CHAPTER IV
RELIGION AND RITUALS

From the very dawn of culture we see a close association between power, religion and ritual. It has been all the more so with regard to Kerala. The following account will give a picture of the complex relations among these in connection with the Kavalappara and Koodali tarawads as the institutional base.

The concepts of religion and culture are equally vague and full of complexities and ambiguities. Thoughts about religion brings to our mind ideas about god, worship, festivals, belief, rituals etc. But none of these constitute the essence of religion. Religion is to be understood as a practical system of belief in something which human beings consider to be beyond themselves and which binds them together so as to organize their life into some sort of socio religious community.  

The period under study has been noted for the ascendancy of Nambuthiri brahmins. The basis of their power and influence was their ritual and economic status. But along with these brahmins there developed powerful non-bramin landed gentry in Malabar like the Koodali family and Kavalappara Mooppil Nayar. By dint of their economic status and association

with the ruling authorities these families enjoyed considerable religious and ritual powers.

Temples have been the centre of social, economic and cultural life in medieval Kerala. This continued to be so in the colonial period also. In most case these temples under the trusteeship of the Nayar families also were the centres of life and culture in a locality. Infact this aspect is evident from the history of Koodali family and the Kavalappara.

Through the *kavus* and temples the Koodali and Kavalappara families exercised considerable influence over their respective localities. There were two main categories of shrines in Kerala, the *kshetras* and *kavus*. The first category, the *kshetras* are dedicated to the superior deities of the Hindu pantheon, Siva, Vishnu, their consorts and incarnations and to Ganapathi. The second category of *kavu* are shrines of the comparatively inferior deities like Bhagavati or Bhadrakali, Ayyappan, Vettakorumakan etc. These *kavus* were also shrines of non-brahmin gods like *Kuttichathan, Gulikan, Mundiyan* and the like. Often the *kavus* would not have roofs and they would be amidst wild trees and plants.\(^2\) This also served the purpose of preserving the equilibrium in ecology. In course of time structural temples were built in the place of old shrines. Thus the *kavus* become synonymous with the temples in Kerala.

The religious institutions, mainly the *kavus*, also furnished as recruiting centres of the agrestic slaves. The religious centres, from a very early period onwards, had acted as centres of all human activities. On certain festive occasions in these *kavus*, families of agrestic slaves offered themselves for money.\(^3\) The religious centres of the lower castes were under the control of the high caste brahmin and Nayar landlords.\(^4\)

The Koodalikavu was also the temple of *Daivathar*. The deities of the *kavu* are Bhagavati and Vettakkorumakan. The Koodali *kavu* had various kinds of rituals and occasions of celebrations like *pattu*, *kalamezhuthu*, *aratt* etc. *pattu* and *kalamezhuthu* have been common to the *kavus* of Kerala. These are ritual arts presented during festive occasions. It is presented in the *kavus* and temples mainly in the *mandala kalam* (*Vrischikam-Dhanu* of Kollam Era). In certain temples it is also called *Vrischika pattu* as it begins from *Vrischika* 1\(^{st}\) for 41 days. *kalamezhuthu* and *pattu* are conducted as an oblation in temples. *Kalamezhuthu* has been the practice of drawing the pictures of gods and goddesses without the aid of any instrument, with uncommon speed using five colours of powders.\(^5\) The colours are obtained from natural things like turmeric, leaves of *vaga*, rice flour, etc. This is a

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ritual art and consists of the drawing the figure of the deities as described in *Kesadipadha Varnana* or the description of the body from hair to feet. This art form is also called *dhooli chithra*. This art form has been there in various parts of South India. But now it is mainly confined to Kerala. It is related to the *alpana* of Bengal and *kolam* drawing of Tamilnadu. But only one colour is used in these. In colour combination *dhooli chithra* of Kerala resembles the mural paintings. Usually the *kalamezhuthu* is conducted in connection with the festivals in *devi* temples or during the period of *mandala kalamezhuthu* is conducted in the *kavus* of Ayyappa, Vettakorumakan and in the Sarppakavu during festive occasions. In certain temples *kalamezhuthu* is conducted on almost all days. After the completion of the *kalam* (the picture), there will be a *pooja* and the recitation of song, praising the deity whose picture is drawn.

There will be *kalamezhuthu* in connection with ritual arts like *thiyattam, kolamthullal, sarppamthullal, mudiyattam* etc.⁶

The drawing of the *kalam* will be started with meditation infront of a lighted stand lamp. The *kalam* will be on the smooth surface inside the temple near the *balikkalpura*. Sometimes it will be on the temporary space selected for the same. On this space a *panthal* will be built. Whether it is in the *panthal* or inside the temple, there will be a ceiling of fresh cloth decorated with tender coconut leaves and flowers. On the eastern corner of the *panthal*

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⁶ *Ibid*
a 'padnam' will be drawn for propiating Ganapathi. A sword believed to be the representation of the sword in the hands of Bhagavati will be placed on a tripod on which a red cloth will be spread. A coconut also will be placed near it as a symbol of Ganapathi. Rice and paddy along with the bunch of coconut flower or arecanut flower also will be placed there. Usually the kalam will be 9 feet long and 7 feet wide or 5 feet long and 3½ feet wide. There will be an assistant for the man who draws the kalam. As noted above natural powders are used for drawing the picture. For black the charcoal of the paddy husk is used. For yellow turmeric powder and for white rice powder are used. By adding lime to turmeric red colour is created. The powder of the nenmeni vaga (Acacia Adoratissima) leaf is used for green. The drawing of the picture will start from the face. First an outline will be drawn. Then it will be filled with powder. The powder will be taken in the palm and make it befall through the space in between the fore finger and middle finger. The community of Kurup is specialised in kalamezhuthu. The sense of colour in kalamezhuthu is very attractive. The pattu will be along with the beating of Chenda, Elathalam and Nanthuni. The last rite in the kalamezhuthu is the kalamayikkal or wiping out of the kalam. It will be wiped out using the

8 Venu G. op.cit.
9 S. Guptan Nair, op.cit, p. 488.
flower of arecanut. The *kalam* will be erased from its feet. The face of the deity must not be trampled.

In the Koodalikavu the *kalampattu* used to be conducted in the month of *Vrischikam*. There are documentary evidences for the details of the expenditure incurred in for this.\(^{10}\) The *kalamezhuthu pattu* needed four *nazhi* of raw rice, 12 *konghazhi* of rice for making rice powder, five *nazhi* of rice for making *thanniramirth* or sweet cake etc, along with the rice used for the ritualistic purposes like *ashtamangalyam* offerings to Ganapathi etc. Altogether a large quantity of rice was needed which included the remuneration in rice to the *tantri* and the man who drew the *kalam*. A measure of ghee, curd and sandal at an expense of rupees six *panam* also was needed for it.\(^{11}\)

Another important ritual and festive occasion in the Koodali bhagavati temple has been the *arattu*. Certain documents in the *Koodali Granthavari* deal with the expenses incurred in the *arrattu* of Koodalikavu.\(^{12}\) It includes the remuneration to various persons involved in it in terms of rice, rice needed for *nivedyam*, *ashtamangalyam* etc; and coconut needed for the rituals, oil for lightening lamps etc. The *dakshina* to the Nambuthiries, Embranthiries and

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\(^{11}\) *Ibid*.

