Chapter - III
ROLE OF THE KALARI
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INTRODUCTION:-

Protecting and Empowering Body-in-Practice

Kalari is a ritualistic heritage existed in Kerala from 12\textsuperscript{th} Century AD which contributed to Martial Arts and Treatment. The place of martial training is known as a Kalari. Having completed a detailed literature review in the previous chapter, the strength of Kalarippayattu as well as healing therapy is discussed here. As a body practice cultivated through tradition, the Mother of Martial Art Kalarippayattu has a universal application in many fields.

North Kalari concentrates on Martial arts whereas South Kalari gives importance to kalari treatment. The Kalari is a centre for training and healing in villages or with royal households, and also serves as a temple where the guardian deity was SIVA/SAKTHI. Siva-Shakthi is a big power worshipped inside the Kalari to make the students focused and serious.

Sage Parasurama is believed to be the founder of the art and the first kalari. Between 7\textsuperscript{th} and 9\textsuperscript{th} century the education system in Kerala was based on Veda, Dhanurveda and Martial Arts. In Southern Kalari system in Thiruvananthapuram and Kanyakumari districts, Agasthyamuni is considered to be the founder of Kalarippayattu, called by various names such as Atimura, Atithada and Marma Ati. Agasthyamuni wrote many books on Marmasasthra,
Kalari treatment method and Sidha-vaidya Vidhya. These formed the basis of Kalari treatments in South Kerala.

In Kalari the human body is trained to perfection. It gives total control and limitless power to the body. Kalari practice is open to students of any religion. The simplest ritual act is stepping into the kalari with the right foot first, and touching the floor, forehead and chest with the right hand. The student crosses to the Poothara, Ganapathithara and then Guruthara for Vandanam. Collectively these entry rituals should both protect practitioners from harm and help them to focus the mind for practice by clearing away any mental obstacles.

Kalarippayattu is associated with the Kerala Heritage, descended from the Sage Parasurama. Long ages ago, the sage Parasurama, Lord Siva’s disciple, brought 166 katam (1katam=5miles) from the sea and consecrated 108 idols. Then in order to defeat his enemies he established 42 Kalaris. He brought some high caste Brahmans in order to conduct worship at the kalari. These 21 masters taught kalari throughout Kerala and established 108 Kalaris. The first historical interpretation of the origin of the Kalari system was given by Elamkulam Kunjan Pillai. He states that the fighting art emerged in the 12th Century A.D during Chera-Chola war. A kalari teacher was very much respected by the society. He was given the title “Panikkar”; derived from the term ‘Parinayaka’. According to Buddhist literature, Panikkar is a teacher of weaponry or Ayudha Vidya Guru. Later the title holders identified themselves as a separate sub-sect of the Nayars.1

The ballads of North Malabar (vatakkan pattukal) are believed to have been written between 1500 and 1700 A.D. Thacholi Othenan, the undisputed

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1. Dr.K.K.N.Kurup, K.Vijayakumar (1997) Kalarippayatt, Department of Public relations, Government of Kerala
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Role of the Kalari

exponent and all time great man of Kalarippayattu was born in 1584. After his
death at the age of thirty-two, the people of Malabar made a cult hero of him and
eventually deified and worshipped him as a demi-god.

**Historical importance of Kalari:** Even today the Martial Art
Kalarippayattu is not fully explored. Kalarippayattu has a strong foundation in
Kerala as legends Parasurama and Agasthyamuni are believed to be the founders
of Northern and Southern style respectively. Cheerappan Chira family of
Alapuzha district situated at Muhamma and their Kalari were as old as the
mythology of Lord Ayyappa and his abode at Sabarimala. It is believed that Lord
Ayyappa was trained in this Kalari. Young Ayyappan was trained by
Cheerappanchira Panicker and became the most brilliant student.

Some of the prestigious Kalaris that existed in Kerala long back
include (1) Mayyazhi Angakalari in Kadathanad (2) Dhooliyamakool Kalari in
Kottayam (3) Dharmadom Kalari with 72 feet length and 36 feet breadth near
Brannen College, Thalassery and (4) Cheerappan Chira Kalari where Manikanda
Kumaran practised Kalarippayattu.

### 3.1 Structural Features

The most important and widespread measurement of kalari in Kerala is 42
feet length and 21 feet width. Angakalari used for ‘Angam’ measured 56 feet
length and 28 feet width. Angakalari are constructed north to South, with entrance
on the North wall. For 42 feet Kalari the entrance is on the eastern wall and the
Kalari is constructed west to east.

There were two distinct types of Kalaries; Kuzhikalari in the North
and Nilakkalari in the south of Kerala. A Kuzhikalari is constructed by digging
out soil from the ground and forming a pit for an appropriate structure. In the Kadathanad area, Badagara Taluk in Kozhikode district, the depth of the Kalari pit is Seven feet whereas in the north of Kadathanad it comes to the chest-height. This makes the inside temperature low and regulated. The height at the centre of the structure ranges from 32 feet to 42 feet. Poothara, the main imaginary place at the south-west corner is constructed with seven steps. Kalari poothara has seven Gods - Vigneswaran, Chandika, Vishnu, Vadukan, Guru, Kali, and Vasthupurushan on seven steps from bottom to top. On the western side of Poothara are seen Ganapathi, Nagam (serpent), Guru, Anthimahakalan and Vettakaran at Agni corner.

