

A THEATRICAL STUDY OF MALAVAAYIAATTOM

Dissertation submitted to the University of Calicut for the award of the
Degree of **Doctor of Philosophy** in the Faculty of Fine Arts

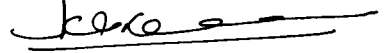
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NOVEMBER 2005

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the thesis entitled, 'A Theatrical Study of Malavaayiaattom', is a bonafide record of original research work carried out by me, under the valuable guidance of Dr. Vayala Vasudevan Pillai, former Director and Head of the School of Drama and Fine Arts, University of Calicut. No part of this has been submitted for the award of any Degree, Diploma, Fellowship or other similar title of recognition.

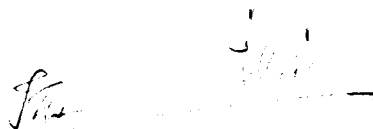


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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the thesis entitled 'A Theatrical study of Malavaayiaatom' submitted for the award of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the faculty of Fine Arts of the University of Calicut is a bonafide record of the research work carried out by Mr. K.P.Dileepkumar under my supervision. No part of this has been submitted earlier for any other purpose.



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PREFACE

This researcher had heard stories about *Kalladikode Karineeli* and the *Otiyans* from the *Panan* community in childhood. They are alleged to be powerful enough even to kill people and to assume any form of disguise, as they like, with the power of their *oti* cult.

I came to know about the theatre form *Malavaayiaattom*, while working as the Scheduled Caste Development Officer in Kunnamkulam. It was natural, as I had close contact with some members of the *Paraya* community who are born artists. Majority of the artists and clubs who were given assistance for the development of folk arts were from the *Paraya* community. It was from them that I heard about the theatre form, which is not even now very popular among the art lovers, theatre workers or other intelligentsia. Once *Malavaayiaattom* is watched, one cannot but marvel at the theatrical value of the art form. It was felt that there are many dimensions to the art form. Especially the participation of the community causes awe and wonder. One feels that one is watching a drama enacted by about one hundred artists. Such is the involvement.

My curiosity to know more about *Malavaayi* was excited. This researcher made it a point to watch *Malvayiaattom* whenever there was a chance. It was at that time that the Thrissur District Panchayath, as part of the Peoples Plan Campaign, decided to document a Dalit art form. The *Paraya* community and the fascinating art form of *Malavaayiaattom* were promptly suggested for documentation. The *Paraya* community as a whole and *Malavaayiaattom* were documented as part of the project. The

documentary film is named *Koothampala Pallich*. The duration of the 35 mm film is 30 minute.

Activities related to the documentation of the film resulted in close contact with the members of the *Paraya* community and their habitats. Many interviews with the members of the community increased my curiosity for *Malavaayi*. I wanted to know more about this character. The reason for her fury, the fight with *Mookkan Chathan* and all that led me to pursue the character for long. Other folk ritual theatre forms like *Mudiyettu*, *Padayani* and *Theyyam* are very much popular and have media coverage in Kerala. They are well known among the art lovers and theatre activists. I wondered why such a fantastic art form like *Malavaayiaattom*, full of elements of theatre remained in the oblivion.

It must be untouchability that kept people aloof from the *Paraya* habitats. *Malavaayi* being a ferocious deity is frightening to the common people. Moreover, *Malavaayiaattom* is devoid of colourful costumes, headgear or other embellishments that can attract photography.

Paraya community members attach much sanctity to the performance and the deity. They do not consider it proper to perform outside the performance space, *Malavaayithara*, and the habitat.

Malavaayiaattom can be performed only in an interactive atmosphere. Hence, participation and involvement of the community members is necessary. This can be facilitated only under an informal atmosphere, which is impossible in arranged performances. Even if it is performed out of its natural atmosphere, *Malavaayiaattom* has many more contributions to offer to our cultural heritage, theatre performance, environmental perspective etc.

This study is on an art form performed by a community belonging to the downtrodden class, who still value the memories of its glorious past, but was relegated to the background by the inroads of casteism and feudalism. Their worldview is projected through this art form.

Method of study

As part of the research, interviews were conducted with many artists of *Malavaayiaattom* in Thrissur, Malappuram and Palakkad districts. Though the concept of *Karineeli* exists in these districts, *Malavaayiaattom* is performed only in Thrissur district.

Twelve performances were witnessed. Three arranged performances outside the area of the performance space were also seen. One performance in the natural atmosphere was documented for the movie. An in-depth study of folk theatre and mother goddess cult was made as part of the research work. Only a small portion of the work could be included in the thesis. Libraries used for the study are those of Kerala Sahithya Academy, Appan Thampuran Smaraka Library, Sangeetha Nataka Academy, School of Drama, Thrissur Public Library, Thrissur Archaeological museum and Thiruvananthapuram public library.

Objectives of the study

Research on folklore will naturally project the subaltern life. There is a wrong notion among the public that the low caste people have no culture or moral values and their visual arts are mere shows without any aesthetic value. However, on a closer look, the philosophical superiority and moral strength of the working class are revealed. The rhythm and artistic value of their art forms are also projected. The folk performing art has been changing

its structure continuously for centuries. It adjusts itself to the changing situations. Folk theatre has the quality of adjusting itself with continuing the functional relevance to the society.

Every theatre form will have a myth behind it. That mythology is usually connected to the caste performing it. Folk art forms are performed by the so-called low castes. Though they are at the bottom of the social ladder, they have high moral principles. Their philosophy is based on bio-diversity. The study of their worldview throws light on the social life and philosophy of the particular community also. Research on a folk art form like *Malavaayiaattom* will have the following impact.

- (1) Identification of the high cultural values and worldview of the so-called lower castes
- (2) Recognition of the superiority of their worldview
- (3) Unearthing of our cultural heritage
- (4) Identification of the artistic value of the art forms of the folk

This will change the attitude of the people towards the folk art forms and society. The need for preserving these art forms will be served through the study. Indians are getting rapidly westernized. One of the main reasons for the westernization is the exposure to western culture and arts through the visual media. Hence, the new generation and mainstream society, look down upon indigenous arts, crafts and culture. In removing these wrong notions, we cannot totally deny the role of visual media. Indigenous arts, crafts and culture have to be exposed in their right perspective. They have to be exposed through visual media itself. To safeguard our cultural heritage, a

proper knowledge of the history of our culture and arts is necessary. A detailed study of these art forms is indispensable for understanding them.

It gives immense pleasure to express my unforgettable and profound gratitude to my guide, Dr. Vayala Vasudevan Pillai, Director, school of drama, University of Calicut, for all the support and assistance given to me for completing the project. I express my heart felt thanks to Dr. C.R.Rajagopalan for the encouragement given in carrying out the research work. I pay homage to Pappu Asan, Pengamuck, who was an all rounder in the field of folk arts. He departed from this world. I have seen his performance as *Malavaayi* many times. I record my profound gratitude to C.D. Sivadas who introduced the wonderful art form to the world outside Paraya habitats. I express my heartfelt thanks to C.C.Devan Master, Choondal house, Ayyanthole for collecting the text of *Malavaayiaattom*.



Chapter 1

***Malavaayiaattom*- Ritual Theatre Form Related to Fertility and Mother Goddess Cult in Kerala**

Malavaayiaattom is a highly stylized ritualistic dance drama. This performance is generally confined to the habitats of the *Paraya* community. Sometimes performance is made in households outside habitats also. *Malavaayiaattom* performance is stylized in *Angika Abhinaya* (gesture) *Aharya Abhinaya* (Make up, costumes and scenic spectacles) and *Sathwika Abhinaya* (spiritual renderings.)

Malavaayi and *Mookkaan Chaathan* represent the age-old value system and the idea of right and wrong. It is a natural development of story telling and preaching prevalent in India. The performers must prepare themselves with prayer and fasting because it has deep religious and ritual significance and the performance projects high moral philosophy. There is enough scope in the performance, which can represent only few typical sensitive reactions extremely useful for satire, which in turn is a vehicle for social change.

The story of *Malavaayi* is still popular among the audience. The life projected through the performance reflects a noble life. Though the subject of the play may be familiar, it gets new meaning with every performance.

Malavaayiaattom is a part of folklore of the region. It belongs to the category of ritualistic theatre forms related to mother goddess cult. A brief discussion of rituals and mother goddess cult is necessary to understand the

art form. A study of our ritual tradition is useful in analysing the performance in its right perspective. It includes in the fertility and mother goddess cult prevalent in Kerala. Hence, mother goddess cult in the background of fertility and ritual theatre is discussed in this chapter.

1. Folk arts are categorised into two.

(1) Ritualistic folk performing arts (ii) Non Ritualistic folk performing arts.

1.1. Ritualistic folk performing arts

Art forms of primitive men are generally related to their rituals and beliefs. All social groups in Kerala, agricultural society or primitive society, have their own ritual traditions. They have performances also connected with rituals. Most of them are connected with *Kaali* worship. *Malavaayiaattom* belongs to this group.

1.2. Non-ritualistic folk performing arts

Non-Ritualistic folk performing art forms, to a certain extent are devoid of ritualistic elements. They include the following.

(a) Festival games like *Onakkali*, *Thiruvathirakkali* and *Thumbithullal*

(b) Plays on special occasions, *Oppana*, *Parichamuttukali* and *Brahmanippattu*

On some occasions, these art forms may also assume ritual forms.

1.3. Rituals

Rituals are reflectory manifestations of emotion. The verbal meaning of rituals is a manner of performing divine service or a body of code of ceremonies; an oft-repeated series of actions; performance of rites.

1.3.1. Evolution of rituals

Persons or even animals, that played an important part in the lives of human beings, found a place in their minds. They practised to remember them through a myth or some rituals attached with the myth. Rituals are practised with the motive of appeasing those for whom rituals are offered. Since death completely defeats reason, imagination must take over. That is where ritual springs. *The origin of ritual is in the fantasies related to life.*

Natural forces, which have been beyond the control of human beings, caused wonderment in him. Hence, he always tries to please these natural forces. Man thinks that these forces can be appeased by offering whatever is dear to him. It is with this motive that rituals are practised. It is believed that by pleasing them the performer will gain something.

As human beings began to settle, agriculture developed as their main vocation instead of hunting. Religious rites and sacrifices also developed and became complex. As failure of crop is quite usual in agriculture, rites and rituals to propitiate gods and goddesses also increased. The people in the pre-historic period worshipped abstract forms like wind, lightning and thunder.

1.3.2. Motives of practising rituals

In the primitive society, there was no system of enforcing social justice. As there was no sovereign power to enforce laws of the society, they believed that supernatural powers would do that work. It was one among the motives of practicing rituals.

In the opinion of Victor Turner, "In the simpler, preliterate, stateless societies redressive machinery is often of two kinds,

jurally or ritual. Jurally action may mean informal or formal arbitration by elders, the summoning of a chief's court with councillors and assessors, or recourse to blood vengeance or feud. What is of special interest to us is ritual action. In many small scale societies what we distinguish in western cultural tradition as social, moral and natural orders are regarded as a single order with visible and invisible components.”¹

The basis of rituals is belief. Traditional people believe that rituals protect them from the fury of supernatural forces. The practice of Mayodis is quoted here.

A.K.Nambiar remarks that, “The basis of rituals is beliefs. It may be due to some accidental relief. Potato cultivation of the Mayodis of Polynesia is an example for this. Potato cultivation was occasionally destroyed in storms. To prevent these, women with loose dress went to potato fields and danced waving their loose dress. A small storm is created there. They believed that this would prevent further storm. This belief created confidence in them and the absence of storms were attributed to the rituals. Tribal dances, rain dances and other art forms are other forms of rituals. There are so many such rituals all over.”²

1.3.3. Existence of rituals

The evolution of rituals is from the belief in the supernatural forces. However, many rituals now exist not mainly because of belief in the divine power. *Vishnumoorthy Theyyam* is an example for this. The *Theyyam* of *Vishnumoorthy* is enacted to escape affliction of small pox. Small pox having

been completely wiped out, the ritual efficacy of the *Theyyam* has no relevance at all. Even then the *Theyyam* is still performed. Many secular gatherings are parts of rituals. However, they are celebrated not because of the supernatural belief, but because they are seasonal festivals. Onam is celebrated because of people's affinity to the rituals. Here the rituals are for the sake of social interaction.

According to Victor Turner, "Though rituals evolved as a part of supernatural belief, it is not right that in all societies rituals are practised with a supernatural base. In modern societies, supernatural belief is being delinked. Some social gatherings are devoid of any divine intentions."

G.N.Devy is of the opinion that, "When rituals originally arising out of the individual's fears and fantasies became collective activities performed by the entire community; they became festivals. Feasting or fasting, sharing of food or completely abstaining from it became an important element in all rituals." ⁴

1.3.4. Protection of rituals

Rituals like *Malavaayiaattom* are protected because they became dear to the society. They are symbols of sentiments. They have some inherent qualities, which make them endearing. Dance, music, floral drawings etc. make them attractive.

According to A.K.Nambiar, "Their rooting in the social life can be understood by studying its history. At the outset, it was an unclear sound. Later it was metamorphosed into mantras.

Moreover floral drawings with colourful powders were drawn.

Unclear sound became mantras and meaningful songs.”⁵

1.3.5. Ritual does not distinguish between audience and performers

Ritual performances have immediate accessibility. They use readily communicable modes and messages of performance. They speak directly to the people. In it, there is less dependence on established aesthetic principles. Rituals are the pillars of a particular society. They are carriers of culture and moral values of a particular society.

