Malabar, a belief in intangible-mysterious powers in certain nature-objects and dead-souls, that controls every action of man, the heart of which has cemented the relationship between nature and culture, the ‘nature-man-spirit’ interaction.

**Theoretical Justification of the Problem**

The present study proposed both an ethnographic and structural-functional approach. This required a descriptive account of all socio-cultural institutions involving the Malayans so as to initiate further interpretation for developing theories. Characterizing anthropology as holistic means, it studies whole groups, societies or populations. An individual anthropologist may, and usually does deal with a particular aspect of the group, but s/he is always in the process of relating that aspect back to the whole. Anthropologists see human groups as bio-cultural structures, functioning as units.

The process of scientific analysis, by its very nature, usually involves breaking such units into smaller and smaller bits, in order to permit greater and greater concentration upon those bits. While anthropologists often conduct such intensive and concentrated analysis, they also put the bits and pieces back together synthesizing their data to look at it, not in itself but, as part of the whole structure and problematic sphere. In fact, it is a principle of
anthropology that one cannot understand a part of the structure, without trying to understand it as part of the whole. Studying various social institutions and also looking at them from an angle of interrelationships between elements within and across cultures have reaffirmed a full coverage of all the elements leading to social change.

**Significance**

The life of the people in North Malabar is not only linked with many traditions but also, closely tied up with *teyyam*. Most of the researchers on *teyyam* and folklorists who have worked in this field (Kurup: 1973, 1977; Chandra: 1978; Payyanad: 1979; Namboothiri: 1981, 1983, 1990; etc) considered *teyyam* as a form of ‘folk art’ or an ‘art form’, within the context of Folkloristics. Naturally, they give less importance to its socio-cultural significance and ramifications. There is a common feeling prevalent among people that *teyyam* is an independent, caste-based occupation of some particular groups. Such assumptions may also lead to the notion that other caste-groups are merely spectators to the performance of *teyyam*. This study, on the contrary, presupposes that all humans live in an environment that affects their lives, and environment includes not only the physical environment but also the socio-cultural environment. Therefore, *teyyam* can be taken as a ritual, which is a demand of the whole culture. It has been considered as a popular necessity.

Myths, rituals, and performances always have some survival values being the bases of culture. In countries like India, myths, rituals and performances continue to play a vital role in the life of a large part of the population. It is true that their ritual significance is slowly fading away as a result of the newly growing forces such as, politics, education and advancement in science and technologies. Still,
teyyam exists as a medium for the rituals to perpetuate. It has been a more popular cultural site in North Malabar witnessing the maintenance of myths, rituals and performances, depending on the distant past itself. It can thus be said that teyyam is an important and living part of the socio-cultural terrain, and therefore, it deserves serious attention.

The history of teyyam has hitherto been presented as part of certain big surveys of events. The concept of history as a universal story of dynasties has already been questioned from various quarters. In the case of teyyam also, the picture had by and large derived from such 'disinterested' versions of historical narratives. Such narrative strategies in the construction of history deal with dynasties of kings, their reforms and their heroic activities. The problem involved in that 'history' is that it binds a larger canvas called nation, and marginalizes the local ways of real life processes and their differences. History is to be treated as the story of life where a struggle for existence takes place. The site for such struggles is culture, i.e., a terrain where struggles occur. This culture is accessible through the various processes in the life cycle. By attempting to learn teyyam and its related life processes as forms of this version of culture, this study believes to construct an alternative history, anchoring more deeply in the life of the people of North Malabar.

Teyyam and its töttam pāttu (chant) are generally studied as part of a larger aesthetic order. It is done with a notion of culture and aesthetics as some achieved categories and are having certain unique features. It is, of course, is not enough for providing any dependable piece of knowledge of the teyyam community. The real life conditions of the related communities have been sidestepped in such studies. The versions about teyyam and the life of its performers are provided
through studies that are considered as, 'authentic'. This is done always by the external agencies such as the cultural organs of the state. It also de-legitimised the real life-stories of the communities, i.e., the versions of their history, deriving from their own lore and oral stories and āttu (song). This study contradicts such versions and tries to understand a history of the community even from those actively disarticulated cultural elements. It attempts to construct a history of the material life conditions of the people involved in the social activities. It is thus a contradiction both to the story of the 'great organizers' of teyyam and to the several superficial 'knowledge-imparting' accounts of teyyam. This thesis will certainly meet the researchers and readers interest both academic and otherwise. The researcher does not claim that he holds the key to the solutions for the persisting problems of Malayans in particular, and the Scheduled Castes in general. The findings should serve as an eye-opener. He only hopes, it would set a healthy trend to tackle the problems in the best interest of the society in a very significant manner.