The Kalari system was a major socio-political institution in medieval Kerala. The decadent political and administrative set up made everybody learn defense. This is why different caste groups and the religious communities like the Mappilas and the Christians underwent Kalari training. Gradually Kalari ceased to be the monopoly of any caste or religious group and its practitioners became a cosmopolitan layer of the society.

Ankam, in fact served as a method of administering justice. The parties involved in a dispute, after getting permission of the respective Naduvazhi, engaged two combatants to settle the dispute through a duel. These mercenary fighters fought to the end of their lives and justice was determined in favour of the winner. The family of the slain fighter was given compensation and the Naduvazhi was given a payment for his presence. This peculiar system of a duel
for the cause of a third party was in vogue in medieval Kerala. It is the duty of a Chekavor to fight Ankam and not to escape it.²

3.2 The Spirit that Resides within Practice

Any Martial art teaches ‘harmony’ at its source. It is a well known fact that mind and body cannot be separated. Breathing is the most effective method for putting into practice spiritual strength and physical strength. When the breath calms the mind calms. So breath is mind and mind is breath. Stances, Meditation, qi (inner) energy are the key words in Shaolin temple Martial arts. The efficiency of the Marma of the body changes according to the development of the moon. On the full moon day Amrita position is at the top of the brain, and it gradually comes down day by day and reaches the thumbs of the feet on the no moon day (Amavasi). The person who has mastered in Amrit position only is considered a true Asan (master) for Marma treatment.

3.3 Yoga

Derived from Sanskrit word YUJ, Yoga translates to mean harmony in unity. Yoga is a method of learning that aims to attain the unity of mind, body and spirit through these three main yoga structures: exercise, breathing and meditation. Hatha yoga concentrates on physical exercises. Hatha is a compound term that means the sun and the moon.

Hindu monks, beginning with Swami Vivekananda brought yoga to the West in the late 19th century. In the 1980s Yoga became popular as a physical system of health exercise across the Western world. Many studies have tried to determine the effectiveness of yoga as a complementary intervention for cancer,
asthma and heart patients. Yoga is a disciplined method utilized for attaining a goal. People in the West recognized the benefits of Yoga and are incorporating it into their exercise routine. Yoga is practiced in hospitals, along with Kalarippayattu and other physical work-outs.

3.4 Heritage Tourism Blended with Kalari

In India, Tourism, Tradition, Culture and Heritage are beautifully blended to attract tourists. Many tourists are coming for treatment and rejuvenation therapies. 107 marmas in the human body are treated by kalari asans (kalari doctors) to attain maximum perfection to the human body which is called Marma Chikilsa. Any tourism developed with a heritage can be called Heritage Tourism. Heritage is a mirror to the past and a window to the future. The traditional Kalari system if it is revived, could invite the attention of the tourists in many respects. Importance of Kalarippayattu as a martial art for physical fitness is accepted even in Western countries. Actors, dancers and theatre performers utilize this art form for physical fitness and flexibility of the body.

The underlying principle of Kalari chikilsa is that an abnormality to any system of the human body such as nervous system or musculoskeletal system can happen only if anyone or more of the 107 vital spots are bruised. The treatment is all about directing the vital spots affected and curing them to normalcy. Knowledge of the vital spots was the most important part of a practitioner's training since his life and livelihood depended on the ability to attack the vital spots to kill, or disarm an opponent, to defend one's own vital spots and to heal injuries. There are many Kalari treatment centres in Kerala.
The masters of Kalarippayattu also happen to be extraordinary healers. They use marma chikilsa with Ayurveda system of massage. This rejuvenation therapy and healing is helpful as sports medicine, for performing artist and physical fitness. Kalari massage is a perfect cure for many diseases like back pain, Spondylitis, slip-disc, rheumatic problems, muscle problems, inactive nerves, migraine, tension etc.

3.5 Kalarippayattu

The technique that Kalarippayattu has developed is the result of the harshness of the specific geographical features of Kerala, endowed by many rivers, forests, hills and lakes. The one-hundred and forty-three year old ban on the possession of weapons and weapon training between 1804 and 1947 succeeded in almost totally destroying the popular appeal and the systematic practice of ‘payattu’ all over Kerala. The efforts of Kottakal Kanaran Gurukkal, C.V.Narayanan Nair, and Chirakkal T.Sreedharan Nair contributed to the revival of this art. Veera Shree C.V.Narayanan Nair –the invincible hero of Kalari art (born on December, 23, 1905) was the fourth son of Sri.Kunhunni Nambiar and Savithri Amma in Thalassery of Kannur District.