Nambidi were given in *panam*. The remuneration to komaram or the oracle, to Marar, or the drummer, the fire worker, Menoki, the Nayar pilots, Vannan and the like also were in term of *panam*.\(^{13}\) The pooram in the temple also used to be celebrated in a grand manner.

After the pooram the bhandaram will be opened and collected in the presence of the Koodali Nambiars, Menokkies and the like. It is the Kandoth Nambiar who opens and counts it in the presence of the Koodali Nambiars, Menokkies and the like. Bhandaram will be locked and sealed by the Kunnath Nambiar. The keys will be kept by the Menokki. The money in the bhandaram will be received by the Kunnath Nambiar and will be given to the Koodali Nambiar. There is a reference to the ordeal of kaimukku\(^{14}\) in the documents connected with the opening of bhandaram. The quantity of ghee needed for the same in specified.\(^ {15}\)

The performance of the cult of teyyam in the Koodalikavu also has been famous. Teyyam is the corrupt form of the word daivam or god and teyyattam literally means the dance of god.\(^ {16}\) The performer in teyyam cult is believed to be the personification of the popular deity. Teyyam has been the

\(^{13}\) *Ibid.*

\(^{14}\) Kaimukku is a trial by ordeal. For details see P. Bhaskaranunni, *Pathompatham Nootantile Keralam* (1988), Kottayam, 2000, p. 746.


\(^{16}\) A. Sreedhara Menon, *Social and Cultural History of Kerala*, New Delhi, 1979, p.146.
admonisher and protector of the various communities of peoples in North Kerala. He gives expression to the mind and the actions of the deity in the form of measured steps and rhythmic dances.

*Teyyam* is a very vigorous dance in which the performer wears resplendent costumes and towering head gear (*mudi*). The rhythmic beatings of a number of *chendas* (drum) and *kuzhals* (pipe) will add to the supernatural character of the dance. The performers of the *teyyam* cult belong to the caste of *Vannans* and *Malayans.* The performance of the *teyyam* in the *kavu* added to the prestige of the Koodali family.

In Northern Kerala *teyyam* has been an indispensable part of the religious life of the rural people. This art form has been co-ordinating almost all castes and sections of Hindu society as a lively form of worship with centuries old traditions practices and rituals. The *teyyam* has been a ritual dance with remarkable performance owing to many a factor. It co-ordinates various group of people and their rituals and practices. As such it has been a symbol of unity among various sections of the society.

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18 For details regarding *Teyyam* see K.K.N. Kurup, *The Cult of Teyyam and Hero Worship in Kerala*, University of Calicut, 1973, p.54.
As noted above the persons belonging to the community of Malayan, Vannan, Velan, Coppalan, Mavilan, Munnuttuvan, Anjuttuvan etc. belonging to the lowest strata of the society are performing the art form of teyyam. They were segregated by the savarnas or the high caste people. But when these persons come in the attire of teyyam and dance with all the grandeur the members of the same higher caste bow before them and worship them. At least for the time being it gave these sections of lower caste a self confidence. Indeed the concept of bhakthi has been used as a safety valve for the unrest and dissatisfaction arising from the ups and downs in the society.

The teyyam performers had only occasional employment. The performer was attached to the shrines in which he was to perform teyyam. It was his 'right'. But actually it was a bonded labour. Through the hereditary right of performing teyyam, he was fulfilling a social obligation.

It was believed that such performance would make it possible to get rid of bad times from the families and the same would invest the tarawad with peace and prosperity. Teyyams were conducted for general agrarian prosperity and the public good. The performance of the kavu added to the prestige of the Koodali family. There has been the practice of performing the

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21 Ibid, p.3.
23 M.V. Vishnu Nambuthiri, op.cit, pp. 5-6.
teyyam of the dead heroes or heroic karanavars in the family. The teyyam of Koodali Veeran, associated with the Koodali family is performed even today.24 This Koodali Veeran was Ramar Kutty the Manager of karanavar, Koran Gurikkalachan. The legend associated with Koodali Veeran is connected the Mysorean invasion. While the Mysorean army was approaching Koodali, Koran Gurikkalachan sent his family members to a place of safety. He wanted the prominent persons associated with the tarawad to escape and wanted his manager Ramar Kutty to shoot him so that he can escape from the humiliation of being captured by the enemy. Ramar Kutty said that he would offer his life instead of killing the karanavar and that he would defend the karanavar and the invader could not touch him. But Ramar Kutty was forced to obey the order of his master. He shot him dead and cremated the body with customary honors. Then, like an oracle with the sword and shield of the karanavar he rushed to the camp of the Mysorean army. Within seconds he killed six or seven soldiers in the enemy camp. But he was soon cut in to pieces by the Mysorean forces. It is in order to commomerate the sacrifice of the Ramar Kutty that in his tarawad at Nittur the Koodali Veeran teyyam is performed.25

25 Ibid.
Tira has been another ritual art regularly performed in the Koodali 
tarawad. But once it ended abruptly and it was renewed in 1988. Certain 
documents connected with this are kept in the Koodali tarawad.26 Certain 
private persons traditionally connected with the tira were invited for the 
revived tira Churiyil Kunhi Raman Komaram and Mundayadan Komaram 
were invited. The persons who were obliged to give various articles needed 
for the tira and enjoyed the right for the same traditionally also were invited. 
Pantham, Kalasam, weapons, crowns etc; were needed for the performance of 
the tira. Articles like oil, sugarcane, lemon, coconut, arecanut, betel leaf, 
tender coconut leaves etc., were also needed for it.27 Along with the tira there 
would be a feast also. The family account book of Koodali tarawad gives 
details of the expenses incurred in for supplying coconut oil, gingelly oil etc; 
for the tira. The Panikkar and Peruvannans who performed the tira were 
given remuneration along with rice and items for the feast. The performers 
were given Rs. 300/- (Rupees three hundred only.)28

Tira adiyantiram was performed both at day and night. Like the 
teyyam performance in the Koodali temple, the tira adiyantiram in the 
tarawad also attracted almost at the temple in the locality. The festival in the 
Koodali tarawad was called arattu. Document No.26 section E of Koodali  

26 Intimation letter dated 10.9.87 to the performer of tira in the Koodali Family 
27 Ibid. 
Granthavari deals with the expenses incurred in the arattu of the Koodali kavu. The persons intimately connected with the arattu were given remuneration in terms of rice.