**Scope and Limitations**

The present thesis deals with the descriptive and analytical study of Malayans' culture and their performance, teyyam. The ethnographic details of the people lay open the common factors of other people's culture also. The major social institutions and elements of right-deassage of every human culture are more or less similar. Teyyam performance throws light on the social set up, and the popular beliefs of North Malabar. It exists as a better access to the knowledge of the social hierarchies like caste system, discriminations, and the interactions among groups and individuals. Hence the wide scope of a study of culture.
The present study has scope in one more sense. The researcher himself hails from the community chosen for the study. An insider's perspective can thus be a significant characteristic here. This may also stand in opposition to the studies conducted by the external organs, associations and individuals. Instead of depending on secondary data, extensive fieldwork and participant observation are done in the course of this research. This has contributed to the production of exact qualitative and quantitative details.

The present study has limitations too. The researcher being a member of the Malayan caste, the informants have tried to avoid questions. The lack of authoritative and knowledgeable informants in the Malayan community also posed problems.

There are some deliberate omissions in this investigation that I wish to draw to the attention of scholars who are working in the same field. I am not interested here to discuss the rituals of teyyam in a detailed manner, I have only briefly discussed the significance of some of the important rituals. This cannot be considered as a compromise or sacrifice, since the objectives of his study is in terms of social realms and structure. I have also avoided any attempt to compare the performance with similar ones. I have considered this matter very carefully, and then decided not to undertake any comparison. The real purpose of this study is not to discuss about what the people believe rather than what they actually are. In other words, it is both factual and actual in nature.

**Area of Study**

The study was confined to Kannur and Kasargod districts, since these two districts have the concentration of Malayan population. The area of the study is North Malabar, which is the northern tip of Kerala State, which shares its boundary with Karnataka State on the
north and east, Kozhikode and Wayanad districts on the south, and the Arabian Sea on the west.

The area lies in between 11° 40' and 12° 48' North latitude and between 74° 52' and 76° 07' East longitude. The altitude varies from 7 meters to approximately 400 meters, and spread to 5,029 sq. kms of land. The area consists of hills, valleys, rivers, estuaries, and seashores. Like the geographical variations, the people in these areas also show great variations. One can see tribes residing on hills, agriculturists on plains and fishermen on the seashores. Similarly, the area selected for this study, Kannur and Kasargod district shows a great cultural variation. Hence, the researcher considered this area as very ideal to undertake the present study, a scientific and anthropological study of the people, their culture and environment.

**Rapport**

The houses of the Malayan scattered hither and thither in three hundred villages have created problems to identify their residences. However, the help and co-operation extended by the village officials and local people have solved the problem. When I approached each and every house of the Malayans, they received me first with a lot of doubts but, when he explained to them the purpose of his visit, they co-operated and furnished a lot of information.

I took a lot of pains in collecting the necessary information from the respondents. Displaying much skill and patience, I succeeded in establishing friendly rapport with the Malayans, especially when some of the respondents were difficult to talk to initially. The experience, which I got from the very first attempt during my MA course, became an asset to the present study, and served me as an advantage in attempts to gather the essential information.
Both the urban and the rural people from the community responded in detail to his queries about their living conditions. Some of them even suggested urgent remedial measures to be taken up by the government for the improvement of the conditions of their community.

The study covers the life of the community, residing in many interior villages where it is difficult for a stranger to get even her/his basic necessities. However, under such circumstances the rural respondents were mostly hospitable. I am deeply indebted to the innumerable respondents of this study, who despite their own personal inconveniences came forward with all enthusiasm and spared quite a lot of their precious time, especially those who preferred to forgo their work and thus, their daily wages. As the length of each interview extended between one to two hours, it was really an appreciable gesture on the part of the respondent to have sat with me answering questions, which did not bring immediate relief to any of their problems. Most of them mistook my visit for an individual’s work in the National Census programme. At first they viewed the objectives of the study with suspicion. Research of this type was new to them. I had thus to face listless difficulties to obtain the data. Even though I met several problems, the fieldwork has become a fascinating experience since many facts that are latent could be brought to light.