According to Victor Turner, “Of practices, the same set of rituals or liturgical actions a congregation is there to affirm the theological or cosmological order, explicit or implicit, which all hold in common, to actualize it periodically for themselves and inculcate the basic tenets of that order into their younger members...”⁶

According to William Bascom, “The theory that various forms of folklore and literature are ultimately arrived from ritual has been expounded at considerable length.”⁷

1.3.6. Existence of prosperity, taboos and rituals

From primitive age, people believed that for a happy and prosperous life some dos and don'ts are to be followed. Moral values suggest that such and such things should be done and such and such things should not be done. Things, which are forbidden, are called taboos and things to be done became rituals.

According to A.K. Nambiar, "One is the belief that for the existence of prosperity of life there are some dos and don'ts. These dos are called rituals. For the second it is called taboo." ⁸

1.3.7. Rituals and sacrifices

In sacrifices, the 'performer' makes the gestures, rings the bell and pours the water and the rest of the formalities. At the same time, he usually remains calm. He does not himself interface directly with the deity, or its power, whereas rituals are overtly dramatic. Theatrical and performative elements are used to establish its efficacious end.

1.3.8. Rituals and customs

Rituals and customs are the offspring of social life of the human beings. Rituals, customs and religion are interrelated. Rituals were related to religion and customs. They in turn are related to fertility. Elements of theatre are found in these rituals and customs. *Malavaayiaattom* is one among such performances.

To quote G. Bhargavan Pillai, "Wherever there is civilization, rituals rites and elements of theatre are found." ⁹

There will be a story behind every ritual. This story is called myth. It is according to this story of myth the ritual is conditioned. This story will be popular with the people.

According to G.N.Devy, "Implicit in every ritual is narrative, a story of impossible things. When we examine a ritual closely, we find that it is a dramatic performance of a plot which has received acceptance in the form of a living myth." ¹⁰

There is no tragedy or comedy in rituals. There is no tragic or comic ending, because in rituals there are no absolute endings.

G.N.Devy adds, "In it, however, there is no space for tragedy, because rituals deny absolute endings."¹¹

1.3.9. Ritual functions

The duty of rituals is to control, establish and transfer values from one generation to another generation. Folk art forms are used in ritual functions and in various rites of rural society. These folk art forms are performed either to appease the ancestors or to control some malevolent spirit or other supernatural deities.

Ritual performances are intended to achieve a desired goal or to end a specific function. It is the transportation of the audience into a state of *Bhakthi* or religious devotion. People attend devotional performances to attain at least a glimpse of their favourite god. Ritual performances serve a specific function. It may be fulfilment of a vow, generating of a boon etc.

1.3.10. Essential factors of rituals

Malavaayiaattom belongs to the genre of ritual theatre. Even though music and play are also included in *Malavaayiaattom*, it is mainly centred round the ritual functions. The mythical part of the rituals makes it acceptable to the devotees. When rituals are devoid of the myth, they become mere visual art. If theatrical function is absent, it is mere ritual. Only when theatrical function is added to rituals that it becomes a ritual art. As society changes, rituals and the myths exist without much change. Theatrical functions change according to social change.

To quote A.K.Nambiar, "Theatrical elements in them have undergone basic changes. It is because of deliberate effort for visualization; elements that are more theatrical crept into the rituals. The urge to audio-visualize the rituals is present both among the performers and the audience." ¹²

1.3.11. Difference between ritual arts and theatre arts

Mere theatre arts devoid of rituals are performed for the enjoyment of people. The artists perform and the audience enjoy it. It is mere show, whereas in ritual arts like *Malavaayiaattom* there is no performer audience demarcation. Audience are also participants in the performance.

In the opinion of K.V.Surendranath, "The basic difference between ritual arts and theatre is that there are no audience in rituals." ¹³

1.3.12 Ritual performances related to fertility and Mother Goddess Cult

Malavaayiaattom is a part of mother goddess cult prevalent all over the world among primitive people. *Bhagavathyppattu*, *Thiyyattu*, *Panappattu*, *Padayani*, *Malavaayiaattom*, *Kaniarkali*, *Mudiyettu*, *Thookkam* etc. can be included in this category. Theatre related to Mother goddess and fertility is discussed in this section.

Kaali worship has been popular in Kerala from time immemorial. There are many evidences to support this.

C. Achyutha Menon in his celebrated book 'Kaali Worship in Kerala' remarks that, "There is hardly a Hindu community or village in Malabar that does not worship *Kaali* in one form or other." ¹⁴

Achyutha Menon quotes Anand Coomaraswamy, "Snake and Mother Goddess are to be considered part of Dravidian culture. The term *Kaali* represents black colour. Another version is that the term is derived from' "*Kaali*," one who limits the period." ¹⁵

1.4. Fertility and Mother Goddess cult

Mother goddess and fertility cults are related. Mother goddess cult evolved as a part of fertility rites and worship of 'Mother Earth'. Numerous fertility rites were performed in the form of adoration dance and spell. All these were intended to control the unpredictable phenomena of nature, in order to make them favourable to man. People considered earth as their mother. They compared earth with woman. They thought that as woman loses blood due to menstruation, to regain the lost vitality mother earth also is to be given new blood.

In Kodungallur there is a deity called *Vasurimala*. This deity is worshipped by drawing a lotus petal figure and spraying blood red liquid (*Guruthy*) produced by mixing turmeric and rice powder with lime. It must be representing the earth goddess. Lotus petal is symbol of female sex organ. The sacrifices represent revitalizing the Mother Goddess by sprinkling new blood. It is said that human sacrifices were made for this purpose. From human beings sacrifices were shifted to animals and later on to fruits like ash gourd.

P.K.Gopalakrishnan, in Cultural History of Kerala remarks that, "Mother earth was worshipped as a goddess. They believed that after every crop mother goddess becomes pooped (tired). To regain her lost vitality she is to be given new blood." ¹⁶

To quote from Aryan and Dravidian elements in Malabar Folklore, "The striking representation of earth Goddess with a plant throwing from her womb is not unnatural, when compared to the description found in literature after a millennium. The greater mother goddesses of Asia Minor Ishter and Isis also appear to be definitely associated with vegetation cults." ¹⁷

1.5. Fertility cult, sex and reproduction

To the primitive mind, human reproduction and agricultural production are closely associated. By adopting the method of sympathetic magic, the primitive people thought that nature's fertility could help human fertility and vice versa. The fecundity of the earth and the fecundity of women are viewed as being of the same quality.

According to A.K.Nambiar, "On the one hand, the plant producing activity of the earth is viewed as being magically depending upon the reproductive capacity of the female. It is viewed as being magically dependent upon that of the earth."

A.K.Nambiar writes on fertility cult and sex, "Thus to get abundance of crops by sympathetic magic, ritualistic sexual intercourse was practiced at the time of cultivation." ¹⁸

According to John Stratton Haley and Donna Marie Wolf, "As he explained it, this offering of *Guruthy* by sprinkling of red water on the ground represents the menstruation of *Bhagavathy*. The earth gives birth to plants in the same way mother gives birth to a child, after the menstrual period. Therefore, the earth also must be mature." ¹⁹

1.5.1. Fertility cult in history

The constant relation of man with soil began to be felt most intimately in agriculture and cattle breeding. Thus, fertility cult came into existence. Aiming at subduing nature many magico-religious rites were performed at the different stages of agriculture.

1.6. Worship of mother goddess

Malavaayiaattom is a part of mother goddess cult. Mother Goddess cult evolved from the primitive period itself.

1.6.1. Mother goddess cult in racial culture

Mother goddesses are related to fertility. They are popularly worshipped in agricultural countries. The high position of the women in society must have been the reason for the origin of mother goddess. Until recently, Kerala women were viewed with much reverence. Also were Mother Goddesses. Other social groups must have followed this tradition. From time immemorial, man used to worship mother earth. Earth is the mother of all animate beings. Productivity is the characteristic of earth. Mother goddess cult is Dravidian and non-Vedic. The Dravidian people established agrarian life. Mother goddess cult is also that much old.

According to P. K. Gopalakrishnan, "Mother Goddesses are even now considered as the deity of fertility, power of reproduction and abundance. May be she was considered as the representative of The Mother Earth." ²⁰

P. K. Gopalakrishnan adds, "It was when human beings began to settle and agriculture became the main vocation, Mother Earth was worshipped as a goddess. [---] These sacrifices represent

revitalising the Mother Goddess by spiritual expression of the supernatural.”²¹

1.6.2. Mother goddess cult in racial culture- universality of mother goddess cult

All over the world, Goddesses of life and prosperity are worshipped in the form of mother. The Mother goddess form was worshipped in Asia Minor, Sparta, Babylon, Mexico and Egypt. In Egypt, she was worshipped as Isis, in France Hira and as Juno in Rome.

According to G.Bhargavan Pillai, “Before Vedas, when there were powerful tribal clans; they had their own traditional art forms. They included dance, songs, acting and all types of arts. Not only that, roots of every realm of culture can be traced to tribal culture.”²²

There were different groups under the tribal headman. There were centres for worshipping and conducting rituals for tribal heroes. Worship of different types of goddesses like war goddess and fertility goddess were prevalent then.

According to Kavalam Narayana Panicker, “Primitive people found some relation between fertile earth and child bearing mother. It is believed that in BC 3000-400 AD Dravidian people had established an agricultural life in India. As such mother goddess cult has that much history.”²⁵

To quote John Marshall, “The Mother was the foremost among the Indus Pantheon. A large number of terracotta female figures

recovered from the Indus sites are considered to be representations of the Mother-Goddess.”²³

V.T. Induchoodan is of the opinion that, “The priests in most of the *Kaali Kaavus* are of Dravidian caste. *Kaali* cult is a pre Aryan phenomenon.”²⁴

According to K. Gomathy Amma, “This mother cult is seen in all traditional societies like Hellenic, Semitic, Teutonic and Nordic. It was when patrilineal system was established that mother goddess cult was replaced by worship of Gods.”²⁵

According to John Stratton Haley and Donna Marie Wolf, “The generic name in Sanskrit and many Indian languages related to it is ‘Devi’, a word like its Latin and Greek cognates ‘dea’ and ‘thea’ means simply goddess.”²⁶

1.6.3. Mother goddess cult in India- Indus valley civilization

The cult of mother Goddess has prevailed in India in remote antiquity. It may be supposed that the pre-Aryan races deified the female principle, which ultimately developed into a cult of Mother Goddess. Many primitive tribes have a belief that this goddess gives them abundant harvests and cattle in increasing numbers. The mother goddesses are worshipped as the goddess of fertility also. The manifestation of the great mother is found in the Indus Civilization. Archaeologists at Harappa have unearthed concrete evidence of this belief; the excavation of a nude female figure depicted upside down with legs apart and with a plant issuing from the womb.

However, this scenario changed with the supremacy of the Aryans during Vedic period. It was when patrilineal system was established, that mother goddess cult was replaced by worship of gods.

According to John Stratton Haley and Donna Marie Wolf, "All through the archaeological remains of the Indus valley civilization which created a new standard of culture for south Asia in the third and second millennium B.C. one finds a distinctive set of female terracotta figurines; thousands of them."²⁷

They add, "The Aryans who followed gave only minor roles to goddesses. Indigenous culture never died out. The history of Hindu tradition is a re-emergence of the feminine."²⁸

1.6.4. Mother goddess cult in India-Aryan civilization

Agriculture as a vocation of life being taboo to Brahmins and Kshathriyas, rituals connected with mother goddesses are not mentioned in Vedic literature. Hence, mother goddess cult is non-Vedic. During Vedic period, male gods became important.

To quote John Stratton Haley and Donna Marie Wolf, "The Aryan civilization that became increasingly dominant in northern India at the level of high culture from 1000 BC onward allotted only minor roles to goddess."²⁹

Permanent husband or fatherhood is not seen in Mother Goddess concept. This denotes a matrilineal system of inheritance. The relationship is based on mother and child. Mother Goddess cult developed agricultural system and village social life.

P.Soman supports this view, "Mother goddesses bear children without getting married. Permanent husband or fatherhood is not seen in Mother Goddess concept. This denotes a matrilineal system of inheritance. In course of time, tribal goddesses were transferred as village deities and fertility deities." ³⁰

1.6.5. The benevolent mother goddess

The Mother goddess has both mild and fearsome aspects. She is ferocious to those who attack her children. She is mild and loving to her children, i.e. her devotees. According to P.K.Gopalakrishnan, "Every goddess has got both sweet and dreadful aspects. In the former, she is the satisfier of all desires and creator of prosperity." ³¹

1.6.6. Mother goddess as annihilator

The mother who is abundant with love and affection becomes frightening to those who attack her children. She will fight with all her might to protect her children and she assumes the form of annihilator of her enemies. This aspect of the mother goddess is seen in *Malavaayiaattom*. *Malavaayi* is a ferocious deity. However, she is ferocious only to those who come to attack her children. To the *Paraya* community members and other devotees, she is their protector and annihilator of their exploiters.

In the opinion of V. T Induchoodan, "On the dreadful self she is the annihilator and sower of the seeds of destruction like disease.

[-----] On this occasion she can be appeased only through sacrifices." ³²

1.6. 7. The divine and demonic, masculine and feminine

Mother Goddess has both masculine and feminine attributes. The ancient people gave them names and entrusted to each separate abodes, domains and functions.