The festival in Koodali temple is from Makaram 12 to 15. It starts with the kalari pooja. The kalari pooja will be conducted by a member of the tarawad along with the trainer in the kalari. A cock sacrifice will be offered to Bhadrakali on the 13th day the tira and it will reach its zenith next day. The tiras of Bhairavan, Sasthappan, Karuval, Occhitta, and Raktha Chamundi - the Pancha murthis are performed in tiras. On 15th the kolams of Kutty Sasthappan, Thekkam Kariyathan, Vettakorumakan, Vasurimala, Sular Dhantan, Ghanta Karnan and the like will be introduced and performed. The kolam of Ghantakarnan is performed by munnuttan and the others by the Malayans and Peruvannans. The hereditary rights of Komaram and Kalasam are to the Thiyya community. The occupational groups of carpenter, blacksmith etc. have privileges and participation in the tira. The Koodali Veeran teyyam also will be performed at Nittur.\(^{29}\)

In 1990 the Koodali family had 150 acres of undivided family property and 500 members. During 1990s atleast Rs. 40000/- (Rupees forty thousand only) were needed for the expenses of the utsavam every year. But this entire expense was met by the members of the family without accepting contribution

\(^{29}\) Chilla Magazine, Kannur, April 1990, pp. 10-11.
from the public. The *karanavar* continues to be unquestioned in connection with this also.\textsuperscript{30} According to document No. 26 section E of *Koodali Granthavari* a large quantity of rice, coconut oil etc., were needed for the *arattu*, in connection with the *utsavam* the bulk of which were remuneration in kind to the persons involved in the *arattu* apart from monitory payment to all of them.\textsuperscript{31}

The following tables give the details of the expenses incurred in an *arattu*.

\textsuperscript{30} *Ibid.* p. 11.

Table 1

Remuneration in kind

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Measure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rice for Kazhakakaran</td>
<td>3 Kongazhi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rice for Maran</td>
<td>15¼ Konghazhi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rice for Vallichan</td>
<td>35 Nazhi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rice for Komaram</td>
<td>3 Konghazhi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rice for Ashtamangalyum</td>
<td>4 Nazhi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rice for Nivedhyum</td>
<td>4 Nazhi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rice for Embranthiri</td>
<td>8 Kongazhi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rice for Kazhakkaran</td>
<td>3 Kongazhi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rice for Vannathan</td>
<td>13¾ Kongazhi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rice for Kaniyan</td>
<td>4 Kongazhi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rice for Komaram</td>
<td>3 Kongazhi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marumavum Parayunnavark</td>
<td>3 Kongazhi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of coconut needed for Kaikkolan</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'' Pallichan</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'' Eriyan</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rice needed for arattu Aramnambidi</td>
<td>25 Nazhi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rice for Embranthiri</td>
<td>4 Kongazhi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quantity of coconut oil for embranthiri</td>
<td>Valiya Changalavattom 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For Thirumumpu</td>
<td>Cheriya Changalavattom 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For Kazhakakkaran</td>
<td>Cheriya Changalavattom 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peruvannann</td>
<td>Cheriya Changalavattom ½</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vallichan</td>
<td>Cheriya Changalavattom 28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 2

**Remuneration in Cash (in panam)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Money in panam</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Embranthiri</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Varier</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marar</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vannathan</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trichandhanam</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chenniyar</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ashtamangalyam</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vallichan and Kaikollar</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lamp</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nambidi</td>
<td>10½</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For lamp</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Embran</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Varier</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thazhathuveedu</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ashtamangalyam</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaikollar and Vallichan</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rice for the sixth day</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ashtamangalum</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maruvum Parayunnavark Dakshina</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thirumumbilekke dakshina</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Embranthiri</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adippatharamar</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thazhathu Veedu</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For the four nephew Nambiar</td>
<td>3 panam to each</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vannathan</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marar</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vedikkaran</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aram Nambidi</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Embranthiri</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teyyampaddike</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item</td>
<td>Money in panam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>drummer</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maruvum Parayunnavark</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agathey Karuvathine</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Menokki</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pilot Nayar</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Komaram</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maravithale</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vannathan</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Munnuttan</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


There is a *kalari* attached to the temple of Daivathar. *Kalari* has been a centre of martial arts and the *karanavar* of the family used the *kalari* and shrine attached to it for maintaining his dominant position in the society. These *kalaries* were for imparting training in martial arts to the Nayar youths. They were military training centres. After the completion of training in such *karlaries*, the soldier would be admitted to the local militia.32 The term *kalari* originated from the Sanskrit word *khaloorika* meaning a military training ground.33 In *kalaries* give physical training in various forms of martial arts to nayar youths were imparted. This was for keeping the martial spirit of Nayars intact. This kind of physical training given in the *kalaries* has been a privilege of the Nayar caste. Northern Kerala have been famous for the

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32 For details regarding *kalari* see S. Guptan Nair (ed.), *op.cit*, p. 488-490.
33 M.T. Narayanan, *Agrarian Relations in Late Medieval Malabar*, New Delhi, 2003, p.68.
heroic deeds undertaken by persons of great valour who got training in the kalari.\textsuperscript{34} During the early historical epoch there were kalaries in each desam. They were in connection with the devi temples. The person in charge of teaching in the kalari was called Kurup or Panikkar. Usually the students were enrolled in the kalari at the age of seven. The most important preparation for each student has been the kachakettu and massaging. The teacher was called asan who made the pupil proficient in Adi, thada, Chuvaduveppu etc. In big kalaries there will be another teacher called padavicharippukar who were responsible for such training. There were two kinds of kalaries the Nalppatheeradi kalari and Arupatheeradi kalari. Each kalari was atleast six meter long and 4.5 meter wide. On the floor there will be a pit of 1.8 meter deep. This pit was meant for physical training. The base of the pit will be polished with mud for training. The student had to come down to this pit.\textsuperscript{35} Before the beginning of the training the students will give dakshina consisting of panam, kazcha, betel leaf and arecanut to the guru. During the period of training the students and teachers will have only arakacha or half dress. It will take atleast five years to complete the training.\textsuperscript{36} Thus each kara has one or two kalaries and trained youths. The militia of the King consisted of the trained men from these kalaries.\textsuperscript{37} With

\textsuperscript{34} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{35} S. Guptan Nair (ed), \textit{op.cit}, Vol. IV, p. 488.
\textsuperscript{36} Ibid, p. 488.
\textsuperscript{37} Ibid.
the advent of colonialism the *kalaries* declined. *Kalaries* were not competent
even to use the gun powder and guns of the west. Trained persons were
sometimes employed for extracting feudal dues from cultivating groups.
*Vadakkan Pattukal* include songs depicting the employment of the soldiers for
collecting the areas of the rent. The *song Ambadi* and the *Raja* of Pallayi
kotta shows such efforts at realising revenue.\(^{38}\) As in pre-capitalist societies
the land owning groups had even used force for realising the revenue. The
*kalaries* also have been a symbol of allegiance. At the time of important
functions in the *kalari* of a *tarawad*, it was customary to call the *naduvazhis*
and others to show their allegiance.\(^{39}\) This is proof for the fact that the
*tarawads* functioned as subordinate agencies of the superior political
authority.\(^{40}\) The *Vadakkan Pattukal* include songs showing this kind of
subordination. Aromal Chekavar hero of a vadakkan pattu says that at the
time of *pooja* in the *kalari* the *naduvazhis* and *desavazhis* must participate in
it.\(^{41}\) In course of time the *kalaries* declined. Still the old buildings of the
*kalari* along with the temples are seen in many parts of Kerala. There are
place names like *padanilangal* and *padanayarkulangara* which are
reminiscent of many institutions of *kalari* in places like *Onattukara*,

\(^{39}\) M.T. Narayanan, *op.cit*, p.68.
\(^{40}\) *Ibid*.
Karappuram, Kuttanadu, Kozhikode, Tulunadu, Kadathanadu etc. Attached to the Koodalikavu, there is a kalari. The karanavar of Koodali or the Gurikkalachan was the head of the kalari also.