**Methodology**

Research is the combination of experience and reasoning. In the opinion of Whitney,

> Scientific research is...honest, exhaustive, intelligent... search for the facts, the true actualities, and their unprejudiced analysis...(to find)...their meaning or
implications with reference to a given problem. Research is a state of mind—a friendly, welcoming attitude towards change. It is the problem-solving mind as contrasted to the let-well-enough-alone mind. It is the composer mind instead of the fiddler mind; it is the tomorrow mind, instead of the yesterday mind. (cit. Misra 1989:19)

Scientific research needs systematic planning and a careful and exhaustive investigation with an objective. According to Theodorson and Theodorson,

> It is a systematic and objective attempt to study a problem for the purpose of deriving general principles.

(cit. Ahuja, 2001:19)

Singleton and Straits have said that,

> Scientific social research consists of the process of formulating and seeking answers to questions about the world.

(cit. Ahuja, 2001:20)

So, the methodology of the present study is the procedure for obtaining knowledge based on observation and reasoning. It certainly includes description, explanation and justification of methods. The perspective of this study has been already explained above. It is that of an alternative history as opposed to the mainstream history, which ultimately ends up with judgments and conclusions, and always tries to do so from a differing value system. This is why this study focuses on direct talks with the very members of the community. Instead of making deciding conclusions about what is good for them from outside, this study explores what the Malayans themselves have to talk about their own conditions. The tools for the study are largely drawn from the theories and procedures of the discipline of anthropology, in order to follow the methods of a scientific research.
Method of Data Collection

Different anthropological methods of research have been used for the collection of data. I have made extensive use of the ethnographic and the structural-functional approaches. To study the various aspects of the Malayans life and their teyyam performance, scientific research methods such as, household survey, observation, interview, genealogy and case study have been employed.

Though the probability sampling remains as one of the best methods for selecting representative samples, simple random sampling was another method used in the present study. So, the investigator selected 51 sample villages through lottery method with a viewpoint of Misra, he opines that,

The random sampling is the only sample that contains reliable information about population. (1989: 42)

In this context, the following statement of Ahuja becomes meaningful:

A sample is a portion of people drawn from a larger population. It will be representative of the population only if it has same basic characteristics of the population from which it is drawn. (2001:155)

Extensive and intensive fieldwork was one of the important techniques adopted for data collection. Ahuja explains the field-study method as follows:

This is the method which involves direct study of field situations. Though this method has broken down the narrow walls of the traditional experimental laboratory in research on complex problems of humans relationships but
it permits the introduction of controls into the data collection. (2001:43)

The fieldworks for the present study were carried out from 1998 to 2006. The intensive fieldwork and ‘watching with a purpose’ were indispensable parts of this study. Gardner’s explanation is worth quoting here:

Selection, provocation, recording and encoding of that set of behaviours and settings concerning organisms ‘in situ’ (naturalistic settings or familiar surroundings) which are consistent with empirical aims. (cit. Ahuja, 2001:238)

It was meant for the in-depth and direct study of field situation. Controlled observation and uncontrolled observation, both participant (the investigator being a part of the situation he is studying) and non-participant in nature were done for data collection. Here, for the present study, the researcher has the unique advantage, that is, he belongs to the same community, and as well the part of teyyam performance, which is the focus of the investigation. The insiders’ perspective made available the data more valid, reliable and authentic. In most of the cases, it always brought alertness to the informants; he knows something, to keep the creditability while conducting the interviews and conversations. And it also helped to eliminate personal bias, that had the possibly of getting mixed with the information given by the informants during interviews.

Interview was another useful method. According to Bingham and Moore, interview is “a conversation with a purpose” (cit. Ahuja, 2001:221). As Misra (1989) believes, it helps a lot to formulate and crystallize the problems of study in this kind of exploratory research. The researcher has interviewed many informants, both male and
female, with greater flexibility. The employment of unstructured interview helped him to gather substantial data. In order to minimize errors, the information collected from the respondents was crosschecked with other respondents.

Case study method was also used in this study to understand the entire system of *teyyam* performance and the socio-cultural aspects of the Malayans community as well. Ahuja’s words endorse the validity of this kind of study:

> It is an intensive study of case which may be an individual, an institution, a system, a community, an organisation, an event or even the entire culture. (2001:261)

Detailed genealogical records have been prepared for every family by means of lengthy and repeated interviews conducted in an atmosphere conducive to the highest degree of mutual confidence and cooperation.