To quote Kavalam Narayana Panicker, "The masculine was known as *Ayyan*, whom they believed, provided and protected the mountains and ravine and feminine was *Amman*." ³³

Kavalam Narayana Panicker adds, "The masculine and the feminine divine spirits prevailing in the mountains were called by the generic name '*Maladaivanga*'-mountain gods. They were known by a variety of names-the masculine as '*Virabhadhran*', '*Vettakkorumakan*', '*Kantakarnan*', '*Matan*' etc. The feminine was known as *Kodumkali*, *Kurumba*, *Chakki*, *Neeli*, *Kotha* etc." ³⁴

1.7. Mother goddess cult in Kerala

The theatre traditions of *Kaali* worship in the southern parts of India, mainly the Kerala region were the channels of communication among the Hindus for *Bhagavathy* cult at the performance level. The rare ritual *Malavaayiaattom* is typical for the analysis of the multiple streams of the genre form style and the technique, which reveal the complex nature of performance traditions of Kerala.

1.7.1 Origin of *Kaavus*

At the time of clearing forestland for habitation or cultivation, there might have been good or bad omen. These omens may have led them to set apart those places from clearing and these places might have later become *Kaavus*. These might not have been dense forests. In these *Kaavus*, a

particular tree or cave was earmarked for worship. Worshippers served food, liquor and meat to the deity. For meat, animals were sacrificed.

According to C. Achyutha Menon, "From time immemorial, human history is governed by the relationship with the trees. That is how banyan and other trees got divinity." ³⁵

C.R.Rajagopalan supports this view, "Primitive ritualistic culture of Kerala is the tradition of *Kaavus* (sacred groves). It is animism that created *Kaavus*." ³⁶

Once, *Kaavus* were the centre of folk activity. Mother goddess was widely worshipped. People led simple agrarian life. The structure of the *Kaavus* was very simple with some trees, plants and a small shapeless granite piece representing Devi goddess. Offerings in these *Kaavus* were also simple. The agricultural people offered whatever they had with them. It may be the first produce of cultivation, some grains or flowers. There were no elaborate rites. Their ancestors were also worshipped along with the mother goddess. The deity and the devotee had quite an informal relationship. The forms of worship changed to concrete forms like tree worship. Serpent worship also evolved during this time. Totem preceded the above form of worship. Ancestor worship prevailed during the later period. As part of hero worship and ancestor worship, mother goddesses and their abodes acquired definite forms. It was at this stage that *Kaavus* evolved. *Kaavus* may be the continuation of *Manrams*, which existed during the *Sangam* period.

According to Koonezhuthu Parameswara Menon, "Places where lord Siva, Vishnu and Subramanian are consecrated are called *Kshethras*. Whereas the abodes of '*Anthimahakalan*,

Uchamahakalan, Rudhiramahakalan, Vettekkaran, Ayyappan, Bhadrakali, Sreekurumba etc, are worshipped are called *Kaavus*." ³⁷

Castes like *Kadars, Malayar, Velan*, live in abodes like '*Pathi*', '*Chala*', '*Theruvu*', '*Koodaram*' etc. Highlands were converted as dwelling places and low lands were converted into paddy fields. Granaries were used to collect cultivated produces. In course of time, these lands became insufficient due to increase of population. New forest lands were cleared. Due to the peculiar geographical features, insularity and atmosphere conducive to agriculture, animal husbandry and commerce, compared to people in other regions, a different life style prevailed and continued unabatedly. People in this part between mountain and sea, Kanya Kumari (Capecomorin) and Gokarnam remained aloof for millions of years from other people. Those people who engaged in different vocations suitable to the particular situation of their dwelling places using their own peculiar implements and tools did not forget about spiritual matters even when they were busy with worldly things.

1.7.2. Aryanisation of *Kaavus*

With the advent of Aryans and the resultant strengthening of the kings, society was split into different strata. The working class became the lowest in the social hierarchy. They were relegated to the background.

Kaavus were at one time Dravidian worship places. They were very simple eco-system. The deity worshipped was an unshaped piece of granite. Large or attractive structure was absent in this system. Worship of mother goddess was prevalent in these *Kaavus*. Here every body had equal access to the deity. There was no caste system or hierarchical strata. As every child

of a mother is equally important to her, mother goddess was easily accessible to everybody. The forms of worship in these *Kaavus* were very simple.

With the supremacy of the Aryans, this scenario changed. In place of small granite pieces, big and magnificent structures sprang up. The new temples were called *Melkaavu*. Former *Kaavus* became '*Keezhkaavus*' (upper and lower one). Society was stratified. Only people of the higher strata of the hierarchy were allowed to worship in the new temples. Finally, the original owners were alienated from their worship places. They were allowed to enter the *Keezhkaavus* during the festival season only. It is to assert their right to see their mother that they conduct *Kaavutheendal* and *Kavettom*. It is believed that the Mother goddess Devi takes delight in carrying out mischievous assaults of minor nature by her devotees. Every *Kaavutheendal* or *Padeni* is an effort towards entry into the temples. *Thookkam*, prevalent in *Bhagavathy Kaavus* until recently may be remnant of human sacrifice that prevailed. The sanctum sanctorum and the idol now found are not where they formerly existed. *Kaali*, *Neely*, *Kotha* and *Ottamulachi* have been replaced by deities such as *Bhadra*, *Durga*, *Parvathy* and *Karthyayani*.

Remarks of Koonezhuthu Parameswara Menon supports this view, "In the place of idols, which were erected in open atmosphere under a tree, big constructions in different shapes and styles sprang up. Flag masts, compound walls and gates were erected. These completely changed the structure of *Kaavus*. [---]Worshipping simple abstract form of stone was

usual. It was replaced by figures with different forms and materials.”³⁸

1.7.3. Temples and *Kaavus*

When caste system became more and more rigid, *Kaavus* were replaced by temples with stone, brass or even golden idols. Instead of groves, magnificent buildings were constructed. The ruling class allotted vast areas of land to these temples and the temple administrators became the centre of power and wealth. The real inhabitants of this land were branded as *untouchables*. With the might of money and power, they were suppressed and they were deprived of their natural rights. They were denied the right to worship in temples also.

1.7.4. Evolution of rituals and sacrifices in *Kaavus*

Human beings have an umbilical relationship with forests and trees. *Kaavus* and worship related to *Kaavus* were quite natural. Even primitive man realized the importance of preserving environment. He led an eco-friendly life and nurtured a worldview conducive to the necessity of protecting the environment. Later, to give sanctity to these concepts, simple rituals might have originated.

According to Chelanat Achyutha Menon, “From time immemorial human history is governed by the relationship with the trees. That is why banyan and other trees got divinity. It was later; abode of other primitive deities came to be called as *Kaavus*.”³⁹

Kaavu means a grove or group of trees. *Kaali* was first worshipped in roots of trees. There was no ritual dance or drama in *Kaavus*. It was with the advent of Brahmins sacrifices replaced simple rituals. New myths based on

Sanskrit texts were added to the history of respective *Kaavus*, and the method of worship became very complicated.

According to G. Bhargavan Pillai, "New songs, stories and music related to Puranas were about mother goddess. In addition, ritual dramas evolved. Mother goddess was war deity also. Local chieftains and kings worshipped by offering sacrifices." ⁴⁰

The performance and myth of *Malavaayiaattom* is intertwined with the culture, worldview and customs of the *Paraya* community who perform *Malavaayiaattom*. According to *Paraya* community, *Neeli* or *Malavaayi* is one of the feminine divine spirits prevailing in the *Kalladikode* Mountains near *Mannarghat* in Palakkad district. The members of *Paraya* community perform *Malavaayiaattom* as part of their ritual. For a study of *Malavaayiaattom*, understanding of the culture, arts and tradition of *Paraya* community is essential.

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Chapter 2

Parayas-the performers of Malavaayiaattom

Malavaayiaattom being an art form of the *Paraya* community, a study of the culture and tradition of the community is necessary. Moreover, *Malavaayi* (*Cheruneeli, Malavaazhi, Karineeli and Malavarathamma*) is the tutelary deity of the *Paraya* community. Their life is deeply merged with the belief and cult of *Malavaayi*. *Malavaayi* worship is part of their personal and social life. Society once viewed them as the practitioners of 'Oti' cult, the tutelary deity of which is *Malavaayi*. The *Paraya* community belongs to scheduled castes. *Parayas* not only worship traditions, but also practice them. *Paraya* community preserves the traditional culture. As per the list of Scheduled castes, they are called *Paraiyan, Parayan, Sambavar, Sambavan, Sambava, Paraya, Paraiya and Parayar*.¹

In certain areas, *Parayan* priests are called as *Valluvans* also.

According to K.S.Singh, "They are notified as *Parayans, Pariah, Sambavar and Sambavan or Samban and Adi Dravida*."²

As per Census of India 1931, "They polluted the upper castes by approach within 72 feet. Many among them live by making mats and baskets and practising witchcraft, as magicians, they are much feared especially by the lower castes. Their principal cult is *Oti* the patron goddess is *Neeli of Kalladikode*."³

According to Chelanat Achyutha Menon, "*Parayans* are the lowest among the slave castes. They live by making mats and baskets and practicing witchcraft."

2.1. Origin of the term “Paraya.”

There are diverse opinions regarding the derivation of their name. Even now, some of them are drummers. Some connect them with the name of drum- *Para* to their caste name. However, any specific term cannot be ascribed to their name.

According to Edgar Thurston, “The late Bishop Caldwell derived the name *Paraiyan* from the Tamil word *parai* a drum, as certain *Paraiyans* act as drummers at marriages, funerals, village festivals and on occasions when Government or commercial announcements are proclaimed.”⁴

According to L.K.Anantha Krishna Iyer, the word *Parayan* is derived from '*Para*' a drum. The *Parayans* delight in drum beating and are generally called on to act as drummers in marriages funerals and village festivals.

Some say that they are of the drummer caste and they attained their name from the instrument.

According to Edgar Thurston, M.A.Stuart questions this derivation remarking, "It is only one section of *Parayas* that act as drummers. Nor is the occupation confined to *Parayas*. It seems in the highest degree improbable that a large and at one time powerful, community should owe its name to an occasional occupation, which one of its divisions shares with other castes. The word *Paraya* is not found in *Divaakaram*, a Tamil dictionary of the eleventh century A.D.”⁵

Hence, it cannot be said that the word *Paraya* is derived from the word 'parai'. The word *Paraya* has become a synonym of outcaste. That is how the word 'pariah' crept into the English dictionary.

2.2. Myth regarding the origin of the community

The Brahmins ascribe the origin of the *Parayans* and other low castes to the connection of Brahman women to the low caste men.

To quote L.K.Ananthakrishna Iyer, "The word "*Parayan*" also means an outcast from every caste. The *Parayan* calls himself to this day "the elder Brahman," claiming in this manner precedence over the Brahman." ⁶

People of *Paraya* community believe that they are descendents of Saint *Sala Sambavan*. That is why many of them are known as *Sambavan*.

To quote Edgar Thurston, "In a note on the *Parayans* of the Trichinopoly district, Mr.F.R.Hemingway writes on *Parayas*, "They have a very exalted account of their lineage, saying that they descended from the Brahman priest *Sala Sambavan* who was employed in a Siva Temple." ⁷

2.3. Tradition of the community

It may be supposed that *Parayans* have been very early settlers of the land and representatives of the ancient Dravidian population.

L.K.Ananthakrishna Iyer writes, "In the Cochin State, the *Parayans* are found almost every-where in the rural parts and are probably the descendents of those of the Tamil Districts, who must have immigrated to these parts in remote times." ⁸

Thiruvalluvar Nayanar, Avvai, Vaishnavar Alwar, Saivite saint *Nanda* and in the modern age, renowned musicians *Ilayaraja* and *Mohan Sithara* belong to this community.

According to L.K.Ananthakrishna Iyer, "Before the advent of Aryans, the *Parayans* had a very exalted position. In *Sangam* literature there are many references showing that the educated *Parayas* and *Panan* had a high position in king's court. *Thiruvalluvar Nayanar*, the author of '*Kural*' and his so-called sister the famous poetess *Avvai* and *Vaishnavar Alwar* were the most famous among them. The great Saivite saint *Nanda* is well-known to the Hindus of all castes." ⁹

Parayas are said to be the early settlers of the land. They are the representatives of the ancient Dravidian population. They are proud of the descendance from the legendary *Paakkanaar*. According to myth *Paakkanaar* was one among the sons of *Vararuchi*, a Brahmin courtier of King *Vikramadithya*. According to legend, he had twelve children in a *Paraya* woman. *Paakkanaar* and *Mezhathur Agnihothri* were among them. There are families claiming descendance from these families near *Koottanad* in Malappuram district. *Mezhathur* is a *Namboothiry* Brahmin family claiming descendance from *Mezhathur Agnihothri*. *Eerattinal* family claims descendance from *Paakkanaar*. When there is some kind of pollution in any of the families due to death, it is a period of mourning to the other family also. This denotes the strong roots of the legend connected with *Vararuchi* in this region.

2.3.1. Right of entering the temple

Though *Parayans* now occupy a low position, they still cherish the memory of their former greatness. They possessed some privileges. It is evident that they could not have gained it from the Brahmins. From the accounts of L.K.Anantha Krishna Iyer and Edgar Thurston, 90 years ago, it is noted that they had the right of entering the temple three days a year, specially set apart for them.