Even after the decline of kalari system, the kalari and its temple are maintained in the Koodali tarawad for ritual purposes. One Nambiar is appointed for lightening the kalarivilakku (lamp in the kalari) daily. At present Sreenivasan Nambiar is appointed for this purpose. Apart from the kalari Bhagavati and Koodali Daivathar there is a deity installed in a permanent room at Koodali Thazhathu Veedu. This deity is the Uchitta Bhagavti. There is a permanent lamp in this room. The kalari Bhagavti also had a velichappadu or oracle. This Velichappadu also would address Koodali karanavar as Adiyatheruthu or Yeshmanan etc. At the time of giving oracles the Velichappadu would address the karanavar as karthavu and senior female member as Akathuttu karthavu. The kalari Velichappadu when he was 'possessed', and dancing would first address the karanavars.

The temple acted as an administrator of justice and as the custodian of temple the Koodali family enjoyed this prestigious position. Oil ordeal had been observed in this temple to prove guilt. In the Koodali Granthavari there

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42 S. Guptan Nair (ed.), *op.cit*, p.489.
43 Interview with K.T. Kunhikrishnan Nambiar, Komath, a senior member of Koodali tarawad, dt. 12.10.2009.
44 *Ibid*.
45 Interview with Meledathu Kumaran Velichappadu, Koodali, dt. 6.4.2009.
is a document related to the case in which a particular property of a family was attached as a compensation for an offence committed by one of its members.\textsuperscript{46} Here that piece of land was given as a gift to Koodalikavu. This was like a forced gift. Such practices of forced gift were prevalent in the pre-colonial period in Malabar. In all ages donations to temples and other religious institutions have been a matter of prestige. Donations to temples increased the social status of individuals.

As the custodian of the temple the Koodali family played a leading role in the cultural life of the locality. Here it was like other Nayar feudal families of Malabar like the Kavalappara Nayar family of South Malabar. Through the rituals and festivals of the temples these feudal families themselves were elevated to the pivot of the cultural life.

The presence of the \textit{karanavar} or the head of the family of Koodali \textit{tarawad} was indispensable for many a ritual in the temple. This is best seen in the \textit{kalamezhethu} ritual in the temple. In fact, the trustee of the Koodalikavu, the \textit{Gurikkalachan} controlled the social and religious affairs of the locality.\textsuperscript{47} The performance of the \textit{teyyam} cult in the Koodalikavu is famous. The patronage of \textit{teyyam} by the Koodalikavu can be compared to

\textsuperscript{46} K.K.N. Kurup (ed.), \textit{Koodali Granthavari, op.cit}, Document No. 53, Section B.

that of the *Tholpavakuthu* or the shadow puppet play in the Aryankavu temple under the trusteeship of Kavalappara Nayar family.\(^{48}\)

Temples in Kerala have been the centre for the re-distribution of resources. They had important economic functions. They served as banks also.\(^{49}\) The Koodali family has been the trustee of the temple and in that position it had control over the landed property of the temple. There are reasons to believe that originally the Koodali family was one among the trustees. In course of time it became the sole proprietor of the shrine.\(^{50}\)

The oldest document related to the Koodalikavu is the *Koodali Granthavari* itself and it is related to the economic functions.\(^{51}\) It is about the credit of 800 *Cannanore Puthiya Panam*, a coin in Malabar to one Neithalacherry Narayanamadhan at the rate of 5%.\(^{52}\) It seems that for about 300 years there was no change in this rate of interest. Every transaction related with the temple was recorded in writing by the *Nizhal Menoki* the accountant of the family. There are a number of documents in the *Koodali Granthavari* related to the mortgage of land. It was the wet land suited to paddy cultivation that was more coveted than dry lands. Wet lands used to be

\(^{48}\) *Ibid.*


\(^{50}\) K.K.N. Kurup (ed.), *Koodali Granthavari, op.cit*, p. xi.


\(^{52}\) *Ibid*. 
mortgaged to the temple for particular amounts of money. Until such lands were redeemed the ownership of such lands would be with the temple and as the custodian of the temple, with the Koodali family. Such lands would be given back to the tenants for cultivation to who would pay rent to the temple. In the case of Koodalikavu mortgaged lands do not seem to have been redeemed for centuries, with the effect that such lands were like those under absolute ownership.\(^{53}\)

Interest in terms of paddy was called *Neppalisa*. The rate of *Neppalisa* also was 5% which also remained constant for about three centuries. Later it was raised to 10%. The surplus realised as rent made the temple a profitable financier who accumulated large quantity of paddy for further re-distribution. Here the *kavu* was like a feudal lord. In fact the cultivable lands were almost monopolized by a few feudal families of medieval Kerala.\(^{54}\) There were litigations for the ownership of the village temples in Koodali by other feudal families related to it. But the claims of these families were defeated.\(^{55}\)

As the custodian of the local *kavu*, the Koodali family influenced the social and economic life of the area. An attempt to cumulate political, economic and religious power in one and the same hand can be noted here. Apart from being a centre of worship, art and culture, the *kavus* had also


\(^{54}\) *Ibid.*

\(^{55}\) *Ibid*, p. xiii.
functioned as recruiting centres of the agrestic slaves. In the Madayikavu the slaves belonging to various castes assembled at the time of *pooram* festival. Folk songs related to the Madayikavu show that people from different religious came to this *kavu* to procure agrestic slaves.\(^{56}\)

The *kavus* and temples functioned as institutional base for the establishment and consolidation of the dominance of their custodians over rural people. Same was the case with the *desavazhi* or the ruler of the *desam*.\(^{57}\) As noted above there were litigations for the ownership of the Koodali temple by other feudal families related to it. But the claims of these families were defeated. There was the dispute between the Koodali family and *Maniyur Kazhakam* on the *janmam* right of a property. The elders settled the situation. If the *janmam* was with the Koodalikavu, it should pay hundred *panam* to Maniyur family and its *kavu*. If the *janmam* was with Maniyur, it was to give 800 *panam* to Koodali.\(^{58}\) It is to be noted that here property is the same but the payment varies. This variation is according to the status of the proprietor. It was not the court of law that settled the affair, but the elders.

The installation ceremony of the *karanavar* of Koodali family, is called *Padathilirikkal*. On this occasion the head of the family or the *karanavar* will be made sit on his official chair. All the members the family were expected to

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\(^{56}\) M.T. Narayanan, *op.cit*, p. 133.