Sri.Kanaran Gurukkal was a chronic bachelor and his entire life was dedicated to the Martial art and its popularity. C.V.Narayanan Nair was the most beloved disciple of Kottakal Kanaran Gurukkal. The C.V.N Kalaris are highly indebted to the organizational abilities of Sri.Balan Nair who acted as the right hand of C.V.Narayanan Nair in building an establishment dedicated to the progress of an art that is the only Martial art of which Kerala can feel proud of.
In Kalarippayattu, different poses or vativus are designed and developed to get concentration for perfect power and force in carrying out a particular action or for being in readiness for action. There are eight such vativus namely:-

1. gaja vativu (elephant pose)
2. aswa vativu (horse pose)
3. simha vativu (lion pose)
4. varaha vativu (boar pose)
5. matsya vativu (fish pose)
6. marjara vativu (cat pose)
7. kukkuta vativu (cock pose) and
8. Sarpa vativu. (serpent pose) [photos in Appendix V]

Each vativu has its own style, power combination, usefulness and effectiveness. Apart from these vativus, there are basic foot positions and movements, which are technically called Chuvatus. These are designed to give more power, precision and concentration to the action against the opponent. In Chuvatu, the attention is centered on the role of the feet. The five Chuvatus are:-

1. Vatta Chuvatu
2. Aakka Chuvatu
3. Neeka Chuvatu
4. Kon Chuvatu and
5. Ottakkal Chuvatu.

These Vativus and Chuvatus are scientifically combined to form what is called Atavus. Simhavadivu is also considered as Marjara vativu in some kalari.
Mayura Vativu, taught in some kalari, is the attacks style by peacock. Standing on the left foot, this vativu has the capability to attack both directions at the same time, with hands to the front and chavittu to the back.

Before starting and finishing of any combat, one must do the Kalari Vandanam. These sequences are an embodied mode of paying respects to the Kalari’s guardian deity, and therefore are crucial to both developing a sense of devotion, as well as one of the most important ways of awakening the subtle, interior body of practice. The kalari vandanam is a form of salute to the earth, sun, sky, guru and lord Ganesha and Siva. They are 30 Chuvatu movements, a succession of steps surrounding the four cardinal directions, with the left leg in a stationary position, and ending with salutations to the Master, called Poothara Thozhal.

The body sequences further develop flexibility, balance and control of the body when the training is rigorous. But this ancient martial art is not just a fighting art, but also a healing art and a spring of knowledge. The rituals make the kalari safe and protect students from inadvertent injury, help develop a devotional attitude, and contribute to a student’s interior transformation. Kalari teaches students of all religions and help the practitioner to wipe out mental distraction.

3.6 From the Body to Weapons as an Extension of the Body

The training of the student in the Kalari begins at the very early age of 8 years with an initiation ritual performed by the Gurukkal. Attendance in the kalari is made a part of the daily routine of the student and he goes through a series of symbolic rituals every day, before and after practice, to acquire discipline and concentration.
Only when a student is physically, spiritually and ethically ‘ready’ is he supposed to be allowed to take up the first weapon. If the body and mind have been fully prepared, when the student takes up the first weapon it becomes an extension of the integration of the body mind in action. All weapons teach attack and defense of the body’s vital spots. Each weapon has one or more basic poses to and from which the practitioner moves, and through which the weapon becomes an extension of the body.3

Kalarippayattu exercise has four divisions.

1. **Maithozhil** - Maithozhil or body exercises form the foundation needed for body control, foot control, firm steps and mind control. These are conditioning and foundation exercises. It is obvious that the preceptors of payattu had minutely observed the postures, stances and movements of animals, reptiles and birds. The simple exercises gradually move on to more complex ones.

2. **Kolthari** – Koltharippayattu is to defend with shaped sticks of different lengths and shapes. The exercises in kolthari also help as foundations for wielding sharp weapons in payattu. In Kolthari one learns to wield Pandeeran (a five-foot long cane), defend and attack with Kettukari (12 span staff), Muchaan (3 span staff) and otta (a special curved wooden weapon).

   With five-foot long cane, Kettukaripayat is practiced in pairs. Pandiran veeshal includes ten sequences, and similar to Silambam of Tamil Nadu. Short stick and curved stick (orta) are practiced in order to attain clear sight and to

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3. PHILLIP B. ZARRILLI (1998)
practice weapons freely in the next stage. Exercises with the pandeeran are done without a sparring partner while all others are done in pairs.

3. **Angathari** - This is the practice with sharp weapons like sword and shield, spear, dagger and the flexible sword (urumi). Urumi is swung with a slashing circling action around the head, warding off opponents from any direction. All these weapons were used in the wars of different centuries. The sword was considered the most lethal of all weapons used by combatants of yore all over the world. And it was glorified to symbolize valour, power and justice.⁴

4. **Verumkai** - This means defense without weapons. It teaches how to defend with bare hands an attack with knife and how to use shoulder cloth for defense. Various kinds of blocks, cuts, thrusts, kicks, leaps, throws and sideways swinging movements are used.

### 3.7 The Importance of Kalari Practice

The Kalari is taken to all spheres of life -- in schools, tourism, sports, police training, military and physical fitness of dancers.