According to Ananthakrishna Iyer, "Even now, a *Parayan* annually becomes the husband of Egathal, the tutelary deity of the George Town in Madras and actually ties the *Tali* or marriage badge round the neck of the image." ¹⁰

The headman of the *Parayans* mounted on the elephant and carried *Venchamaram* (Yak tail). At Sriperumpudur of the Chinglepet district also, they had the privilege of mounting on the elephant. During the festivals of Kanjeevaram, Kumbakonam and Sreevilliputhur, they were also allowed to take part in pulling the *Ratham* (chariots carrying the idols).

They had the right of entering the temples three days a year, specially set apart for them. At Melkote in Mysore, they were granted the privilege of entering the sanctum sanctorum along with the Brahmins until 1799. It is also recorded that Brahmin women used to worship at *Paraya* shrines in order to beget children and *Paraya* exorcists treated Brahmins by uttering Mantras.

According to Edgar Thurston "At Melkote in Mysore, the chief seat of the followers of Ramanuja Acharya and at the Brahman temple at Belur, the Holeyas or *Parayas* have the right of entering

the temple on three days in the year specially set apart for them.”¹¹

2.3.2. Sanctity of *Parachery*

According to another legend, a Brahman considers himself polluted by the touch, presence, or shadow of a *Paraiyan* and will not allow him to enter his house, or even the street in which he lives. *Paraiyans* will not allow a Brahmin to enter the *Cheri*. Should a Brahmin attempt to enter their quarters, water mixed with cow dung was thrown on his head and he was driven out. The following quotations are ample evidence to the fact that the *Parayans* are people with self-esteem. They had high position in the society in spite of casteism.

According to Edgar Thurston, “However, it is not so well known that the *Paraiyans* will not allow a Brahmin to enter the *Cheri*. Should a Brahmin attempt to enter their quarters, water mixed with cow dung is thrown on his head and he is driven out.”¹²

Edgar Thurston quotes Captain J.S.F. Mackenzie, “Some Brahmins consider a forsaken *Paracheri* an auspicious site for an *Agrahara*.”¹³

Parayans have long-standing connection with the soil than that of other castes. They are trustworthy also. In some parts of Tamilnadu, there was a practice of making a *Paraiyan* walk the boundaries of a field, with a pot of water on his head, when there was any dispute about their exact position. This is the evidence for the connection of the *Paraiyans* with the soil and their integrity.

In this connection Edgar Thurston records, "Mr. Stuart records a custom, which prevails in some parts of making a *Paraiyan* walk the boundaries of a field with a pot of water on his head, when there is any dispute about their exact position." ¹⁴

2.4. Worship of *Neeli* and the *Oti* cult

Paraya community belongs to the Hindu religion. However, they are untouchables. Their principal form of worship is mother goddess named *Karineeli* or *Malavaazhi*. *Malavaayi* is another form of *Kaali*. They also worship *Chathan* and *Karimkutty*.

Valluvan was a man of recognised priestly rank and of great influence. Therefore, the *Parayans* had identity in respectable society. The people of *Paraya* community act as priests to other castes also. As magicians, their principal cult is *Oti*, the patron of which is '*Neeli*' of *Kalladikode*." The worship of *Neeli* and practice of *Oti* cult by the *Paraya* community is centuries old. It is obvious from the following quotations.

According to L.K. Anantha Krishna Iyer, "*Nayadis* are animists and they believe in the existence of certain demoniacal gods namely *Mallan*, *Malavaayi* and *Parakkutty*, who are supposed to live in the hills and forests watching over their welfare." ¹⁵

According to Chelanat Achyutha Menon, "As magicians their principal cult is *Oti*, the patron of which is '*Neeli*' of *Kalladikode*." ¹⁶

Parayas of both Tamilnadu and Kerala worship mainly mother goddesses. In Tamilnadu, the chief deities are called *Mungilamma* (bamboo goddess), *Padeiyattal* and *Parapottamma*. In Kerala their guardian, deity is '*Neeli*'. She

is believed to be seated in the mountains of *Kalladikode* in Palakkad district. There is a temple of *Neeli* in *Kalladikode*. *Neeli* is also called *Karineeli*, *Malavaayi*, *Malavaazhi* (one who rules mountains), *Cheruneeli* and *Malavarathamma*. A platform in the name of *Malavaayi* is constructed in *Paraya* habitats. *Pooja* is performed here regularly. *Malavaayiaattom* is performed around this platform. *Neeli* is also related to 'Oti' cult for which the *Parayans* are notorious.

On the cult of *Oti* and worship of *Karineeli*, Edgar Thurston writes, "The guru initiates him into the brotherhood by the performance of *Pooja* on an auspicious day to his favourite *Neeli*, called also *Kalladikode Neeli*" ¹⁷

According to Kavalam, "In the rural areas, they used to be consulted on problems connected with theft and *Paraya* magician was supposed to help to recover the stolen articles." ¹⁸

In the opinion of L.K. Ananthakrishna Iyer, "*Oti* cult is said to be the cult of breaking human body by magic. It is the name given to a kind of black art practiced by the *Parayas*. It was believed that those who are proficient in this black magic could render themselves invisible. They can also assume the form of anything, like animals. There is still a superstition that they entice pregnant women from their houses at midnight to destroy the foetus in the womb, even if the door of the room in which she sleeps is locked. The foetus of the woman is extracted and after many processes, *Pillathailam* (infant oil) is made. It is believed that the *Otiyan* who does the black magic of *Oti* using the oil does much black magic."

[.....]"In 1834 the inhabitants of several villages in Malabar attacked a village of *Parayas* on the alleged ground that deaths of people and cattle and the protracted labour of a woman, had been caused by the practice of sorcery by the *Parayas*. They were beaten inhumanly with their hands tied behind their backs so that several died." ¹⁹

It is very shameful and dismaying that the *Paraya* has to face a similar situation incident in this computer age. A *Paraya* near Pattambi in Palakkad district was hacked to death on the suspicion that he practised 'Oti'.

2.5. Secret language

It is very interesting that the *Parayas* have a secret language all over Kerala, though with regional variations. It is spoken even now. It is not known whether it was a dialect of the community members or merely a medium for exchanging confidential matters among them. This language is occasionally used during the performance of *Malavaayiaattom*. Only the older generation is conversant in this language. Because of this strange dialect and different cultural identity, some claim that their homeland must have been the mountains.

Some words used by *Paraya* community as secret language is noted below.

വിണ്ണൂൻ (*Vinnian*)-Parayan

അനമ്പൻ (*Anamban*)-Ezhuvan

കൂമ (*Kooma*)-house

പടിമാനം (*Padimanam*)-west

- കലച്ചൻ (*Kalachan*)-Pulayan
 തെമ്മാനം (*Themmanam*)-south
 കെമ്മാനം (*Kemmanam*)-east
 മേക്കുക (*Mekkuka*)-drink
 പൂണി (*Pooni*)-lord
 കർപ്പർക്ക (*Karparka*)-Arrack
 വിണ്ണൂത്തി (*Vinniethy*-Paraya woman
 കുളുപ്പ് (*Kuluppu*-child
 നടത്തി (*Nadathy*)-cattle
 മന്നം (*Mannam*)-toddy shop
 മാറോടിലായി (*Maarodilayi*)-understood
 അനമ്പ് (*Ananbu*)-Toddy
 കൂനാണ്ട (*Koonanda*)-conversation²⁰

2.6. Occupation of the *Parayas*

The chief occupation of *Paraya* is making of wickerwork products. They make baskets, bamboo mats and umbrellas. Until recently with few exceptions, all their women were basket makers and weavers. The men supply them with bamboo and sometimes take part in the work. The tools of the basket makers are of the simplest character, those necessary for the harvesting of the material and those used in the manufacture. The males make fine splints of bamboo and the women weave them. However, bamboo has become scarce and costly. Plastic items replace wickerwork. Hence, the *Paraya* community cannot depend upon their traditional occupation.

According to L.K.Ananthakrishna Iyer "*Parayans* follow their old occupation, namely, the manufacture of wicker work (baskets), bamboo mats and umbrellas." ²¹

2.7. The present position of the Paraya community

Though the *Parayans* occupy a low and despicable position, in the places where they live, they preserve and still attach importance to the memory of their former greatness and regard themselves as the original owners of the soil. There are many instances to show that they were at one time in a flourishing state and they possessed privileges, which they could not have gained from Brahmins.

People of *Paraya* community are born artists. Their life from birth to death is full of rituals and celebrations. On the 28th day of birth, when a girl attains puberty, for the marriage and even after death there is music and dance. *Chakkadupattu* also accompanies funeral ceremonies. When the grave is dug, there is a *Chakkadukottu* (beating of drum). For 13 days this continues. *Mudiyaattom* (swirling of hair) accompanies almost all rituals of this community. *Kalikettu*, *Kettumuhoortham*, *Manjakkali*, *Kodumkali* and *Karuvelikku Parayal*, are some other art forms of the community. Their instrumental music known as *Kadiyanakkam* (*Kottippaattu*) is very complex and interesting. *Malavaayi* is the tutelary deity of the *Paraya* community. Performance based on the myth of *Malavaayi*, the performance of *Malavaayiaattom* is described in the next chapter.

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Chapter 3

Malavaayiaattom - Performance

Malavaayiaattom is deeply rooted in folk tradition. Their music is predominantly folk music. It is a group activity with complete audience participation. Such participation leads automatically to identification that is intimate with the characters. The verbalisation of audience reflects the feelings and affords good opportunities for the release of hostility and tension.

The description of *Malavaayiaattom* is based on the following performances.

Edakkalathur Chandran and troupe at Ayirakkeri house, Urakam

Paapu Asan Pengamuck and party at Thayyur

Sankaran Thippilissery and party at Puliyanur.

Kanjirakode K.C.Babu, at Thrissur

Kallur Unnikrishnan, Kunnamkulam.

Dasan and party at Kechery.

Interviews were conducted with the following persons.

C.D.Sivadas, 'Nikunjam', Muthuvara.

C.C. Velayudhan Master, Choondal house, Choondal

C.C.Devan Master, Choondal house, Ayyanthole.

Parkan, Kandanakam, Edappal.

Paapu Asan, Pengamuck

Kallur Unnikrishnan, Kallur, Kunnamkulam.

Edakkalathur Chandran, Edakkalathur.

Sankaran, Thippilissery, Akkikkaavu.

Sankaran, Pazhavor, Thayyur.

K.K.Devan Master, Manthoppu, Chowannur.

Sankuru Asan, Nambazhikkad, Mattom.

3.1. Concept of Karineeli or Malavaayi

In almost all Paraya habitats, worship places are constructed for *Muthappan* and *Malavaayi*. According to the Parayas, *Malavaayi* belongs to *Kalladikode*. *Neeli* or *Malavaayi* is a primitive goddess believed to have lived among the tribes of Kalladikode. Once, Kalladikode and its suburbs were the habitats of sorcerers. It is presumed that when the tribal people began to live in plains, leaving their habitats in the mountains, they brought to the plains their tutelary deity also.

The verbal meaning of *Malavaayi* or *Malavaazhi* is one who rules the mountains. She is also called *Malavaarathamma*, *Karineeli* and *Cheruneeli*. The temple of *Malavaayi* is at Muthikkulam in the dense forest in the ravines of *Kalladikode* Mountains in Mannarghat Taluk in Palakkad District. Tribal people worship in this temple. For *Pongal* on the first of *Makaram*, tribals celebrate *Mattuppongal*. One can reach the temple only by trekking through dense forests for 12 kilometres.

Earlier *Panan* and *Parayan* community were notorious for the 'Oti' cult, sorcery alleged to have been practiced by the *Paraya* community. People believed that they could even do impossible things through the practice of 'Oti' cult. Some of them were said to disguise themselves and kill

their foes and engineer the abortion of pregnant women. This propaganda became a curse to them. They are even now ill-treated and tortured in the name of *Oti* cult. Nevertheless, because of this, higher caste people were once afraid of ill-treating these people. *Malavaayi* is believed to be the patron of *Oti* cult. Offerings to *Malavaayi* became widespread and part of the life of *Paraya* community. Hence, it is no wonder that *Malavaayi* plays much influence in their life. They honestly believe that propitiation of the goddess will bring prosperity and peace to their family and the locality.

Paraya community firmly trust that *Malavaayi* is with them through thick and thin (*Eettalum Pettilum*). Therefore, they think that their destiny is tied with the fury and blessings of *Malavaayi*. To propitiate the goddess, every year a performance is conducted in front of the worship places of *Paraya* community. This is conducted during the festival season.

There are many references on *Malavaayi*.

G.Bhargavan Pillai remarks that, "*Kalliyankaattu Neeli*" is very famous. *Neeli* or *Neeliyar kottai Neeli* is in front of the *Pazhassi fort*. She was the tutelary deity of the warrior people. Near *Alacode* in Kannur, tribals perform *Neeli Theyyam*. Near Pittana in Neeleeswaram, there is *Neeli* temple. *Neeli Kaavus* are present in Elaranji and Edaner Madhom in Kasargode." ¹

According to Chummar Choondal, "*Malavaayi* is a symbol related to primitive culture of tree worship, forest conservation and cattle rearing. Not only people of *Mannan* community worship deities like *Mundiyan*, *Mookkaan Chaathan Kolavan* and *Malavaayi*. *Paraya* communities have special poojas for *Malavaayi* drawing

kalam and preparing *Kuruthi*. Among certain tribes of Wynad also worship of *Malavaayi* is seen.”²

Chummar Choondal quotes another reference, “In *Malamakkali*, there is a reference to *Neeli*. “ *Kalladikkodu Malayile, Kalladinjam parayile, Muppathirandu kuruvadivetti*”³

“*Kalladikkodu vazhum karineelikku Puthravaramillathiri-kkumkalam*

Puthravarangalinnu tharane Sivane.”⁴

3.2. Myth of Malavaayiaattom

According to the myth of *Malavaayiaattom*, when *Bhadrakali* was born from the third eye of lord Siva, twins also were born. They were *Malavaayi* and *Mookkaan Chaathan*. They spent their childhood in *Kalladikode Mountains* famous for sorcery and black magic. While wandering, they met their father Lord Siva and asked to accept their parenthood and to find them a livelihood. Nevertheless, Siva was not to accept this claim easily. He entered into a quarrel with them and challenged them to prove their mettle and abilities if they were his children.