\(^{58}\) K.K.N. Kurup (ed.), *Koodali Granthavari, op.cit*, Document No. 14, Section B.
be present on the occasion. There are a series of rituals connected with the death of karana
cars. There is a separate cremation ground for the members of the family. After the cremation of the karana
car the bones will collected and will be kept beneath a jack tree in the compound of the Koodali tarawad. This jack tree is called Asthi plavu. It is believed that there is no need of going to places like Tirunelli or Tirunavaya for further rites if the bones are placed beneath the Asthi plavu.

The Koodali family maintained a thannirpanthal. This was for serving the way farers who were given Sambharam freely from here. This thannirpanthal has been near the entrance of the present Koodali high school. One Kannan Nambiar used to distribute Sambharam from here for a long time. It has been helpful for the students also.

The Kavalappara Nayar had many temples under his control. As the naduvazhi the Moopil Nayar has both rights and obligations in connection with them. If the Koodali family maintained their rituals through the temple of Daivathar, the Kavalappara enjoyed such status over a number of temples.

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59 Interview with K.T. Kunhikrishnan Nambiar, present karana
car of Koodali tarawad, on 10.6.2008.
60 Ibid.
At the heights of its power the Kavalappara Moopil Nayar had control over 25 temples. Of these five where in the territory of Cochin. Some of these temples were under the exclusive control of the family and these were the temples of Eruppe thevar and Trikkangode. Temples of Eruppe, Aryankavu and Anthimahakalankavu were the most prominent ones. The important ceremonies in connection with these temples were Utsavam, Varam, Pooram, Kalamezhuthupattu, Darikavadham pattu and Talappoli.

The most famous temples under the control of Kavalappara family were those of Eruppe, Aryankavu and Anthimahakalankavu. The temple of Eruppe about a hundred metres off the Kavalappara Kottaram was dedicated to Lord Siva. The Aryankavu temple is a Bhagavati temple at Aryankavu. The Anthimahalakalankavu is at Kulapully near Shornur. Originally the number of Kalangals or temples of the Kavalappara Swaroopam in the Valluvanad and Palaghat taluks was eighteen. Attached to these kalam there were temples over which the Kavalappara family had supervisory powers. Among these were the temple of Krishna at Pazhampalakode, Kunnekkatkavu at Thennilapuram, Anthimahakalankavu at Chelakkara, etc. The Moopil

62 K.K.N. Kurup (ed.), Kavalappara Papers, op.cit, p. XL.
63 Ibid.
64 Certified copy of the deposition of Appukuttan Unni alias Karakkat Moopil Nayar, DW 14, OS No.34 of 1919, Sub Court, Ottapalam, dt 1-10-1922.
65 Ibid.
66 Letter of Appunni Nayar, Moopil Nayar of Kavalappara to Professor K.K.N. Kurup dt 4-11-1982.
Nayar is designated as Vadakkum Nambidi (Nambidi of North) in connection with the Chelakkara temple. The title Thekkum Nambidi or the Nambidi of South is of the Maharaja of Cochin. It is to be noted that it is with the Raja of Cochin that the Kavalappara Mooppil Nayar shared this title. The Vadakkum Nambidi and Thekkum Nambidi used to conduct the annual *Vela* in the Anthimahakalankavu in alternate years in rotation. This arrangement continued until the time of Kochunni Mooppil Nayar. There is no separate property attached to Eruppe temple and the expenses in connection with the temple are part of the expenses of the Kavalappara family. In 1922 the annual expense was about Rs.1000 (Rupees thousand only). The *Utsavam* is the most important celebration of the Eruppe temple and there will be an *arattu* on the 8th day since the beginning of the *Utsavam*. On 7th day of the *Utsavam* there is a *Pallivetta* which is a symbolic ritual of royal hunt. *Pallivetta* included a procession of about hundred metres. On the fifth and sixth days of the *Utsavam* hundreds of people used to assemble in the temple premises. For rituals connected with the festivals of temples like Aryankavu and Eruppe, the physical presence of the Mooppil Nayar was indispensable.

The power and influence of the Kavalappara family grew more in connection with the festival of Eruppe temple. The mock fight between two

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69 Interview with Advocate Mohan Kumar, Receiver of Kavalappara Estate, on 20.10.2008.
large wooden horses or the *kuthirakettu* as it is known is as important item in this festival. This mock fight is in the form of competition between two areas of Eruppe. Large decorated wooden horses will be carried by the young men of each area and brought to the temple accompanied by a procession. The people of two areas will act as factions. These two areas are Karakkat and Kavalappara and they will have their own horses. It will be the healthiest young men who make a show of strength. This is reminiscent of the occasion when young men were selected for military training. At the temple of Eruppe, in connection with the *thalappoli* in the month of May oracles belonging to the Paraya caste had certain privileges. This is continuing even today.

The expenses of the *utsavam* are met by the Mooppil Nayar. The public would not contribute towards it. Apart from this *utsavam* there is a *varam* called *Chakkavaram* in this temple. On the day of *Ashtami Rohini* the birth day of Lord Krishna there is another celebration.

The Aryankavu temple also doesn't have any separate property. The accounts of the temple formed part of the *tarawad* accounts. The temple is about two furlongs away from the *Kavalappara Kottaram*. It is a *kavu* and the idol of *bhaghavati* is exposed to nature. In front of the temples there is a *mughamandapam*. There is no *nalambalam*.

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70 D.W. 14, in O.S. No. 34 of 1919, Sub Court, Ottapalam, dt. 1.10.1922, *op.cit.*
The most important celebration in the temple is the *Pooram* in the month of *Meenam* (March-April). Before the *Pooram* there will be a *Vela* of five days. During the *Mandalam* period there will be a *kalamezhuthu pattu* and a *Darikavadham pattu*. The expenses of the *kalamezhuthu pattu* is met by the *tarawad* and that of the *Darikavadham pattu* by the public. There will be *thalappoli* at the end of *mandalam* and the expenses of this also are met by the *tarawad*. In the month of *Kanni* (September-October) also there will be a *thalappoli*. Women will take *thalam* in this festival.\(^{72}\)

The *thalappoli* at Aryankavu temple is a festival of the locality as a whole. As at Eruppe the *kuthirakettu* is an important item of celebration as at Aryankavu also. Important *kavus* had its own *thattkam* which may be explained as the area of ritual jurisdiction. As in the case of human beings gods and goddesses also are supposed to have relations like sisters, brothers, fathers, mothers etc. It is reflected in the rituals in connection with the annual festivals in temples. The Anthimahakalankavu of Koonathara and Kulapully are thus related to the Aryankavu temple.\(^{73}\) From the Anthimahakalankavu the bhaghavati of Aryankavu is brought in procession in connection with festivals.

\(^{72}\) *Ibid.*

On the eve of the festival horses from the different desams of the thattakam of Aryankavu would come to the Aryankavu temple. These horses are the Pannayur horse, Thrangali horse, Mannannur horse, Kavalappara horse, Karakkat horse, Shornur horse, Thrangali desam horse, two Koonathara horses, Velliyad horse, Corottur horse and the Mundayakodichi horse. Horse is the symbol of Kavalappara. Different communities have rights and privileges in connection with these artificial horses of Kavalappara. The chief of the Thandan family of the desam will give the bamboo and the hey needed for the construction of the horses. Cloth will be supplied by the Mannan. The Thandettan Nayar, the Palanquin bearer of Kavalappara also has privileges connected with this.