**a) Kalari as a part of the school curriculum:** - In kalari, guru-sishya relation is so ardent that having sought out a teacher and been accepted for study, the student places his entire faith, trust and future in the hands of his teacher. The student is expected to have absolute trust in the master’s intuitive wisdom and knowledge, never question a master’s decisions, and accept the severity of his training. Students are supposed to assume that whatever the teacher does is done out of love for the art and the teacher’s desire to instill

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⁴. Chirakkal T. Sreedharan Nair
that art in the student. Physical fitness is very important for self-confidence and courage. All workouts like Yoga, Aerobics and Kalarippayattu can improve the body-mind connection. Applying the focus of concentration to anything one does makes the endeavour much more rewarding.

b) **Kalari training for concentration and courage:** - The common Malayalam folk expression, *meyyu kannakuka* encapsulates the martial practitioner’s idealized state of awareness that, like Brahma, the thousand-eyed, the practitioner can ‘see’ everything around him. Joshua Mc Guire is a double Olympian in fencing who wants to study Kalari. He feels that someone who is proficient at Kalari could do well in fencing as well, with proper training. Amit Bhattacharjee, a sports psychologist and a mental trainer, trains sportspersons to achieve excellence through unity of mind and body. As a personal mental trainer for Abhinav Bindra for the last fourteen years, Amit played a significant role in the success and calm, unruffled nature of Abhinav.

c) **Kalarippayattu for physical fitness of dancers:** - Kottarakara Thampuran selected Kathakali artists from their soldiers who have mastered Kalarippayattu. Theyyam, the Kerala folklore is based on Kalarippayattu. Performing artists combine Kalarippayattu and Yoga to increase their flexibility and concentration. Group fitness classes are taking an ethnic turn celebrating diversity by reaching across cultures for inspiration and combining diverse disciplines to keep workouts fresh and exercises inspired. Zumba, the Latin based dance; Capoeira, a Brazilian blend of Martial Art and
d) **Kalari as a sports medicine:** - Many sports events require physical fitness of high degree which can be achieved through rigorous and daily practice of Kalarippayattu. It allows sports people to keep their body flexible and perfect. Kalari treatment can be applied as a first-aid in minor fractures, sprain, and dislocation which arise during sports events. Football and hockey team world over practice Kalari for their physical-mental fitness. Sports injury massage is to get immediate relief and send the sportsman back to the match immediately. It can be used by sportsmen for healing injuries that accidentally occur during sports.

e) **Reduction of Crimes:** - Kalari contributes to improved social fabric which leads to reduction in crimes and subsequent decline in investigation expenditure spent by the Government from public Exchequer. It is an established fact that Kalari contributes well-disciplined students who are so much obliged to Gurukkal.

f) **Kalaripayattu as a strong basis for Kerala tourism:**—“In each context of the practice of Kalarippayattu, practitioner’s body, practice, power and self are constantly being repositioned for the practitioner himself.”⁵ Health Tourism with Kalari can be a manifestation of our age-old tradition which is seriously protected by Gurukkal and students and taken to the future generations. Techniques, use of weapons for self-defense as well as Marma treatment and

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⁵ Phillip B. Zarrilli (1998)
physical exercises to obtain body control, all are scientifically integrated in Kalarippayattu.

3.8 Treatment Kalari

Treatment inside the Kalari was based on Ayurveda, Astrology, Marma treatment, Yoga treatment, Massage therapy, Science of the Body, Nervous System and Sanskrit. Kalari treatment is actually developed by Gurukkal through tradition. Kalari treatment is secret in nature mainly because it is related to Marma in the human body. The Kalari practitioners and soldiers remained healthy only because of Uzhichil performed in the Kalari.

Marma therapy contributes to increase or recharge physical, mental and spiritual energies. Marma can be divided into mamsa marma, asthi marma, snayu marma, dhamani marma, sira marma and sandhi marma according to the place where they are located in the human body. There are 10 mamsa (muscle) marma, 8 Asthimarma (bones), 23 snayumarma (ligament), 9 dhamani marma, 37 siramarma (vessel) and 20 sandhimarma (joints) in the human body. The 64 ‘practical vital spots (abhyasa marmmangal), their contents, and how to point at those vital spots with the forefinger while reciting a mantram should be learned not only by reading this book but also by obtaining some practical training from an expert master on the vital spots. This knowledge can only be used at a time when his life is in danger.

Kerala has 120 treatment Kalaris as on 31st March 2012. The important among them are given below.

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7. Ashtangahridayam
Attractiveness of a state should come from its own activities. The performing art forms of Kerala can be projected as tourist images. Kerala is proud of its two traditions, Kathakali and Kalarippayattu. Kalaris should be winning socio-economic units and are looking good to graduate from experiment to expression, from the fringes to the mainstream. For this purpose these martial arts centers should be converted into main health tourism centers.

Kalarippayattu has strongly influenced the evolution of Kathakali and Theyyam. Kalari is a martial art more defensive in nature whereas Kathakali is more aesthetic and expressive in nature. Kathakali is considered as a Theatre work and is a dance-drama which requires physical fitness and power. Kathakali’s rigorous exercise and preventive health care is based on its own adaptation of
Kalarippayatt’s system of exercise and massage. The monsoon season is the right
time for kalari treatment. Treatment kalari in Kerala become active during rainy
season: June-July [karkidakam] and October [thulam].