They decided to demonstrate their divine powers. They stopped sunrise and sunset. The sun stood still. There was neither sunrise nor sun set. Siva enquired about it and came to know that it was the work of *Malavaayi* and *Mookkaan Chaathan*. He called them to *Udippanam* and asked them; if they were so powerful let the former position of the sun be restored. They brought the sun to the former position and the sun again began to rise and set. Having been convinced of the powers of his children Lord Siva recognised their powers and gave them *Thirunandam*’ (boon).

They asked him in what direction they should go. Lord Siva directed them to go towards west.

They started towards west and proving their powers, they collected necessary money, materials, ornaments and weapons from people of different occupations. After the odyssey, they reached *Kalladikode Mountains* and there they constructed a black fort and cave. They seated themselves there facing the west.

According to C.D. Sivadas, "There is divinity throughout the performance, reading between the lines, it is a symbolic fight of the depressed communities to subdue the feudal lords who were exploiting them." ⁵

3.3. Age of the performance

On analysis of the structure and language of *Malavaayiaattom*, it is certain that the performance is centuries old. The language of *Malavaayippaattu* has no influence of Sanskrit literature. In the dialogue *Nayadis*, primitive language is used. *Nayadi* is a primitive tribe, which possesses tribal characteristics. According to caste hierarchy, the mere sight of a *Nayadi* pollutes a caste Hindu. The relations points to the association of the *Paraya* community with the *Nayadis*. It supports the contention that *Paraya* community recently migrated from the forests. Mention of *Kalladikode Mountains* and stress on *Udippanath Udi Bhagavan* (Sivan) is ample proof to show that the place of origin of the caste is the mountainous region. The enactment of *Nanjum Nayattum*, killing of wild boar etc. emphasizes this concept.

3.4. Geographical Area of Performance

Malavaayiaattom is performed in a rather small geographical area. It is performed in adjoining places where Thrissur, Malappuram and Palakkad districts converge. The main area of performance is Talappilly Taluk. A small area of Pattambi and Thrissur Taluks also are arenas of this performance. Even though *Malavaayiaattom* is performed outside the geographical area of the performance, the performers are from places mentioned earlier. The main influence for this is their matrimonial alliance with families in the earlier mentioned areas of performance. There are many performance groups in Talappilly Taluk who performs the *Attom* even outside the district.

In Palakkad district, there are *Paraya* habitats where *Attom* is conducted without break. Nevertheless, in some cases, there is no performing group. Troupes from other areas stage the performance. A map showing the geographical performing area of *Malavaayiaattom* is attached.

3.5. Period of performance

Malavaayiaattom is performed during festival season. Festival season in Kerala begins from the *Makara Chovva*, in the month of January. With the advent of this month, the rainy season stops. Agricultural activities are over. Paddy fields become barren. Season of paddy cultivation being over, people are in a relaxed mood. During the festival season, the weather will be sunny. Extreme heat is felt in the season. At night, people love to remain outside. There is company of others and they engage in music, dance and other cultural activities. That is the reason why this season became the festival season. Festival season ends with *Pathamudayam* in the month of *Metom* (April). With the commencement of the month *Edavam*, which falls on May

15th, the rainy season begins. That is why the festival season ends at that time. The season spreads for four months. Weeks just before *Vishu* is the peak time of the performance. In rare cases, *Attom* extends up to the end of *Metom*.

3.6. The date of the performance

In some places, performance is conducted on a particular date in a year usually on a '*NaI*' (star, one of the 27 stars in a month) on a particular star. In other cases, performance is conducted as part of a vow. In this case, though it is conducted every year, the date can be changed. If there is any pollution in the family, due to birth or death, performance is conducted only after the completion of the pollution. The date of the performance is fixed according to the following conditions. (1) The availability of the performance troupe (2) Availability of money (3) Absence of any pollution like death, birth or any other incident.

Even though they cannot conduct the performance, they have no fear about adverse effect. It is due to financial shortage or adverse circumstances beyond their control. They believe that it is because of *Malavaayi's* will. They also think that had they *Malavaayi's* consent for the performance, they could have got the opportunity to conduct the performance. Although there is belief in fate, they do not leave the responsibility to *Malavaayi* alone. They try their level best together. Usually they do not go for collection of money by donation. Even then, relatives and neighbours voluntarily contribute in the form of money and materials.

3.7. Objectives of the performance

The performance is conducted with the following objectives.

- (1) They believe that the performance will bring prosperity to their family, relatives and locality.
- (2) If they have any curse from any other deity or any other supernatural beings, they think that *Malavaayi* is powerful to remove it.
- (3) Along with *Malavaayiaattom*, rituals are conducted for other deities also. So with the performance of *Malavaayiaattom*, other deities are also propitiated.
- (4) People of *Paraya* community are ancestor worshippers. They believe that the performance of *Malavaayiaattom* and the connected rituals propitiate their ancestors.
- (5) At the end of the performance, there are oracular forecasts by *Malavaayi*. Each member of the family is called, their problems heard and some solutions are suggested to the devotees. Some past incidents are recollected and some forecasts are made. They wait for long for this occasion to come. *Malavaayi* gives them the holy '*Thoolarpodi*'- leftovers of offerings.
- (6) Performance of *Malavaayiaattom* is a hilarious occasion. People join, laugh together, dance, pray, sing and sleep. There is companionship and intimacy, which becomes a nostalgic experience.
- (7) Prevention of epidemics and natural calamities is also one of the objectives of conducting *Malavaayiaattom*.
- (8) Prosperity of agriculture is one of the aims of conducting *Malavaayiaattom*.

Another attraction is the oracular prophecy by the deity. The technique of arousing personal ego is very much used here. At the end of the performance, *Malavaayi* calls each and everyone, tells some incidents of the past and forecasts their future. In many cases, *Malavaayi* acts as a mediator and many longstanding family feuds are settled.

3.8. Time of performance

The actual performance time of *Malavaayiaattom* is 12 hours i.e. from 10 hours in the night to about 10, o'clock in the morning next day. However, the preparation for the performance starts from the noon itself. Even before that, the space is made ready. The preparation of different powders and items for the rituals is completed. The preparation for performance involves strenuous and hectic work, which requires the co-operation of everyone participating in it as both spectators and actors. The performance commences only when the preparations are complete. The rituals of performance end only the next day. Still there are some ritualistic ceremonies to be completed. After collecting the materials and taking bath it is time for meals. Hence, performance span extends up to 24 hours. Usually performance connected with *Kaali* takes place only after midnight. Important rituals of *Malavaayiaattom* also take place after this time.

Midnight is considered a spiritually crucial time. During this time, nature undergoes rapid changes. Early sleepers or late sleepers, every living being, go to bed by midnight. Even plants begin to take rest. It is this time when spirits become active. Hence, the time after midnight is believed to be the ideal time for invoking spirits.

In *Malavaayiaattom*, the time of performance is not rigidly adhered to. The rituals start after meals. After meals, the performers one by one take the instruments and start tuning it. Others join them. When it is seen that everybody has assembled, the rituals also begin. The end of the performance is also in the same manner. When their respective roles end, the performers stop the performance, take a bath and get ready for the lunch.

3.9. *Malavaayithara* -performance space of *Malavaayiaattom*

The temple of *Malavaayi* is in *Muthikkulam* in the *Kalladikode* mountain ranges near *Mannarkadu* in Palakkad district. *Malavaayithara* is mainly constructed in the habitats of *Paraya* community. Construction of *thara* varies according to the financial condition of the families. In some cases, *thara* is made of country bricks. It is plastered with mud. On occasions of performance and other auspicious days, it is scrubbed with cow dung and sanctified. In certain habitats, *Malavaayithara* is constructed with laterite stones. In some places, granite also is used. It is a cubical shaped construction. The length of the *Malavaayithara* varies from three feet to five feet and width two feet to four feet. The idol of *Malavaayi* is a shapeless granite piece of about eight inches. Another piece of the same shape represents *Muthappan*. *Muthappan* is another character in *Malavaayiaattom* who is also called *Mookkaan Chaathan*, *Mundyen*, *Kalladi*, *Maani* and *Maanikkaran*. A wick lamp is lighted on this *thara* daily. Special poojas are conducted on auspicious occasions. *Malavaayithara* and its premises are considered as a holy place and any kind of pollution is avoided.

Malavaayithara is constructed on the eastern side of the house. It is considered as a sacred place. Everyday traditional lamp or wick lamp is lighted on the *Malavaayithara*. It is not possible to construct *Malavaayitharas* in all households. Hence, the practice is that one *Malavaayithara* is constructed for each *Paraya* habitat.

This practice is followed even now. Usually the premises of the *Malavaayithara* are made sacred by planting trees like *Pala* and banyan. There will be an atmosphere of a *Kaavu*. Besides *Malavaayithara*, depending on the space available and the financial capacity some other constructions are also erected adjacent to it. Other constructions are *Muthappanthara* and *thara* for *Kodungallur Bhagavathy*. However, they have only secondary importance. In some places, *Karimkaali* is also worshipped. On these *tharas*, small pieces of shapeless granite stones are fixed representing each deity.

On special occasions, these platforms are cleaned, cow dung is smeared and *Pooja* is conducted. There is a special cavity on *Malavaayithara* devoted to *Chaathan* for lighting a wick lamp. Lamps are lighted on the top of the *thara* also. Special *poojas* are conducted to purify *Malavaayithara*. Usually there are no slabs or other constructions on the top of *Malavaayithara*. However, on other platforms like *Muthappanthara* or *Bhagavathythara*, a small roof is constructed and photos of gods are fixed. It is a recent development. The dimensions of *Malavaayithara* is noted in the *Thottam* itself. '*Ayyayiram Kalluvetti Adipaatti and Muvvayiram Kalluvetti Mudipatti*' (*Molu Mudichu*) (Basement is constructed with 5000 stones; Upper structure is constructed with 3000 stones).

It is said that in ancient days, elders went to *Kalladikode* and spent there many days, they studied the mantras, rituals and the performance of *Malavaayiaattom*. It was only then that they constructed *Malavaayitharas*, consecrated the deity and conducted *Poojas*.

Even now, *Malavaayiaattom* is performed in open space. The space is not roofed. There is no curtain or background in the performance of *Malavaayiaattom*. Cow dung is smeared on the floor for preventing dust and consecrating the place. There is no special seating arrangement.

The *Malavaayithara* is constructed facing west. *Poojas* are conducted facing east. Performers first do some rituals facing the east and start performance. Other than this practice, there are no particular entry places or exit for the performance arena. When the performer ends the performance, he bows before the *Malavaayithara*.

3.10. Preparations for the *attom*

Malavaayithara, the performance space *Malavaayiaattom*, is marked by hanging tender coconut leaves around it. Bamboo posts are fixed on the periphery of the space. Coir ropes are tied connecting these posts and tender coconut leaves and mango leaves are hung on it. Different figures using tender coconut leaves are made and they are hung on the rope. They include figures of birds, animals, ball etc. The colour of tender coconut leaf is very attractive. It makes the space auspicious. Traditional bell metal lamps are lighted and placed on all *tharas*. Besides, fire torches (*Pantham*) are erected at different spots for adequate light. The performance arena has a festive look. With the tender coconut leaves, red silk cloth and glowing bell metal lamps, the space of *Malavaayiaattom* performance becomes

mesmerizing. Even though the performance place is *Malavaayithara*, every inch around *Malavaayithara* turns as space.

The performance space is arranged days before. The premises where *Attom* is conducted is cleared of bushes and cleaned. The ground is levelled. A *pandal* (a temporary shed using bamboo and coconut leaves) is constructed one or two days in advance. The floor of the *pandal* will be swept with cow dung. This is done in advance so that the floor is dried before the performance.

Materials for *pooja*, like coconut, tender coconut leaves, areca sheath, rice and paddy are collected well in advance. Colours for preparing different *Kalams* are made. Usually five colours are used for drawing *Kalams*. Organic colours are prepared for this purpose. The performers prepare the colours. Black colour is prepared using charred rice husk. Rice powder is used for white. Turmeric is powdered for yellow. Red colour is prepared by mixing turmeric and lime in a certain proportion. Green powder is prepared by drying the leaves of *Vaaka* tree (*Acacia Adoratisma*). Blue colour is prepared by mixing rice powder with ultramarine.

The performing troupe arrives at the place in the morning itself. They start the preparations after taking a bath and prepare different colours, flowers, etc. By evening, all arrangements are made. Relatives start coming. Relatives also help in preparing for the performance. Everybody participates in one or other activity. A feeling of oneness and sharing is present everywhere. In the meanwhile, arrangements are made for the preparation of food. Though not sumptuous, food is supplied to all present. After nine o' clock, all assemble near the *Malavaayithara*.