Festivals in temples had their political phase also. In connection with the kuthirakettu at the Aryankavu, the chiefs of each community in the desam also will be identified. It is indirectly the practice of recognizing the chiefs of each community of each desam. The festival is also an occasion for proclaiming the prominence of the Kavalappara Nayar in the area. The Mooppil Nayar will have its Nilapadu or seat in a particular venue at the festival. There before the Mooppil Nayar the horses and the bullocks will be played as an act of acknowledging the supremacy of the Mooppil Nayar. The

\[74\] Ibid.
cherumars will have kalavela along with this and they would ensure their right for ploughing on this occasion.\textsuperscript{75}

The kuthiravaravu or the advent of horses and Velavaravu or the advent of bullocks are symbols of the centralisation of power. This power was centred on kavus. Here we are not seeing the influence of the brahmins. In the thattakam of Kavalappara there is no powerful brahmin village. The brahmin villages of Ongallur (Isana mangalam) was on the boundary of the realm of Kavalappara.\textsuperscript{76} Among the pooram horses that come to Aryankavu is the one that belongs to Melarkkot. Melarkkot is a branch or tavazhi of Kavalappara.

As part of the festivals in connection with the ceremonies of the annual festival of the Aryankavu temple Tolpavakuthu is staged. Tolpavakuthu is a shadow puppet play and has been an important art form in certain parts of Kerala. The Kavalappara family has been the most important patron of this art. Tolpavakuthu shows legacy of the cultural contact between Tamilnadu and Kerala. The theme is the story of Ramayana of Kambar, the great Tamil poet. Puppet play is performed in order to propitiate goddess bhadrakali in the Aryankavu temple.\textsuperscript{77} There are legends regarding the staging of

\textsuperscript{75} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{76} Ibid.
puppetry in AryanKavu and near by temples and they are related to the puranic Kali-Darika Story. Once upon a time there was a very powerful and wicked demon called Darika. He used to harass and torment everyone without distinction. Even gods were not spared. In order to destroy him Lord Siva created goddess Bhadrakali from his third eye. Bhadrakali came to have confrontation with Darika. In the battle that followed he was killed. The fight between Bhadrakali and Darika took place at the same time when the Rama-Ravana battle was going on. Bhadrakali thus missed the thrill of witnessing Ravana's end. In order to make up for this, the encounter between Rama and Ravana is re-created for her at least once in every year through Pavakutту. In Kerala the Puppets are modelled after Kathakali character.

Eventhough the story enacted in the Tolpavakuthu is that of Ramayana, the full story of Ramayana will be enacted only in the Aryan Kavu temple. It is a symbol of the ritual superiority of Kavalappara family over other subordinate or lesser feudal families in the area. The Kavalappara family had the material wealth for supporting this art form and artists. Leather puppetry is a theatrical art and will be staged in a Kuthumadam.

80 This Kuthumadam is different form the traditional Kuthambalam of Kerala. In the Kuthamabalam there will be space for the spectators also. But in leather puppetry the spectators will be sitting outside the Kuthumadam.
Leather puppetry shows mixed culture of Tamil and Malayalam. Just before the beginning of this play there will be a *Kelikottu* or announcement of the beginning of the play. This *Kelikottu* is a band music using instruments of *Chenda*, *Madhalam*, and *Elathalam*, with other traditional musical instruments of Kerala. Following this there will be a *Ganapathi Pooja, Vandhanasloka* for saluting Ganapathi, Saraswathi and Narayana, *Vanakkam* or salutation performed by children characters or the *Pattupavakali* and salutation to the teachers and worship of gods by puppets. Following this there will be an oration called *Akavan*. Following this, the theme of the play will be explained.

The expenses of the play of each day would be borne by persons or families as an offering to the temple. There will be salutation to the persons who conduct the play. This is called *Sadyavazhthal*. The *Kuthumadam* usually 42 feet long and 12 feet wide and 12 feet high itself shows artistic and scientific skill. It is like the stage part of an open air theatre with the spectators squatting in the front. The three sides of the stage will be closed and will be completely drapped in front, the upper part in white and lower in black curtain. *Kuthumadam* will be outside the temple. At the time when temple entry was not allowed to the members of the lower caste, this

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81 Chummar Choondal, *op.cit*, p.141.
82 *Ibid*.
facilitated people of all castes to come and see the performance. The figurins of puppets are attached behind the white screen and held them in position by fixing them with pins. Below the figures and just above the black curtain is arranged a long row of lamps. The light employed are in coconut shells fixed in a long bamboo. The light of the lamps brights up the white screen on which the puppets are disposed. Usually the Tholpavakuthu would be from 11 o’clock in the night to the dawn. In temples other than Aryankavu in the locality the puppetry will be staged for 14 days and in such temples the story will begin from Pancavati only. But in the Aryankavu under Kavalappara as noted above the play will be for 21 days and the full story from the birth of Sree Rama to the coronation will be enacted.84 This has been a privilege and monopoly of the Kavalappara family. It has not been questioned. The supremacy enjoyed by Kavalappara family continues even after the decline of the family as a feudal landlord. The performance of this art form is a token of the ritual status of the ruling family of Kavalappara. The physical presence of certain members of the family in the temple, the rights and privileges enjoyed by them in the temple, the performance of Tholpavakuthu etc., made the people aware of the supreme position of the family in the locality. Even now it continues and make the people aware of the great status enjoyed by the

family through centuries. Even now the right to light the lamp of kuthumadam of Aryankavu temple is a privilege of Kavalappara family.\textsuperscript{85}

Legends show that the Kavalappara family has been responsible for the introduction of the puppetry in the area. Once the Raja of Kollamkode at Palakkad happened to have no heirs. Then as an offering to goddess they conducted Pavakuthu at the bhagavati temple at Purattiyar, Pailoor, Palakkad district under his patronage. For forty one days the Pavakuthu was conducted. Following this he was blessed with a child and it was believed that it was the result of propitiating the goddess through conducting the Pavakuthu. Once the Kavalappara Mooppil Nayar also happened to have no heirs. Then as per the advice of the Raja, the Mooppil Nayar arranged for the performance of Pavakuthu in the Aryankavu temple. This had the desired effect. Then the Kavalappara Nayar approached the Poothur Sangham of Tolpavakuthu artists and asked them to come and settle down in his area for staging the puppetry regularly in the temples of his realm.\textsuperscript{86}

These Pavakuthu artists came from Tamil speaking areas and were Saiva Vellalars. They were traders and used to accompany the Vaishnavites also. In the wake of their travels they would be staying in the premises of temples at night. They would recite Ramayanam songs as Adalpattu. The

\textsuperscript{85} Interview with K.K. Ramachandra Pulavar, famous Tolpavakuthu artist, on 28.2.2007.