Written and printed documents were also used as secondary sources. The present study has also used information coming from the findings that are available in individual books written by scholars belonging to other disciplines. Articles from Journals, Periodicals and Newspapers were also used for data collection. No single science has a corner on the truth, and the work of all branches of knowledge is useful. The analyses of the previous accounts of *teyyam*, and the Malayans under study by anthropologists, and others helped the investigator in a first-hand understanding of their culture. All the information presented will be placed within an anthropological context, as viewed and interpreted by an anthropological perspective.
Recording and Analysis of Data

The data were recorded by writing down in the field notebook while collecting pieces of information through observation or interview, etc. Electronic aids such as, camera and tape recorders were also used for recording data.

The data, thus collected were analysed according to the objectives of this study. Both quantitative (statistical method) and qualitative (non-quantitative) methods were used. Tabulation, calculating averages and percentages, constructing diagrams, and charts were done for a thorough analysis of the data. Designing and redesigning were done through secondary analysis. Computational analysis was another means to proceed with the work.

Review of Literature

Any investigation needs reading to gather information. The present study has made use of some works, particularly on culture and performance.

*How to Complete Your Research Successfully* by Bell (1993) served as a source of reference. The description of different approaches, style and traditions, methods of data collection, analysis, presentation, report writing, insight into different ways of planning and conducting researches were examined closely.

The real value of folk literature as sociological data lies in its typical situation, relationships and attitudes. Folk literature of India provides certain typical pictures of social structure, and the life activities of man through numerous stories, legends and proverbs. Deva, a sociologist of international repute, in his book *Folk-Culture*
and Peasant Society in India (1989) has expressed the opinion that folk literature has a predominantly rural background.

_Teyyam: An Analytical Study of the Folk Culture, Wisdom and Personality_ by Pallath (1995) deals with the ritual symbolism in the life of the Pulayas. The symbol-system of east and west upholds two different worlds-views, and the basic personality of the people. According to this book, the symbolic system shapes the worldview. This is done by a comparative study of the Hindu Pulayas and the Christian Pulayas. It is an attempt to describe a particular _teyyam_ with respect to its symbolic aspects including, concept, definition, performing castes, attires, and performance of _teyyam_. This is an analytical study to explore the religious symbol system.

An article by Ramachandran, _Kothamurippattu_ in Desi Magazine, 1988, describes the performance _Kothamuriattam_ in brief. Another article entitled, _Origin and History of Teyyam_ in Desi Magazine, 1989 by the same author furnishes opinions on _teyyam_ and its origin. He describes the various steps involved in _teyyam_ such as, _tottam_, _vellattam_, and _teyyam_ performance. The attire of _teyyam_ is also discussed in brief. This article gives a clear outline of the _teyyam_ performance.

_Nature-Man-Spirit Complex in Tribal India_, edited by Vidyarthi (1981), presents the ‘nature-man-spirit’ concept of Mann, Steward, Vidyarthi and other scholars. The book contains eleven essays, which are empirical studies of different tribal communities in India. The articles provide a deep insight into the tribal life and culture. Cultural ecology in association with spirits, forms the soul of this book. It also explains the intimate relationship and interaction between social organization, religious complex and ecological conditions. The authors of the articles also discuss well about the adaptation as a
part of cultural ecology. The triangular link between nature, man and spirit assumes new forms, reformulating the concerned socio-economic and cultural network.

*Ethnographic Report of Seven Scheduled Caste of Kerala* by Bindu (1991) presents a brief but descriptive account of the Malayan's ethnography along with that of the other six communities. According to the author, magic, *teyyam* and medicines are the caste-based occupations of these people. Some details of the magic such as, *ennamanthram, balikala,* and *charadumanthram* are discussed in detail along with some magical chants and formulae. This report does not discuss about the history, and the origin of the people.

In the MA Dissertation entitled, *The Eco-Cultural Adaptation among the Kurichchans of Kannavam,* Damodaran (1995) argues that the whole life of Kurichchan in Kannavam is woven by their daily interactions with the environment. He observes that the ecology plays an important role in shaping the culture of the people. Consequently, the people living in Kannavam Reserve Forest make use of it to fulfill all needs. The forests supplies raw materials for construction of house, food in the form of animals, fish and birds, and bark and leaves in place of cloth. The author concludes that the settlement pattern, social institutions, life-cycle rituals, and practice of ethno-medicine of the Kurichchan are emerged from the people's interactions with the environment.