3.11. Characters

Malavaayi and *Mookkaan Chaathan* are the main characters in *Malavaayiaattom*. *Mookkaan Chaathan* is also called *Mundiyan*, *Maani*, *Muthappan* and *Kalladi*. They are sister and brother. Other characters are the *Nayadis* and the *Thandan* of the toddy shop.

Only men enact the role of all characters. Women have active participation in the performance. One of the main features of *Malavaayiaattom*, the occasional *Mudiyaattom* which makes the performance live, is performed by women. The rituals also start with bringing of the materials for rituals by the oldest woman in the family to the performance space. This provides evidence to the fact that the performance of women was not a taboo. The reason adduced for the non-participation of women in major roles is that of physical exertion. The costumes of *Malavaayi* like *Kaalchilampu* and *Aramani* are very heavy. It needs much physical exertion and stamina to perform for such a long time. In other theatre forms like *Padayani*, *Mudiyettu* and *Theyyam* also, actors are men.

3.12. Theatre text

A text of the performance is appended as annexure of the thesis. C.C. Devan Master, Choondal house, Ayyanthole, collected the text. The text of *Malavaayiaattom* is traditionally transferred orally. There is no written text. Hence, different texts exist among different performance groups. There are regional differences also. *Malavaayippaattu* is the theatre text. It is dissimilar in different localities.

Malavaayiaattom begins with the ritual *Oottariyikkal*. In *Oottariyikkal*, mother *Malavaayi* is hailed and she is requested to be present in the arena

of performance. In this song, *Kizhakhu Udivaaram*, *Padinjaru Asthudivaram*, *Vadaku Vavunda* *Balipeedhom* and *Thekku Thiruppeedhom* (corners of east, west, north and south respectively) are hailed. Four directions and forty-two corners are also hailed. The sky and earth are hailed. *Ayyappan*, *Ganapathy* and *Malavaayi* are as well hailed in the song. It is after some time the *Attom* begins. Before beginning the rituals, *Malavaayi Thottam* is recited. The seat of *Malavaayi* is described in the *Thottam*. *Malavaayi* is thanked for the help being rendered to the family. She is requested to protect them and to save them when there is a crisis.

The rituals start with *Balipooja*. In *Balipooja*, peculiarities of rituals of different castes are described. According to the *thottam*, the chanting of Vedas indicates Brahmin's rituals. The length of the cloth gird around the waist points to the *Nair* influence. The ringing of bells can make out *Ezhava* rituals, *Pullons* by the sound of *Pulluva Veena*, and carpenters by the small wooden planks. Their long ritual sword reminds us of black smiths, *Mannans* by their *Nanduni*, *Paakkanaars* by their percussion instruments and *Pulayans* by the sound of *Kuzhithalam*.

After *Balipooja*, the story of *Malavaayi* and *Mookkaan Chaathan* starts. This part describes about how *Malavaayi* and *Mookkaan Chaathan* obtain boon from their father, Lord Siva, *Udippanath Udibhagavan* or *Udippanath Appan*. They met their father and asked him to accept their parenthood and to find them a livelihood. However, Siva was not to accept this claim easily. He challenged them to prove their mettle if they were his children. They decided to prove their divine powers. They stopped sunrise and sunset. The sun stood still on the third day. *Udippanath Appan* called an

Astrologer. After many computations, the astrologer forecast that it was due to the dissatisfaction of the children of the mountains that the sun was neither rising nor setting. Lord Siva enquired about it and came to know that it was the work of *Malavaayi* and *Mookkaan Chaathan*. Lord Siva called them to *Udippanam* and asked them if they were so powerful; let the former position of the sun be restored. They brought the sun to the former position and the sun again began to rise and set. Lord Siva, convinced of the powers of his children recognised their powers and gave them *Thirunandam*' (boon). He gave them 12 *Kathams* of land for settling and 120 *Kathams* of land for their livelihood.

Later they asked him in what direction they should go. Lord Siva directed them to go towards west and bestowed them with other boons. When they were wandering, to take rest, both of them were sitting under a small jackfruit tree. They decided to make a test on *Vayyanattilampilavu* (small jackfruit tree.) First, they dried it circumambulating the plant seven times. When they went from the *Vayyanattilampilavu*, they again circumambulated and rejuvenated it. Having been convinced of their magical powers, they again set out on their journey.

They went towards west to *Odanad*. At *Odanad*, they met the *Moosary* (bell metal worker) and asked for *Ponnaradichilampu* (bell metal anklet). *Moosary* told them that for generations, they did not have the practice of giving the bell metal anklet as donation. On the third day, it was found that the children of *Moosary* suffered from some illness. Their moulds were found damaged. They called for the local astrologer. The astrologer discovered the curse of *Malavaayi* and *Mookkaan Chaathan* as the reason

for the troubles. The *Moosary* challenged that if they were so powerful, let the illness of his children be healed and let his moulds become right. On the third day, the illness of the children was healed and the moulds became right. They warned that those who met them for donation were not mere thieves, old men or children, but the gods of the mountains.

From the *Moosary* they collected Anklet, *Mulachirattas*, (bell metal fake breasts) *Kazhuthoot*, *Marthali*, *Jekaru* and *Chettian*. In this manner, they collected *Vanchimaram* from *Vanchikkunnath Patanair*, *Vanchi* from *Paakkanaar*, *Mula* (bamboo) from *Mulankunnath Patanair*, *Vellaattanimudi* from *Paakathiar*, peacock feather from *Peelikunnathu Patanair*, sickle from *Karuvan* and *Vatti* from *Kannappulacherumi*. From *Chettiar* son of Palakkad *Chettiangadi* they collected *Pullikkarimkacha*. From *Chettiar* of *Kongamam Nadu* they got bulls.

In the section of *Nanjum Nayattum* in the beginning, all corners of earth, sky and earth are hailed. They set out for a journey on a Wednesday. They took the screw pine bag, rice, tobacco and other materials in a bag. On the way, *Malavaayi* and *Mookkaan Chaathan* passed many places. They reached a paddy field in *Kuttanad*. They met a *Pulaya* girl who was sweeping there. They asked her way to *Kallathru Muthappan's* place. She said that it was not easy to go to *Kallathru Muthappan's* place. She described *Kallathru Muthappan's* place. The gate of *Kallathru Muthappan* was very strong. The latch was moved by a horse and locked by an elephant. Then she told the way to *Kallathru Muthappan's* place. First, they met *Kallathru Muthyamma*. She told that it was very difficult to open the

gate. It was at that time *Kallathru Muthappan* came and permitted them to enter.⁶

Malavaayi and *Mookkaan Chaathan* told *Kallathru Muthappan* that they came to acquire knowledge from him. They studied many things from *Kallathru Muthappan*. On the way back from *Kallathru Muthappan's* place, they took rest under a Jackfruit tree (*Vayyanattilampilavu*). To test his newly acquired powers, *Mookkaan Chaathan* dried the jackfruit plant. *Malavaayi* did not like the action of her brother. Using the magical powers, she rejuvenated the jackfruit tree. With that, they began to quarrel with each other. There was a fierce battle between them. Nobody won or lost in the fight. At last, they came to a compromise to share everything in adversity and prosperity. (*Nanjilum Nayattilum*). As a gesture of compromise, they went hunting and engaged in agricultural activities. Hunting of the boar is described. They go to the interior of the forest and disturb the wild boar. The wild boar goes to the next mountain. They chase it and kill it.

In *Arimpuncha*, different vocations related to agriculture like ploughing, levelling, of the boundary, plucking and planting of the seedling, harvesting, making hay and threshing are described vividly. In the *Malayanpaattu (Chempu)* (tribal song-colachasia), eight corners of the world, the sky and the earth are hailed. The landlord calls the *Parayan* to plant colachasia. His wife joins him in planting colachasia. The third day *colachasia* buds take the form of a pin and develops leaves and on the tenth month, it flowers hinting that it has become ripe for harvesting.

In *Malayanpaattu-Ambumvillum* (tribal song-bow and arrow), cutting of bamboo and making of the bow and arrow are described. Rituals of

cleaning and consecrating are described in *Atithalipooja*. The last part of the *Malavaayi* song is the blessing of the sponsors of the *Attom*. They are blessed so that all their misfortunes are removed and their family and children flourish.

3.13. Rituals

The rituals of *Malavaayi* start with prayers.

Malavaayiaattom starts with eulogizing sun and other natural and supernatural forces. It goes thus.

Daiveeswara, Daiveeswara,

Udichuvarunna Bhagavane

Pantheerayiram Padaakkuthire

Thirumanassundakkitharanam

“My god, my god, the rising Lord, twelve thousand fighting force, have blessings on us.” The sky, the earth and eight corners are hailed and prayed for help. The interesting feature of the prayer is “Sathyam undakkitharane”- meaning let truth triumph. It is obvious from the *Thottams* that the performance and prayers are not for personal gains, but for the universal well-being. There is no selfish end at all. Whatever may be the outcome; they are always for truth and pray for the prevalence of it. *Malavaayiaattom* is performed for a noble cause. Social good is the goal in this case. Hence, individual interest subservient to social interest.

3.14. Rituals

Only ritualists will be present near the *Malavaayithara* when the rituals of the performance of *Malavaayiaattom* start. There is no definite start or end

as in the modern theatre. As the rituals start, one by one, the audience joins the ritualists and it becomes a big conglomeration.

To quote A.K.Nambiar, "At first only the priests will be there. Later they are joined by family members as audience and metamorphosis into a social festival and later into a village festival." ⁶

3.14.1. Oottariyikkal

The first item of the performance of *Malavaayiaattom* is *Oottariyikkal*. This is the counter part of 'Keli' in *Kathakali*. *Oottariyikkal* announces that there is a *Malavaayiaattom* performance. Minimum instruments used for *Oottariyikkal* are one *Chenda* one *Maram* and one '*Kuzhal*'. The number can be increased.

In *Oottariyikkal* all corners of the universe, all mountains are hailed. Lord *Ganapathy* is hailed to remove all types of hindrances. He is prayed for the well-being of the performers. The evolution of the universe is depicted in these songs.

വാഴ്ക വാഴ്കമ്മേ വാഴ്ക വരിക ദൈവമേ
 നിറവഞ്ചികളും നിറപൊലി വാഴ്കമ്മേ
 കിഴക്കുതന്റോരി കിഴക്കുദിവാരം വാഴ്കമ്മേ
 പടിഞ്ഞാറുതന്റോരി അസ്തുതിവാരം വാഴ്കമ്മേ

(Hail mother hail abundant agricultural produce. Four directions and forty-two corners were seen born. After the birth of soil and earth, grass and flowers are seen born. Where Sastha was born, *Muthappan* also is born)

വാഴ്ക വാഴ്കമ്മേ നിറപൊലി വാഴ്കമ്മേ
 നാലുദിക്കും പിറന്നേ നല്പുത്തി രണ്ടു കോടിയും പിറന്നു കണ്ടേ
 മണ്ണും ഭൂമിയുമതാപിറന്ന പിറവിയാലെ

പുല്ലും പുഷ്പാദികളും പിറന്നു കാണുന്നു

ശാസ്താവും പിറന്ന പിരിയിലകത്തേ

മുത്തപ്പനും കൂടിയതാപിറന്നു കാണുന്നു

Prayers are made for the family members and the performers.

ചുണ്ടക്കാരുടെ കുടുംബം നാലാമേടത്തെ

ആപത്തനർത്ഥങ്ങളും പുറം നീങ്ങളെ

ഗണപതിയെക്കൊണ്ട്പാടിയവനെ

കയ്യും കണയും പേർന്നു വരട്ടെ

The percussion recital is an announcement to the village and serves as a gathering call to all devotees, that the ritual is about to begin. After *Oottariyikkal* other rituals like floor drawings start. Drawings are made on the *Malavaayithara* itself. Five organic colours are used for floor drawings. At first *Kalam* for *Malavaayi* is drawn. It is drawn facing the east. *Malavaayi Kalam* is a circular one. Colours used for *Malavaayi Kalam* are yellow, white and red. The outer circle of the *Kalam* is connected to the centre of white lines. The lines are double lines. For this, white rice powder is put on a stick with flat surface and the powder is wiped. The place where the stick was placed becomes blank and the powder falls on either side of the stick forming parallel lines.

The white lines intersect two circles, outside the outer circle; semicircles are drawn in white colour. Alternate semi circles are drawn in white colour. Remaining semi circles are filled with white, yellow and red powder. The diameter of *Malavaayi Kalam* is less than two feet.

On the left of *Malavaayi Kalam*, *Muthappan Kalam* is drawn. *Muthappan* is *Mookkaan Chaathan*. *Muthappan Kalam* is cross-shaped. It is

small compared to *Malavaayi Kalam*. The lines of *Malavaayi Kalam* are drawn with a stick and the *Kalam* is filled with red and yellow powders.

On top of the *Muthappan Kalam*, bow and arrow are drawn in white powder. Its size is about six inches. Near it, a sickle and a *Kambu Muram* (a bamboo container to winnow cereals) is also drawn in white powder. After the drawings are over, the matter is informed to the chief and arrangements for the poojas are made.

It is the duty of the women to arrange material for the rituals in the *Malavaayithara*. A group of women bring these materials from the house to the *thara*. In the front, a woman holding a *Nilavilakku* (traditional bell metal lamp) leads the group. Just behind her, another woman carrying the *Pooja* articles goes and after her, other women carry the materials. They circumambulate the *thara* three times. Each time they reach in front of the platform, they pray to *Malavaayi*. After that, the main *Pooja* articles are placed on the *thara*. A bottle of toddy is also placed on the *Malavaayithara*. Usually the oldest woman of the family brings these articles.