\textsuperscript{86} Ibid.
story contained in the songs would be enacted as Pavakuthu in which the puppets were made of palm leaf. It was in a later period that the puppets came to be made of the skin of deer. They came and settled at Koonathara near Ottappalam in Palakkad district. These artists continued to be supported and patronized by Kavalappara Mooppil Nayar. Through the years the conducting of this art form became a matter of prestige for the Kavalappara family. These artists used to perform the kuthu in the other temples of the area also. The families of these artists were supported by the Kavalappara family. In effect this art form became a medium for expressing the prominent status of the Kavalappara family in the area. In the beginning of the puppet play the artists recite poems praising its patron.

It is the community of Pulavar who are the artists in the Pavakuthu. The term Pulavar means 'scholar'. The Pulavar scholars composed poems by themselves in order to praise their patron. Thus it was a sort of advertisement and acknowledgement of the supremacy of the chieftain in the area. The Kavalappara family has their own puppets for such performance.

The Pavakuthu in the Aryankavu temple is scheduled to begin on the first day of the month of Meenam (March-April). Now the entire expense for

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89 Interview the Ramachandra Pulavar, famous Tolpavakuthu artists, on 28.2.2007.
the performance of the *kuthu* on that day is borne by the senior lady of the Kavalappara family.\(^{90}\) This right is enjoyed by them as a monopoly. Any other person belonging other families will not conduct *kuthu* on that day even if he wished it, respecting and fearing the divine sanction which is believed to be behind it. The rites connected with the *kuthu* of the 9\(^{th}\) day also is a monopoly of the family. The expenses for the *niramala* (decoration of the temple with garlands) on that day will be met by a junior member of the family. The right of conducting the functions of the 18\(^{th}\) day is the exclusive right of Mooppil Nayar.\(^{91}\)

On all days the functions connected with the *kuthu* start from the sunset. The puppets will be carried along with *Nagaswaram, Thayambaka, Kombupath, Madhalapath* and other forms of orchestra to the stage. Orchestra will continue up to the time of the entrance to the *kuthumadam* and it will be by 10\(^{th}\) clock at night. The procession including of certain temple functionaries led by the oracle will circumambulate the temple thrice. Then they enter the *kuthumadam*. The oracle will bless the stage and ensure that he will see that the *kuthu* will be conducted successfully with all paraphernalia. All the instruments for the band music that have been carrying in the procession would be placed before the *kuthumadam*.

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\(^{90}\) Chummar Choondal, *op.cit*, p.142.

\(^{91}\) Interview with K.K. Ramachandran Pulavar, *op.cit.*
At the zenith of his power the entire play for forty one days was conducted under the auspices of Kavalappara family. The performers were patronized by the family. The right to perform Pavakuthu belonged to the community of Pulavar. Their remuneration includes the money in the form of Chattupanam, Pathupanam etc., which were given in the form of offerings. The public also would make offerings in connection with Tolpavakuthu. They are meant for the betterment of their agricultural farms, cattles, poultry farms, etc., and for the general progress of the family. The cost of an offering varies from Rs. 3000/- to Rs. 4000/-. The money goes in favour of the artist of Tolpavakuthu. Then devotees would give dakshina also in the form of money to the artists. Even now the Pavakuthu is the traditional occupation of the Pulavar.

Some of the outstanding artists of leather puppetry are Koonathara Krishnan Kutty Pulavar, V. Sankara Narayanan, Koonathara Pazhanikutty Pulavar, Nadesa Mundali and Sankaran Ezhuthazan. These artists are known for their outstanding proficiency in singing and explaining the story. They have performed this art form in many foreign countries.

The land owning family of Kavalappara enjoyed its ritual and economic status through establishing its superiority through the control of

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92 Chummar Choondal., op.cit, p.142.
94 Chummar Choondal, op.cit, p.142.
Aryankavu temple. The performance of puppetry was also carried out to establish superiority over other landlords and tenants of the locality. Here one can see the interrelationship with temple and land monopoly. The epics like Ramayana was also used for exerting authority over tenants and others. The exclusive right of the entire performance is enjoyed by the family helped them to retain the ritual as well as the superior status. Even after the decline of the land lordism, in the rural areas such ritual superiority of the former landlords continued as on in a historical past.

Even though the head of the Kavalappara family ceased to be an independent ruler he retained many of the ritual powers of a chieftain. One among this was the Thandettam or accession to power. It was also called Ariyittuvazhcha. The Thandettam was performed in the temple of Aryankavu dedicated to bhavavati the tutelary deity of Kavalappara family. The Kavalappara Nayar figures in the ceremonies and rituals associated with the installation of the Thachudya Kaimal, the officer in charge of the administration of Koodalmanikyam temple at Irinjalakuda, Trissur district, Kerala. It is called Jathakavarodham. The Kavalappara Moopil Nayar used to participate in the installation ceremony of Thachudaya Kaimal.

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Nambuthiri brahmins had a very important part in the installation ceremonies whether it was that of a king or feudal chiefs. At the time of Ariyittuvazhcha the priest would strew rice, flowers etc., on the head of the ruler, chanting hymns. *Ari* means rice and it is from this strewing of rice, the entire ceremony is called *Ariyittuvazhcha*. At the time of this accession to power the king would take a pledge that he would protect cows and brahmins and that he would not do anything against wishes of the subject and if he did anything like that the people had the right to depose him from power.\(^98\) The *Ariyittuvazhcha* of the Zamorin has been typical of the coronation ceremonies of the rulers of Malabar.\(^99\)

On the occasion of the *Ariyittuvazhcha* there would be no crowning or enthronement. In fact the crowning was a ceremony introduced by the Portuguese in Kerala. *Ariyittuvazhcha* in the formal inauguration of the reign with the blessings of the brahmins.\(^100\) The ruling powers used to interfere in the succession problems of their neighbouring principalities and attend the ceremonies associated with the accession to power etc., as a device to establish their supremacy over the realm. For example the *Ariyittuvazhcha* of


the Vettathu Raja was to be under the auspices of the Zamorin of Calicut. He was to be physically present on that occasion.  

The installation ceremony of the Kavalappara Mooppil Nayar, the Thandetam, was performed in the temple of Aryankavu, the shrine of the tutelary deity of the family. It was celebrated with much pomp. It has been so even during the British period. Like the installation ceremonies of the other chiefs the Nambuthiries performed the rituals in connectin with this. Among the rituals of the Thandetam was the Pasu Danam or the gift of cows to the Nambuthiries. In the Thandetam of 1910 twelve Nambuthiries belonging to Kummini Mana, Thiyyannoor Mana, Chittatiyoth Mana, Mannanambatte Mana, Thekkeppattu Mana, Matangath Mana etc., were gifted cows. Onapudava or new cloths would be presented to the deserving person on the eve of the Thandetam ceremony. An extract from the accounts showing the expenses of the Thandetam of 1910 gives details of the purchase of thekkkan charakku (clothing materials) meant for the use of and presentation (onapudava) to the sthanis (holders of places and ranks) Avakasis (Claimants) and to various dignitaries, officers and so on who participated in the function. The ceremony of Thandetam starts from Menakathodikkalam. From this place the Mooppil Nayar would go to the Anthimahakalankavu.