*Nomads in the Mysore City* by Misra, Rajalakshmi and Vargese (1971) presents ethnographic details of a few nomads, who visit Mysore and the adjoining places every year. The people mentioned in the book show sharp cultural variations. All of them possess less material possession by virtue of their practice of nomadism. Some of them are engaged in ritualistic begging and fortune telling, while others sell
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medicine to earn cash, goods and other materials like cloth, vessels etc. The authors of this book argue that these people do not like nomadic life, but at the same time, they also follow it because, the better alternatives are not available to them. It again establishes the link between nature and culture.

The book by Namboothiri, *Teyyam* (1998) explains almost all aspects of *teyyam* performance. The author looks *teyyam* as folklore and gives descriptions of its rituals and myths. He also gives short notes on some of *teyyam* performance. Other two books of the same author, *Vannanum Kenthon Pāttum* (1982) and *Pulayarute Pāttukal* (1983), present brief histories of the Vannan and the Pulayan. The author gives more attention to the songs of the Vannan and the Pulayan. The style is narrative and the approach is more or less folkloristic, even though, these books have some ethnographic details. In *Thottampāttukal: Oru Padanam* (1990), another book by the same author, describes the important aspects of *teyyam* performance. The approach is folkloristic and style is narrative. This book is very much helpful for the students of *teyyam* and folklore.

Kurup, in his book *Arya- Dravida Ghatakangal Malabarile Nadankalayil* (Aryan-Dravidian Elements in Malabar Folklore, 1980) ascertains the socio-cultural importance of *teyyam* performance. The book describes different aspects of *teyyam* performance. The author analyses *teyyam* celebration and its link between Aryan and Dravidian elements based on the *Perumkaliyattam* at Ramavilyam Kazhakam, an important sacred center of *Teyyam*. The book is very much helpful to understand the basic aspects of *teyyam* performance.

*Nadankala* by Choondal (1979) elaborates many aspects of folklore. It describes the function and significance of folklore. *Karthu Kalakal*
(1991), a study by the same author reflects the importance of folklore and ethno-arts of the tribes of Kerala.

*Chilambitta Ormakal: Teyyakkarante Katha Teyyathinteyum* (1997), written by Sreedharan, makes an attempt to familiarise the life experience and experiments of a *teyyam* performer Kannan Peruvannan. The book reveals the dual personality of a performer, as an ordinary man, and as a *teyyam* performer. The author consciously or unconsciously gives a heroic image to the performer. However, this book reflects the whole life of a *teyyam* performer.

Nambiar's *Keralathile Nadan Kalakal* (1989) is helpful like a guide to the study the folk arts of Kerala. He reviews the achievements and drawbacks of folklore studies in South India with special reference to Kerala. The author gives a detailed plan of investigation and research. Unlike many other books, this book describes various folk arts and throws new light and thought on folklore studies.

In addition to these works, the present study has also made use of *Kerala History* (Menon, 1967), ethnographic notes on the Malayan from *Caste and tribes of Southern India* (Thurston, 1909), *The Scheduled Caste* (Singh, 1996), *The Malabar Manual* (Logan, 1951) and *Dravidian Encyclopedia Vol.II* (Subramoniam ed. 1993).

Even though, the contributions on *teyyam* and its performance are only a very few, most of them are in Malayalam, they have helped me a lot to plan this study. More than that, all of them have given me valuable information, and insight on the research universe and focus. I found in all these materials that they give little importance to the social aspects of *teyyam* and further, the performers have not been given any attention. In that sense, the review of literature not only helped the present study in one sense, to make it possible to find the gaps and left outs but, also helped fill up these gaps.
Chapterization

This thesis has been divided into six chapters including an introduction, and conclusion. The first chapter introduces the framework of the study, which includes the problem, objectives, theoretical justification and methodology under taken for this study. A brief description of other areas of the study is also given in this chapter. The second chapter gives an ethnographic account of the Malayan of North Malabar. It has 20 sub-sections describing their environment, history, different social organizations, and activities. The third chapter discusses the wonderful world of teyyam and its existence. It is divided into 17 sub-sections. The fourth chapter unravels the basic components of teyyam and related aspects. The fifth chapter analyses the social structure of North Malabar. And the sixth chapter is the concluding chapter.