The main singer of the *Malavaayippaattu* is also the head of the performance group. He acts as the head priest also. He blesses the woman carrying the *Pooja* articles putting his hands on her head.

The sickle brought by the woman is kept on the *Malavaayithara* in an upright erected position. A basketful of paddy and a *Vettukathy* (machete) is also placed on the *Malavaayithara*. A coconut, husk removed and cleaned, is broken using the *Vettukathy* in front of the *Malavaayi* idol. The coconut water is sprinkled on the *Malavaayithara*. Coconut pieces are placed on both sides of the idol. One wick lamp is lighted in each coconut piece. Two

glasses of toddy also are placed on the *Malavaayithara*. The toddy glasses are covered with pieces of plantain leaves. Wick lamps are lighted on the plantain leaf pieces.

When these rituals are going on drum beating begins. Two *Marams*, two *Chendas* and *Kurumkuzhal* are used. The rhythm of this drum beating is called *Kottikkoottu*. Four men take the glasses and circumambulate the *Malavaayithara*. When they pass each side of the *Malavaayithara*, they stoop and then stand erect. The circumambulation takes place three times. After that, they place the glasses on the *Malavaayithara*, and vermilion is applied on the forehead of the *Malavaayi* idol.

Water is kept in the *thara* in front of the *Malavaayi* idol in a *Kindi* (a spouted bell metal pot). Different flowers and *Chuvanna Thulasi* (*Ocimum sanctum*) is offered after dipping it in water. After the offering of flowers and observance of some rituals, they drink the toddy kept in the bottles. These offerings are accompanied by drum beating. The rhythm of this movement is called *Kottikkoottu* or *Vadakan thalam*. All these rituals together are called *Korikkoottal*. When the rituals are over the drum beating also stops.

The chief of the performance troupe makes some forecasts. He utters some words on the efficacy of the rituals. This forecast is called *Adhikaaram Parayal*. After *Adhikaaram Parayal*, drum beating starts again. During this time, members of the family and their close relatives pray before the *Malavaayithara* and prostrate before the head priest and the head of the family.

Malavaayi and *Mookkaan Chaathan* are the main characters in the performance. *Malavaayi* dances throughout the performance. She is always

active. Her dance is in the *Thandava* style with quick steps without any interaction with the audience except at the time of *Velipat* (oracular forecast). It is rather impossible for an ordinary person to keep on dancing for such a long time extending to about 14 hours. Hence, different performers do the role of *Malavaayi*. The first performer will be from among the members of the family where the *Malavaayiaattom* is performed. Usually the elder son from the younger generation takes the role.

Before the performer dons the costumes of *Malavaayi*, he prostrates before all elders present. This is a very solemn occasion as taking up of the role is considered as a privilege. The youth and his family will be proud of it. The main performer who enacts the role of *Malavaayi* puts *Thalaseela* on his head and blesses him putting his hands on his head when he prostrates before the main performer. Then the performer sits on a stool kept in front of the *Malavaayithara*. The chief priest helps him to wear the traditional *thattu*. As a prelude to wearing the *Kaalchilampu* (a bell metal ornament worn on the ankle), the performer holds the *Chilampu* in both his hands and with great devotion circumambulates the *Malavaayithara*. While doing so he turns to the four sides of the *Malavaayithara* and shakes the *Chilampu*. Before putting on the *Kaalchilampu*, *Kaamath* (a special screw pine mat) is tied on the ankle to avoid any type of injury due to friction caused by the heavy *Kaalchilampu*. Because of non-availability of special type of screw pine mat, performers have begun to use cloth instead of mat.

Malavaayi wears a white cloth. It is starched and folded. Rice water is used to make the cloth stiffen and to keep the folds intact. It is worn on top of the traditional *Thattu*. On top of it a red silk cloth is worn. Now other

ornaments like *Mudippuvu*, *Chettian*, *Marthali* and *Aramani* are also worn, with the help of other people. *Aramani* keeps the clothing tight and functions as a belt. *Vanchi* is tied on the shoulders and wrists. Sandal paste is applied on the body. White lines are drawn on either side of the eyes with rice powder paste.

As the rhythm of the drum beating changes, *Malavaayi* takes her steps. The stress is on the legs so that the movement of the legs is easily recognized by the sound of *Kaalchilampu*. The sound of *Kaalchilampu* can be heard above all other sounds.

With firm footsteps, *Malavaayi* stoops and rises with stretching hands as if she is collecting energy and strength from the earth and distributing it. The dance assumes the form of *Thandava*.

3.14.2. Entry of *Mookkaan Chaathan*

When *Malavaayi* continues dancing, *Mookkaan Chaathan* prepares for his entry. *Mookkaan Chaathan* or *Muthappan* is preparing to come to the performance arena. *Mookkaan Chaathan's* preparations and *poojas* are made in a place made sacred inside the house. A particular place is earmarked for this purpose. A small *Kalam* is drawn on the floor inside the room. A traditional bell metal lamp is lighted. Some *Poojas* are conducted in front of the *Kalam*. *Mookkaan Chaathan* himself does the *Poojas*. Some raw rice and rice powder is kept in a plantain leaf. A coconut piece full of sandal paste is also kept. *Mookkaan Chaathan* applies the paste first on his forehead and then other parts of the body. He folds his hands and applies paste on the hand. Sandal paste is applied on the legs in a circular design. *Mookkaan Chaathan* also wears the traditional *thattu*. Over the *thattu* a red

silk dhoti is worn. He also wears a white vest. A long white towel is tied on his head. Over the waist *Aramani* is worn.

As part of the ritual, *Mookkaan Chaathan* sprinkles toddy in the *Kalam* for the ancestors. He drinks the left over toddy in the glass. Before starting for the performance, *Mookkaan Chaathan* prostrates before the *Kalam* and holds the two sticks. Before starting, he hoots.

ആറപ്പേ.....ആഹേ.....ഏയ്.....ഏയ്.....

താനിന്ന താനിന്ന താനിന്ന താനിന്ന

താനിന്ന താനിന്നാനോ.....

സരസ്വതി ഗണപതിയേ ശിവ പാർവ്വതിമാരേ നിങ്ങൾ

തുണയായ് അടിയന് കൂടെ വേണം

താനിന്ന..... താനിന്ന.....

അണിഞ്ഞൊരുങ്ങി ഞാൻ ആനന്ദത്തോടെ

ഇറങ്ങാൻ പോണ്ട്

കല്ലടിക്കോട് മുത്തപ്പൻ ഞാൻ

കള്ളാടിയെന്ന് പേരു വന്നു

താനിന്ന..... താനിന്ന.....

നാലില നടമുറ്റത്ത് ഇറങ്ങി ഞാൻ പാടുമ്പോൾ

മുത്തപ്പനും മലവായിയും...കൂടെ വേണം

കല്ലടിക്കോട് മുത്തപ്പൻ ഞാൻ, കള്ളാടിയെന്ന പേരുവന്നു.....

അയിരിക്കാർ തറവാട്ടിൽ നീണ്ടാക്കൊക്കെ മടക്കിയോ

അപ്പുണ്ടോ? ഇയ്യാളുടെ അപ്പനെയല്ല, അപ്പം.

ഒരു കുപ്പി കോഴി കൊണ്ടുവരിക, അല്ല, കള്ള് കൊണ്ടുവരിക

ഒരു കെട്ട് ഓല കൊണ്ടുവരിക, അരക്കെട്ടായാലും മതി.

എന്റെ കയ്യിലുള്ളത് കാണിച്ചു തരാം

കോരുകുട്ടൽ തുടങ്ങുകയാണ്

After a *Vaythari* (humming), *Saraswathy Ganapathy* and *Siva-Parvathy*, Please accompany me for help. After make up, I am hilariously going for the performance. When I perform in the sacred courtyard, *Malavaayi* and *Mookkaan Chaathan*, please be with me. I am *Kalladikode Muthappan* and got the name *Kallaadi*. *Mookkaan Chaathan* prostrates before the guru. He dances around the *Malavaayithara*. Simultaneously *Malavaayi* also is dancing. *Mookkaan Chaathan* does some rites, recites *Thottam* filled with humour.

ഊരകത്തമ്മ തിരുവടിയുടെ തട്ടകത്ത് ഞാൻ വന്ന ഗുരുക്കൾമാരിക്കരിക്കണ സ്ഥലത്ത് ഞാൻ വന്ന് ഈ സഭയിൽവന്ന് വിളങ്ങിപ്പോവാൻ അനുഗ്രഹിക്കണമെന്നെ. ഗുരുവിന്റെ പേരുപറഞ്ഞ് അനുഗ്രഹം വാങ്ങുന്നു. അറുമുഖ സ്വാമിയെ കൈവണങ്ങുന്നു. ആകാശത്തോട് മുതുകുംചാരി ഭൂമിയോട് പൊക്കിളും ചാരി നിൽക്കുന്ന ഉണ്ണിഗണപതിയെ വണങ്ങുന്നു.

ദൈവീശ്വരാ..... ദൈവീശ്വരാ.....

ഉദിച്ചു വരുന്ന ഭഗവാനേ.....

പന്തീരായിരം പടക്കുതിരേ.....

തിരുമനസ്സുണ്ടാക്കണം

My God! My God! The rising sun! Have mercy on us.

In the monologues of *Chaathan*, he refers to many contemporary issues and expresses his general awareness.

അയ്യയ്യേ നീ അലഞ്ഞ് തിരിഞ്ഞ് നടക്കണ നേരത്ത് ഊരകത്ത് ഉണ്ടെന്ന് അറിഞ്ഞ് അയ്യയ്യോ

(എല്ലാവരും അയ്യയ്യോ എന്ന് പറയുന്നു.)

നേരമ്മ പെങ്ങളേ ആടിയോടി തെളിഞ്ഞുകണ്ടു.

പെങ്ങളെ തെരഞ്ഞ് പല സ്ഥലത്തും നടന്നു ഊര-(അ)കത്ത് ഒരുവിധ രാജ്യങ്ങൾ പെങ്ങളേതേടി തെക്ക് തെക്ക് തിരുവനന്തപുരം ആലപ്പുഴ കൊല്ലം കോട്ടയം ഇടുക്കി അരി വിള

കാരമുള്ള മൂന്നു കുർപ്പിച്ച് കാതുകുത്താനിരിക്കുന്നേരം
 നോവുണ്ടെങ്കിൽ പച്ചിലമേൽ നോക്കിയിരുന്നോടി
 കാതിൽ രണ്ടിലും കടക്കുനിട്ട് മുല്ലപ്പുനിറമുള്ള ചേലൊന്നു കാണാൻ
 എന്തൊരു ചേലടി പൊന്നു
 അക്കരെ നിന്നു മാരാ വഞ്ചിക്കാരൻ തുണക്കാരാ
 ഇക്കരക്കൊന്നു വരുമോ അക്കരെ നിന്നു മാരാ ഇക്കരക്കൊന്നു വരുമോ
 കരിമ്പനോലയിൽ മുത്ര മൊഴിക്കുമ്പോൾ പര പര ശബ്ദം
 മുത്രമില്ലാണ്ടാണോ ഓലയില്ലാണ്ടാണോ
 ഇപ്പോൾ പണിയില്ല, ചെക്കൻ വലുതായാൽ പണിയിച്ചോളും
 മരുന്ന്-അമ്മികുന്ന്, കോഴിമുത്രം
 പണ്ടക്ക് പണ്ട കാർന്നന്മാരുള്ളകാലം പല്ലും തേക്കാറില്ല കൂളിക്കാറുലു
 കാട്ടു മുല്ലേ കരിം ചീരേ കറുത്ത മുത്തേ ഉറണും കഴിഞ്ഞുറക്കുമായോ
 ആനവതാരം പുണ്ടൊരു ആനക്കല്ല് കാണാൻചെന്നു
 അത്ഭുതമായൊരു ആനക്കല്ല് കണ്ടപ്പോൾ.....
 ആദ്യാനുരാഗം ആദ്യത്തെ ചുംബനം മറക്കുവാനാകുമോ മരിക്കുവോളം
 നേരത്തെണിക്കടിപെണ്ണേ മുറ്റമടിക്കടി പെണ്ണേ മാറ്റാൻ വീട്ടിൽ പോകേണ്ടവളെ

"I was searching for my sister. She was found in good position." He tells many stories, sings folk songs. It is rest time for *Malavaayi*.

3.14.3. *Kalasadal*

According to the rhythm of drum beating, four men holding glasses with lighted wicks circumambulate *Malavaayithara* in a particular rhythm stooping and then rising. First, they do this clockwise facing the *Malavaayithara* and then in the reverse pose. After circumambulating three times, they stop dancing. The rhythm of drum beating during this time is called *Vadakkanthalam*. At least three *Marams*, three *Chendas* and one *Kurumkuzhal* are used in this concert. The number can be increased to any

extent. After stopping the dance, vermillion is applied on the forehead of *Malavaayi* idol. *Kindi* (a tailed bell metal container) is kept on the *Malavaayithara* and some rituals are done with the water from it. After that, everyone participating in the rituals takes toddy. Arrack also is served.