(See Annexure V for Kathakali photos)

3.10 Similarities – Kathakali and Kalarippayattu

Body control exercises in Kathakali are similar to that of Kalarippayattu.

3.10.1 Cattam and kettichattam jumping kicks are based on
kalarippayatt’s jumps and kicks.

3.10.2 The ‘Namaskaram’ in Kathakali is similar to Puthara Thozhal at the
south-west corner of the Kalari.

3.10.3 The leg exercises of the Kalamandalam, for Kathakali artists, are
derived from Kalarippayattu numerous preliminary kicks.

3.10.4 ‘Vecciruttal’ at kalamandalam is an adaptation of kalari’s cat pose.

3.10.5 Kai Visal is performed for arm and upper body flexibility. This is also
derived from Kalarippayattu.

3.10.6 Valaccu visal is derived from kalarippayatt’s numerous body circles.
This helps the development of the upper body moving in circles.

3.10.7 Tancham Vecciruttal is an exercise in which hands are clenched and
held in “sword and shield position” across the chest. 8

The basic Kathakali position is built on a “Centre” in the navel
region. Similarly in Kalarippayattu this navel region is the source of movement,
energy and power where Kacha is tied to protect the pranavayu.

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8. Phillip Zarrilli (1984), The Kathakali Complex Actor, Performance and Structure,
Abhinav Publications, New Delhi pp 104-108
3.11 Some Giants in the Field of Kalari

3.11.1 Thacholi Manikkath, Vadakara

It is a place of martial arts and tradition with Thacholi Manikkoth Kalari and Kadathanad kalari. It is the birthplace of Thacholi Othenan - a legendary hero of the ballads of North Malabar--and the kalari where he practiced his martial feats and spent long days in deep meditation before every ‘poythu’. The kalari has an old Banyan tree on one side and a practice platform in front of it. Othenan could perform Kalari on this small platform - which is possible only for people with high perfection.

Pulluvan thara near the kalari is famous for its traditional pooja. This kalari is open only on Kumbham (February) 10th and 11th. Kalari performance is conducted inside this kalari only on these two days annually.

3.11.2 Jai Sankar KJV Kalari & Ayurveda Research Centre, Puthuppally, Kottayam

This Kalari, started in 1902 is run by Dr. Baiju Gurukkal who belongs to the fifth generation of his family. It is 42 feet kalari. The treatment is based on Ayurveda, specializing in treatment of orthopedic disorders and neuromuscular problems such as back pain and Spondylitis. Rejuvenation treatment including Uzhichil, Pizhichil, Chavitti thirummal, Kizhi treatment and medicated steam bathare provided in the Kalari. Dr.Baiju Varghese stated that they are the state champions for Kalarippayattu for the last seven years.

3.11.3 Chembad Kuzhalakali, Kannur

This is a famous pit Kalari started in 1940, in which Sri. C.V.Narayanan Nair was a Kalarippayattu student. Narayanan Nair is the founder
of CVN Kalari in Kerala. The entrance is on the east of the kalari and the kalari floor is prepared with mud and turmeric which is considered as antiseptic in Ayurveda.

In this Kalari there are two sets of classes namely Karkidakam and Thulam kalari. These are the rainy seasons in Kerala. The kalari gives importance to treatment. Body massage, Marma chikilsa (treatment) are done inside the kalari. Special oil is used for body massage. Sreejayan Gurukkal has an Ayurveda pharmacy and his kalari is famous in Chembad. With teaching and healing process, this kalari contributes much towards the culture and health of the region

3.11.4 Sree Bharath Kalari, Valapattanam, Kannur

Chirakkal T.Sreedharan Nair was a legendary exponent of payattu who proved its practical value as a magnificent self-defense art. He taught, researched, demonstrated and wrote about the discipline and established the Sree Bharat Kalari in 1948. Chirakkal T. Sreedharan Nair was an undisputed authority in all aspects of Kalarippayattu. Before the start of the Festival at Kalarivathikkal temple, Valapattanam, Martial Art is performed by this Kalari and followed by 41 feet Kalasam. Now the Kalari is run by his son Prasad Gurukkal. Students from all religions come here to study martial art.

3.11.5 E.N.S.Kalari, Nettoor, Ernakulam

This kalari is situated very near to Thirunettoor Mahadeva temple, Maradu road. Started in 1954, this kalari gives martial art training to nearly 40 students every day and provides Kalari massage and medicine. Sripathi Gurukkal has two daughters and one son, all engaged in kalari activities. This Kalari does demonstration in the backdrop of traditional oil lamps. A prior booking is required
for this spectacular martial art demonstration. E.N.S kalari provides minimum one week (21 Hrs) and one month (90 Hrs) crash courses. Gurukkal says kalari provides confidence, health, love, self-realization, vigor, dedication and hard-work to any personality.