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From there he would go to Aryan Kavu temple in a decorated palanquin kept in the Kavalappara Kottaram. The right to bear the palanquin was vested with certain families.\textsuperscript{103} The Nayar will wear his traditional ornaments like anklet, bangle and chain (mala) connected with the celebrations of Ariyittuvazhcha. The whole ceremony would be presided over by Kallakkat Mana Nambuthiris. These Nambuthiris have been the traditional guru or preceptor of the Kavalappara Mooppil Nayar in the use of arms.

As the former feudatory of Palaghat Raja, the Kavalappara Mooppil Nayar would be invited to attend certain ceremonies connected with the Palaghat Raja. Certain documents in the Kavalappara Papers reveal this.\textsuperscript{104} In 1902 when the Palaghat Raja died, an invitation letter was sent to Kavalappara Mooppil Nayar inviting him to attend the Sanchayanam (the ritual of collecting the bones of the dead after cremation). The Sanchayanam takes place on the 7\textsuperscript{th} day. The bones are collected in a new pot, and deposited at the foot of a big fig or jack tree, and then at the next convenient opportunity, removed there form and thrown into the waters of a sacred river.

\textsuperscript{103} Interview with Indira Nethiyar, a senior member of the Kavalappara family on 20.9.2009.

\textsuperscript{104} K.K.N. Kurup (ed.), Kavalappara Papers, op.cit, Documents Nos. 80 and 81.
As a *naduvazhi* the Kavalappara Mooppil Nayar has been associated with the caste tribunal of *Smarthavicharam*\(^{105}\). Request for conducting *Smarthavicharam* used to be forwarded to the Mooppil Nayar. It is he who gave order for conducting the trial. There are documents showing the requests for *Smarthavicharam* and sanction given by the Mooppil Nayar.\(^{106}\) The *Smarthavicharam* in the family of Allampilli Mana and Cheruvattur Mana were conducted under the official auspices of the Kavalappara family. This shows that even after the loss of political power as a *naduvazhi* Kavalappara Mooppil Nayar enjoyed traditional rights. Being a *naduvazhi* the Mooppil Nayar had certain privileges in connection with other Rajas and *naduvazhis*. The Mooppil Nayar officially participated in certain rituals in the family of Palakkad Raja. The Mooppil Nayar would be invited for the ritual of the *Sanchayana pada* of Palakkat Raja.\(^{107}\) Formal royal letter or *theettu* would be sent to the Mooppil Nayar inviting him to the *Sanchayanam* (bone collection ceremony after cremation). Palakkat Raja Sekhari Varman seems to have sent such a letter dated 25 May 1890 to the Mooppil Nayar.\(^{108}\) Along with the *Sanchayanam* there would be the installation ceremony of the next

\(^{105}\) *Smarthavicharam* has been a caste tribunal in which the Nambuthiri women suspected of adultery was tried. The entire trial was under the leadership of a *Smartha* or a learned Nambuthiri and hence the name *Smarthavicharam*.


\(^{108}\) *Ibid*. 
Raja. In the letter it is specified that the Kavalappara Nayar must come to the ceremony "according to the old custom".109

The Kavalappara family maintained two *Oottupuras*, one for brahmins and the other for non-brahmins.110 Giving feast to the brahmins and giving gift to them were considered to be holy rites that brought welfare and wealth to the donor. The wealthy chieftains used to maintain *Oottupuras* for brahmins where they were given lunch. The Kavalappara family maintained five *thannirpantals* (watersheds) where arrangement were made for giving water and *sambharam* to way farers.111

The Kavalappara family also had its own *kalari* or military training centre. Among the obligations of the feudal lords in Kerala was the supplying of soldiers to their overlords. The Mooppil Nayar has been a feudatory of Cochin Raja and in this position he was to command a force of *Ayayirum Nayar* (five thousand) soldiers. The chieftains also were in need of trained soldiers for the protection of their realm, as bodyguards etc. So attached to the feudal families there were *kalaries*. The Kallakkat Mana Nambuthiri has been the traditional instructor in arms of Mooppil Nayar. Even after losing the powers as a *naduvzahi*, the *Kalari* of Kavalappara is maintained. Slowly

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109 Ibid.
110 Interview with Venkiteswaran Embrandiri, aged 80, the present priest of Eruppe temple, on 22.3.2010
111 For details of *Tannirpanthal* see S. Guptan Nair (ed), *op.cit*, p.259.
it ceased to be a military training centre, but its ritualistic importance continues. Previous investigators[112] state that the kalari with its instructors, trainers, hospital facilities, worshiping centre etc., was a visible symbol of the power and authority of the naduvazhi. In the Kavalappara kalari it was the Nayar boys who were given training in the use of arms. Like in other kalaris along with physical exercises the use of sword, spear, bows and arrows etc., were taught to the students. The main kalari of Kavalappara family is at Kavalappara itself and is known as Kallakkat kalari. Now the family of kalari Panikkars of Kavalappara has become extinct[113].

Kavalappara Mooppil Nayar has been a patron of temple arts like Kathakali, Chakkiarkuthu, etc., also apart from the Pavakuthu detailed above. Like Pavakuthu, Chakkiarkuthu also was regularly performed in the temple of Aryankavu. The famous kuthu orator Chachu Chakkiar was patronized by the Mooppil Nayar's family. The Kavalappara Mooppil Nayar has been a patron of Kathakali also. Under their patronage there were many a great Kathakali artist of whom the most important was Chilambaka Narayanan Nayar known as Kavalappara Narayanan Nayar who was famous throughout Kerala. It was for Kavalappara Narayanan Nayar that the Kavalappara set up a

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[112] Interview with Advocate Mohan Kumar, Ottapalam, Kerala, Receiver of Kavalappara Estate, on 20.9.2009.
Kaliyogam. It was Kavalappara Narayanan Nayar who has staged the largest number of *raudra vesham* (ferocious actor). Appukuttan Unni Mooppil Nayar has been a patron of Carnatic music and famous musicians like Venkata Krishna Bhagavathar, Kutty Rama Panikkar, Tondiculam Ananda Rama Bhagavathar, Palakkad Rama Bhagavathar and Ernapalam Venkata Rama Bhagavathar enjoyed his patronage.

The foregoing accounts show the ritual status and powers of the two Nayar *tarawads* under discussion. They had lost their defacto ruling authority under colonialism. But they continued to have their tutelar powers even under colonialism. This is very much relevant with regard to Kavalappara Nayar. Even though the Nayar had no defacto authority over the political or economic aspects he continued to be the overlord of people of his realm through the observance of the rituals and the celebrations connected with the temple festivals, patronage of temple arts etc. The act of the colonial master in permitting him to have these rights and privileges has been diplomatic as the same was pacifying both the chieftain and his subjects to an extent.

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116 K.K.N.Kurup (ed.), *Kavalappara Papers*, op.cit, p. XLIII.