3.11.6 C.V.N. Kalari, Near Ganapathi Temple, Edakkad, Calicut

Started in 1955, this Kalari is still traditional Kuzhikalari with thatched roof. Sudhakaran Gurukkal provides Martial Arts training as well as treatment. The Gurukkal had the opportunity to travel to many foreign countries. The Kalarippayattu was demonstrated in eight countries. He provides training at Sports Authority of India (SAI), Calicut centre. Kozhikode district martial art training is also provided. Gurukkal prepared a study material titled “Theoretical short notes for KALARIPPAYAT, UZHICHIL & MARMA CHIKITSA” for IGNOU, 1st year diploma course. This is the first Kerala Government Tourism Award winner Kalari. It provides approved Kalarippayattu demonstration for the cultural centres under the Government of India.

3.11.7 C.V.N.Kalari Sangham, East Fort, Trivandrum

This Kalari was established by Sri.C.V.Govindankutty Nair in 1956. It is situated very near to Sree Padmanabha Swami Temple, Trivandrum. The Kalari is not a mere arena for martial training but is also a temple of learning and religious worship. To a student of Kalarippayattu, the ritualistic and spiritual atmosphere in the kalari plays an important role in forming his character.

The centre has spearheaded the promotion and propagation of the tradition of Kalarippayattu by organizing many international and national level performances and workshops of Kalarippayattu and by running a year round
training program for local and foreign students at Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala. C.V.N.Kalari also runs a traditional ‘Kalarichikitsa’ clinic specializing in Ayurvedic orthopaedic treatments.

3.11.8 Sreerangom C.V.N.Kalari, Karuvanchal, Chambakkara, Kottayam

This is a famous Chikitsa Kendram which was established in 1956 by K.Gopinatha Kurup and is now run by G.Sreedharakurup. Many foreigners visit this treatment centre for general health treatments as well as for curing disorders of various body systems. It has achieved the ISO 9001 Certification.

3.11.9 P.K.B.Kalari Sangham, Kottapadi, Anjoor Road, Trichur

This kalari is situated near Thekke Kaplangad Bhagavathi Temple, Thozhiyoor P.O. Started in 1957 this kalari has celebrated its 50th year and 80th birthday of Balan Gurukkal on the same day. This kalari gives more importance to treatment. Kalari gives Martial art Training to students in the age group of 7 to 17 years.

Only proficient students can undergo Marma chikilsa. This is a deadly treatment which can only be imparted by trained gurus. According to Balan Gurukkal, there is a sacred chakra in the brain of every human being which activates the brain and as a result an electric current runs on human body. Some disease occurs to the body if this flow of current is disrupted.

3.11.10 S.N.G.S Vallabhatta Kalari, Chavakkad, Trichur

This Kalari which was started in 1957 follows Vadakkan style of Kalarippayattu and Kalari treatment. All the three sons and one daughter of Sankaranarayana Menon are engaged in this traditional treatment. This family had
Vettath king’s chief army under their command. In 2007 they celebrated the 50th year of Vallabhatta Kalari, which has spread to many foreign countries such as Belgium (Chris cards), France, United States (California), Spain and London. They conduct stage shows by linking dance and Kalari. A Ballet called ‘Body of the Earth’ is performed on many stages. This kalari has a special section for treatment.

Vallabhatta has 14 kalari in Kerala as on 31st March 2012. Kerala Government has started pension scheme for old Kalari Asans. Krishnadas Gurukkal is the Secretary of District Kalarippayattu Association, Thrissur. He conducts world tour with his students to demonstrate Kalarippayattu. Many foreigners are coming to learn Martial Arts for self-defence purpose.

3.11.11 Hindusthan Kalari at Puthiyara, Calicut

It was established by Late Sami Gurukkal in 1962. Massage treatments in the Kalari is famous for arthritis, Spondylitis, backpain and slipdisc. Lakshmanan Gurukkal and Radhika Gurukkal are engaged in Kalari activities. Sami gurukkal used to go for demonstrations in famous Thalassery C.V.N and Vadakara Kalari and was a specialist in Marma treatment. His Payattu tactics with body-mind-eye integration were appreciated by his students. Sami Gurukkal taught Kalarippayattu in Northern style.

3.11.12 Kadathanad K.P.C.G.M. Kalari, Vadakara, Calicut

K.P.C.G.M Kalari Sangham was started by Late Chandran Gurukkal in 1963, which is now run by his son Gurukkal Madhu Puduppanam. This kalari imparts training to girls also and treatment and rejuvenation during monsoon season. The Traditional Kalari is 42 x 21 feet and 6 feet deep structure with steps
Chapter-3

Role of the Kalari

provided on the eastern wall to enter into the Kalari. The arena is protected by a thatched roof of plaited coconut leaves. These Kalari controlled the temperature within the pit or the practice area so that students do not get tired during Kalari practice.

Kolthari in this kalari uses sticks of different length and shapes; Pantheeruchan, Ettuchan, Ezhuchan, Aruchan, Muchan and Otta. A wide variety of sharp metal weapons are used in Kalarippayattu. Weapons for practice such as Sword, Shield, dagger, spear, knife and urumi are kept near Poothara.

3.11.13 Kadathanad Angakalari, Puduppanam, Vadakara, Calicut

Suresh master, the Gurukkal runs a Kuzhikalari at Puduppanam, Vadakara from 1963 onwards. Yoga, Tai’chin (soft skill) and karate are linked to Kalarippayattu. The Kalari conducts research studies and training in Martial Arts.

3.11.14 Gurudeva Ganesha Kalari Sangham, Pulpally, Wynad

This is a treatment / Payattu Kalari, started in 1970, in which many girls get Kalarippayattu training with Government stipend. It is run by Gurukkal Kuttikrishnan Asan who is the Wynad district secretary of Kalarippayattu Association.

3.11.15 V.K.M. Kalari, Karthikapuram, Kizhur, Kunnamkulam, Trichur

Started in 1980, this Kalari under Sathyan Gurukkal gives martial arts training to 15 students at a time. The Gurukkal says many local people are coming for treatment. Football and sports person consult the Gurukkal for sprain and other injuries. Uzhichil is common for sports injury, sprain and headache. This kalari does not take up marma treatment.
3.11.16 V.K.M. Kalari Sangham, Aruvayi, Pazhanji, Trichur

This Kalari, started in 1983, is situated at Aruvayi, very near to Sree Chiravarambath kavu Bhagavathi Temple. They run a Parambarya Marma Chikilsalayam. The Gurukkal insisted on wearing a Kacha during Kalari practice as it holds pranavayu.

Kacha is needed to keep the veins intact and to give more power to the inhaled oxygen (Pranavayu). The Kacha is believed to be the protector of one’s Prana, the life force. Medicated oil is applied all over the body before Kalari exercise. This renders coolness and flexibility to the body and gives more power to the veins and muscles. This Kalari is constructed as kuzhikalari by digging out the ground so that the practicing area is always cool. Ayurjyothi treatment centre is set up at Akkikavu, Thrissur. The Gurukkal Vinodkumar with some students participated in the Closing Ceremony of Commonwealth Games at New Delhi 2010 – called AGNI- which was a demonstration of Kalarippayattu.

3.11.17 V.K.M. Kalari, Kizhoor South, Kunnamkulam, Thrissur

K.O. Varghese Gurukkal started the Kalari in 1983 and has started a Kalari medicine shop at Kizhoor. The Martial Art classes are taken with Sathyan Asan, V.K.M. Kalari, Kizhur, Kunnamkulam, Thrissur District.

3.12 Puttara—Common to All Kalari

Kalari Bhagavati is Siva-Sakti or Siva-Parvati also called Kalariparadevata. The seven steps of the Puthara are constructed at south-western wall inside the Kalari (kanni moola) with exact measurement of 8 to 2 finger length of Guru, usually made of seven semi-circular steps narrowing towards the top. The seven presiding deities of the Kalari are given below.
3.13 Kalari Marma Massage

Kalari marma massage is a unique system of treatment developed by Kalari Masters throughout the centuries. It actually originated as a treatment for students practicing Kalarippayattu. Students used to have injuries during their practice sessions which ranged from mild situations like bruises, contusions, sprains and strains, to severe conditions like joint dislocation, fracture and even vertigo and unconsciousness. Whatever be the condition, the students were treated by their Masters.

3.14 Kalari Marma treatment V/s Ayurveda

Kalari Marma treatment is entirely different from Ayurveda and Panchakarma treatment. In Ayurveda people get relief from medicines than massage whereas in Kalari people get relief from Uzhichil and Marma Chikitsa. According to Kalari system, there are 108 marma points which are extremely vulnerable. Marma points should not be mistaken as the ‘trigger points’ described in modern orthopedics and sports sciences. (Trigger points are tender points in the muscle tissue which when stimulated, can elicit pain.) Disturbances to the Marma points can cause severe pain, deformity and even death. Depending on the degree of trauma to these points, the after effects may vary. The first aid for trauma to Marma points should be sought from a Kalari Master as early as possible, since delay in treatment can severely worsen the condition.
Anatomically speaking, a severe trauma caused by external forces can cause internal bleeding due to rupture of blood vessels which is called hemorrhage. This causes a marked decrease in blood supply to the part affected. As a result, supply of oxygen and necessary nutrients are decreased. This leads to enormous cell death. Accumulation of dead cells can lead to a condition called sepsis. It then spreads along with blood to lungs causing pneumonia, septicaemia then to brain, causing meningitis. The Gurukkal (Kalari master) performs Marma treatment with spiritual thoughts, blessings from God and Masters and with mental power. He helps the person to find relief from ailments like severe joint pain, back ache, disc prolapse and other injuries by manipulating the Marma points. A perfect knowledge of the muscle system, nervous and circulatory system and bone structure is necessary for performing Marma treatment. While performing Kalari Marma Massage, the Gurukkal provides deep emphasis on the presence of Marma points within the part massaged.

Kalari Marma massage has its effects on Lymphatic drainage system. Movements to the skeletal muscles cause contractions to the intrinsic muscles of lymph vessels, thereby promoting the flow of lymph. Lymph is the medium of transport for harmful waste products and also the substances that are responsible for immunity. Thus Kalari Marma massage helps in fast removal of harmful waste from the body, reduces oedema and also enhances immunity. Kalari Marma massage provides a cleansing effect to the body. It purifies blood and also reduces skin diseases. It also helps to improve muscle function, venous drainage, and nervous system of the body. Kalari Marma massage influences the breathing
- Ganapati is at the base of the puttara who gives initiating power.
- On the second step is Bhumi of the Bhumi Sakti or Parvati who gives the power of patience of the earth.
- On the third step is the Vishnu who gives Agnisakti or commanding power.
- On the fourth step is lightning.
- On the fifth step are the power and blessings of the guru.
- On the sixth step is Kali in her raudra aspect.
- At the seventh step is the power of voice/sound.

[Imaginary to make the student focused and devotional]

**Figure 3.1**

The location of the deities of C.V.N.Kalari, Thiruvananthapuram

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kanni mula (South-west corner)</th>
<th>western wall</th>
<th>north-west corner</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3 (weapons)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 south-east corner</td>
<td>Eastern steps</td>
<td>6 North-east corner</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key:
pattern, thereby inducing a reliable respiratory mechanism. This in turn imparts its effects in sleep disorders and also in psychotic individuals.

Lack of internal medicine is one of the greatest highlights of Kalari marma massage. Even though, it helps to improve the immunity, strength, agility and endurance of both external and internal body parts. Kalari Marma massage enhances the flow of life gas; oxygen, thereby rectifying the irregularities in breathing pattern. By maintaining a healthy blood circulation, it helps to clean the toxic waste products accumulated within the body through outlets like breath, sweat, stool and urine.

Even healthy individuals, who are devoid of any potential diseases, can undergo Kalari Marma massage as a yearly fitness programme. Since the immunity system is enhanced, it helps to keep one disease free and in a state of positive health. Kalari Marma massage has proved to provide an overall relaxation effect and also provides rejuvenation to the cells in the body. Kalari Marma massage to whole body is performed, aiming at producing relaxation and rejuvenation to the body. A course of such type of massage, in which a single session lasts for two and a half to three hours, is enough to keep a person healthy and immune for the rest of the year. People find relief from various disorders like sprains, arthritis, back ache, disc prolapse, cervical spondylosis, neck pain as well as neurological conditions where other systems of treatment like homeopathy and modern medicine could not succeed.
3.15 Knowledge of Amrita Nila (Amrita Nila Ariyunnavane Asanakoo)

Knowledge of Amrita Nila is compulsory in Southern Kalari Marma Theory. The action and strength of the Marmas in the human body differs significantly from a thin crescent to a full moon. According to the Southern Kalari system one can become a Guru only if he knows Amrita nila. It means the status of the Marma point under the influence of the moon. According to the waxing and waning of the moon different Marmas in the body of a man become more sensitive. For example on a full moon day the centre part of the top of the head is more sensitive than any other part. On the day of the new moon the thumbs of the feet become sensitive. In a fight, in short, the fighter should know which marma of the body is more vulnerable. Otherwise he cannot be a good fighter, not to speak of a Guru.

3.16 CONCLUSION

Kalari is a centre of learning and healing. All exercises in Kalari are performed in strict accordance with Vaytari or systematically developed verbal instruction given by the Guru. The Vaytari is designed specially to give strength, flexibility, endurance, reflex, nimbleness and precision. The folk performances, lasts for a long duration; sometimes for a whole day and a night. Performances like the Poorakali, Theyyam, Patayani, Mutiyettu, Parichamuttu, Kolkali and Velakali borrowed the physical training programme from Kalari practices. The Theyyam dancer has to acquire skill in the use of sword and shield.

Within Kerala, practitioners of Kalarippayattu compete with teachers of Karate, kung-fu and modern composite forms of self-defence for students as
well as the public. One mode of cultural praxis takes on new and highly divergent meanings in the heteronomous contexts within which Kalarippayattu is practised and performed, and within which its images are produced.\(^9\)

The dynamic and shifting relationship between the body, bodily practices, knowledge, power and the practitioner’s self are vital in Kalarippayattu. If a person performs the exercises correctly and have the proper grip, then you begin to ‘enjoy’ practice. If an opponent is powerful, one might become nervous; so, slowly you must develop this ability to be calm, to have mental peace. The following levels of the mind can be achieved only through Yoga- Dhyana-Meditation which is also part of Kalarippayattu.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intellect</th>
<th>Thoughts</th>
<th>Thinker</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>↑</td>
<td>↑</td>
<td>↑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mind</td>
<td>Emotions</td>
<td>Feeler</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>↑</td>
<td>↑</td>
<td>↑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Body</td>
<td>Objects</td>
<td>Perceiver</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Having awakened and raised kundalini sakthi within from the psychophysiological practice of exercises, this ‘power’ was traditionally understood to take on the furious, raudra or destructive aspect of the goddess either alone or in combination with Siva as the fearful Kala-Bhairava. Through practice itself and/or realizing special *mantram* one might attain ‘this special power of fury’. Some Kalari masters point out that the combination of self-confidence, doubtless

\(^9\) Phillip B Zarrilli, ‘when the body becomes all eyes’
heroism, and internal fury manifest in the raising of kundalini sakthi does not lead to emotional upset or anger, but rather to a state of intense concentration of energy, 'the power generated from concentration'.

10. ibid. P. 212.