Rituals just before *Malavaayi Thottam* are called *Korikkoottal*. The rhythm during this period is called '*Kadiyanakkam*' and '*Chittakkai*'. After the *Korikkoottal Thottam*, the travel of *Mookkaan Chaathan* and *Malavaayi* to *Udippanathappan's* place is described. During their long wandering for a permanent dwelling place, they got a copper plate. On the copper plate, it was inscribed that their origin is from *Udippanam*. *Udippanam* is the seat of Lord Siva. From this copper plate, they understood that they were children of lord Siva. They started for *Udippanam* to ask for *Thirunandam* (*Varam*, boon). They reached *Udippanam* and asked Lord Siva to acknowledge their parenthood and to give them boon. However, Siva questioned their claim and rejected their request. He insisted that if they were his children they had to prove their supernatural powers.

കല്ലോവാഴച്ചമ്മേ, മുല്ലത്തെ വാഴച്ചമ്മേ

മുല്ല പുത്തൊരു പുപൊലി വാഴച്ചമ്മേ

ഉദിപ്പനത്തപ്പന്റെ ഇടകണ്ണിൽ പൊട്ടി വലകണ്ണിൽ തേതിരിഞ്ഞ്

ഇണപോലെ രണ്ടാളവർ ആങ്ങളയും പെങ്ങളും

അയ്യോ എന്റൊരു ഉദിപ്പനത്തപ്പാ ഞങ്ങൾക്ക് ഇരിക്കാൻ ഭൂമി തിരുനണ്ടം തരണേ

അയ്യോ എന്റൊരു മടിപിറന്ന മക്കളേ ഇരിക്കാൻ ഭൂമി തിരുനണ്ടം തരില്ല

അയ്യോ എന്റൊരു ഉദിപ്പനത്തപ്പാ ഞങ്ങള് ഇരിക്കാൻ ഭൂമി തിരുനണ്ടം വാങ്ങിയേ

പോവാളെളൊ

Malavaayi and *Mookkan Chatham* decide to prove their might. They make the sun stand still.

അതിക്കും തലേന്നെ മൂന്നാം ദിവസാണെ ഉദിക്കേണ്ടെടത് ഉദിക്കണില്ല
 ഏന്തിക്കേറേണ്ടെടത് ഏന്തിക്കേറണില്ല
 ഇത് എന്തൊരു കഷ്ടകാലാനറിയില്ല ഇത് എന്തൊരു ശൂന്യപ്പിഴയാണെന്നറിയില്ല
 ഇത് എന്തൊരു കഷ്ടകാലാനറിയില്ല ഇത് എന്തൊരു ശൂന്യപ്പിഴയാണെ

Udippanathappan calls for an Astrologer. The astrologer explains that sunrise and sun set halted because the children of the mountain were dissatisfied.

പണിക്കരു വന്നതാ നാളും പേരും നോക്കൂപ്പോ മടിപിറന്ന മക്കളുടെ ഉപദ്രവം
 കാണുന്നേ

ഇരിക്കാൻ ഭൂമി തിരുനണ്ടം കൊടുക്കാത്തതു കൊണ്ട് ഉദിക്കേണ്ടെടത് ഉദിക്കണില്ല

ഏന്തിക്കേറേണ്ടെടത് ഏന്തിക്കേറണില്ല

Siva challenges that if they are so much powerful, to reinstate the sunrise and sunset.

പണിക്കരു വന്നതാ നാളും പേരും നോക്കൂപ്പോ മടിപിറന്ന മക്കളുടെ ഉപദ്രവം
 കാണുന്നേ

ഇരിക്കാൻ ഭൂമി തിരുനണ്ടം കൊടുക്കാത്തതു കൊണ്ട് ഉദിക്കേണ്ടെടത് ഉദിക്കാത്തത്

ഏന്തിക്കേറേണ്ടെടത് ഏന്തിക്കേറണില്ല അത്രക്കും സത്യമുള്ള മടിപിറന്ന മക്കളാണെങ്കിൽ

ഏന്തിക്കേറേണ്ടെടത് ഏന്തിക്കേറട്ടെ.

Malavaayi and *Mookkaan Chaathan* again prove their mettle. Satisfied with his children's divine powers, Lord Siva gives enough land for them to settle. Then they ask him in which direction they should go. He directs them to go towards the west.

They start from *Udippanam* towards west. Once having proved their power, they want to test it further. First, they test it on a jackfruit sapling,

which dries, and later, they rejuvenate it. Having become confident of their power they want to acquire whatever is due to them. First, they go to *Odanad*. There they meet the (ഓടനാട്ട് മുശാരി) *Moosary* (Bell metal worker) and ask him to give (കാൽച്ചിലമ്പ്) *Kaalchilampu* as offering. The *Moosary* replies that for generations they have not given *Chilampu* as offering. On the third day, after the *Moosary's refusal*, the products made in the mould of *Moosary* were found damaged. On the third day from that date, the children of *Moosary* fell ill. They call the (കണിയാരുപണിക്കർ) (local astrologer). The astrologer predicts that the problems faced by *Moosary* are due to the curse of. (മലയിൽപ്പിറന്ന ദൈവം) gods of the mountains. When offerings are made to the deities, moulds of *Moosary* become right and the illness of his children is cured.

Besides (കാൽച്ചിലമ്പ്) *Kaalchilampu* they collect (മുലാറ്, മുലച്ചിരട്ട), *Mularu* (കഴുത്തുട്ട്) *Kazhuthoottam*, (മാർത്താലി) *Marthali*, (ജെകറ്റ്) *Jekaru* and (ചെട്ടയാൻ) *Chettian* from the *Moosary*. Later they meet (വഞ്ചിക്കുന്നത്ത് പടനായർ) *Vanchikkunnath Patanair* and collect (വഞ്ചിമരം) *Vanchimaram* (Wood for boat). With that wood they meet (പാക്കനാർ) *Paakkanaar* for making *Vanchi*. For making (വെള്ളാട്ടണിമുടി) *Vellattanimudi* bamboo is needed. For it, they meet (മുളകുന്നത്ത് കാവ് പടനായർ) *Mulangunnathukaavu Patanair*. For *Vellaattanimudi* (Headgear) they meet *Paakathiar*. (പാക്കത്തുവർ). From *Peelikunnathu Patanair* (പീലിക്കുന്നത്ത് പടനായർ) they collect (പീലി) plume of peacock for *Vellaattanimudi*. Get (അരിവാൾ) sickle from the *Karuvan* (Blacksmith) and also collect *Vatti* (വട്ടി) .Screw pine bag from (കണ്ണപ്പുലച്ചെറുമി) *Kannppulacherumi*. Later they go to Palakkad (ചെട്ടിയങ്ങാടി) *Chettiangadi*

(Merchant street) and meet (ചെട്ടിയാർ) *Chettiar* (Merchant) and collect (പുള്ളിക്കരികച്ച) Pullikkarimkacha, (dotted black cloth). From *Chettians* of (കൊങ്ങമം) *Kongamam* they get bulls.

All of them first turn down the request. However, when revengeful steps were taken on them using divine power, they through astrological predictions identified the reasons for the disaster. They got rid of the catastrophe by giving the mountain gods whatever they asked. After getting necessary costumes, they fixed Wednesdays and Fridays for (കലശാട്ടം) *Kalasattom* (festival of a deity to propitiate it). *Malavaayi* danced wearing costumes with her screwpine bag and sickle. When they were going from one place to another brother and sister lock horns. They fought each other. No one won and none was defeated. At last, they come to a compromise. This is enacted in *Balipooja*. In *Balipooja*, peculiarities of rituals of different castes are described.

3.14.4. Nanjum Nayattum

Nanjum Nayattum (adversity and hunting) is the most interesting and important of the scenes of *Malavaayiaattom*. They are abundant with rituals connected with the fertility cult. In these scenes clearing of forests, ploughing of soil, sowing the seeds, harvesting and different steps in cleaning paddy are vividly enacted.

By the time the song on *Thirunandam* (boon, offering) is over, it will be three o'clock in the morning. The performer of *Malavaayi* is substituted. It is the main performer of *Malavaayiaattom* performing the scene. The look of *Malavaayi* becomes fiercer as time advances.

Nanjum Nayattum begins with the feud between *Malavaayi* and *Mookkaan Chaathan*. During the performance, *Mookkaan Chaathan* teases *Malavaayi*. She frequently becomes very furious. Then they enact the role of fighting each other and go round the *Malavaayithara*. This time percussionists start the drumbeating. They play *Kottiyadikkal*. They move to the four sides of the *Malavaayithara*. Then *Malavaayi Thottam* begins. *Malavaayi* enters the house and comes back quickly, with piercing eyes bites her teeth, jumps, and swirls.

3.14.5. The fight

The fight between *Malavaayi* and *Mookkaan Chaathan* continues for a long time. The fight is enacted by going around the *Malavaayithara*, dancing with the quick rhythm of the percussion instruments. At the climax, the performer of *Malavaayi* falls into a trance. The drummers shift to slow rhythm. People around *Malavaayi* hold her. She touches her fore head on the *Malavaayithara* and her *Thalaseela* is removed. *Mookkaan Chaathan* will be continuing his tricks. The drumming is stopped for a while and the performer takes rest. After the rest, the drumming beating begins again *Malavaayi* still maintains an aggressive mood. *Mookkaan Chaathan* and *Malavaayi* take a coconut each. They roll them to each other. *Mookkaan Chaathan* mimics *Malavaayi*. Very primitive language is spoken at this time. *Mookkaan Chaathan* and *Malavaayi* use secret language of the *Paraya* community now. The dialogues are sarcastic.

3.14.6. Hunting

The next ritual is simulation of hunting of a wild boar. They go to the forest for hunting of wild boar. Their sound and movements make the

animals go out of their den. Both of them chase the boar. The boar escapes to the next mountain where *Malavaayi* and *Mookkaan Chaathan* chase it. *Mookkaan Chaathan* has a bow and arrows in his hands. Hunting is enacted with vivid expressions.

3.14.7. Nayadis

It is believed that some *Nayadis* accompanied *Malavaayi* in their expedition. They ask permission for their departure. While speaking they hit with a pestle on the floor. They are given gifts like one bale of cloth, one bundle of betel leaves and toddy. *Nayadis* leave blessing them. They speak very primitive language.

3.14.8. Arimpuncha

Malavaayiaattom being a fertility rite, different agricultural vocations are either sung or enacted. *Aripuncha* is a scene when different activities of agricultural production are described. Cultivation of land, strengthening of *Varambu* (boundaries), ploughing, levelling, removing of weeds lifting and replanting of seedling, budding of paddy and its ripening are described in the *Aripuncha* song. These activities are mimicked during the song.

Harvesting, threshing, making hay and beating of hay are different scenes enacted during *Aripuncha* song. In these scenes, beating of hay and collecting the gleanings of paddy is given importance. The paddy thus obtained is the right of the agricultural worker, as remuneration for the work of preparing the hay and stacking it. By the time the work is completed, it is very late. They go to the toddy shop, but find it closed. The *Thandan* (Ezhavas in erstwhile Cochin State are called *Thandan* with respect) is in

deep sleep. He is called and asked for toddy. There is a very informal conversation among them. *Thandan* demands pending dues to be closed. *Chaathan* and *Malavaayi* say some excuses. They speak many things in double meaning. *Malavaayi* tells that the amount will be paid soon. She offers jackfruit next time. *Thandan* recalls *Malavaayi* addressing her *Cherotti*, gives her some more toddy. The scene is a beautiful enactment of feud and compromise and love among villagers. They are quite naturally enacted. The spectators feel that what is seen is real. The dialogues are not stereo types and are quite spontaneous. Some current affairs are also discussed in their conversation, until it is five o' clock in the morning.

3.14.9. Karithiri

After the *Puncha* cultivation, *Mookkaan Chaathan* and *Malavaayi* come from the field very late. For light, they use some small fire torches (*Thirikol*) made of stick and cloth, dipped in oil. The fire torches are lit on both ends. *Malavaayi* bites one *Thirikol* in the middle; holds *Thirikol* in her either hand. This ritual is called *Karithiri*. This is a very terrifying role of *Malavaayi*. She is in a very fearsome mood. With rage, she bites her hand until blood comes. At this time, *Chaathan* praises her and gradually she becomes calm. Very effective lighting techniques are used in these scenes. The fierce expressions of *Malavaayi* are very effectively projected in this light. Accompanied by the quick rhythm of the drums, *Malavaayi* dances in a terrifying manner. At this scene, singing is stopped to project her facial expressions. However, the drumming continues. *Karithiri* is a very frightening scene. Children begin to cry seeing the expressions of *Malavaayi*. Here the whole figure of *Malavaayi* seems to be shining. At the same time, there is

light and shade impact, with the darkness outside. The light of the lamp, which *Malavaayi* holds on her mouth, reflects from her eyes giving a fearsome look.

3.14.10. Kulikuri

After a day's strenuous work, *Malavaayi* and *Mookkaan Chaathan* take bath. The scene of taking bath is vividly enacted in *kulikuri*. They apply oil, *thaali* (herbal shampoo), wipe the body with a bath towel, and then wash their clothes. A plate of water is kept near the *Malavaayithara* and bathing is symbolically enacted. They help each other to apply *thaali* and wipe the body after bath. The acting of this scene is excellent. With the end of the *Kulikuri*, *Thalaseela* is removed from *Malavaayi's* head. Stretching the bath towel, she moves in frenzy roars.

Malavaayi takes the sickle in her right hand and *Vatti* (screwpine bag) in the left hand. She takes *Thavidu* (remnant of offering) from the bag and spills it. She calls all *Kuttatu Kutupaatu*. She declares that one who is born among the downtrodden has come. She goes inside the house to *Padinjatti* and comes back. In the meanwhile, there is a dialogue with those in the room, calls everybody to the *Pandal*. She declares that one who is born in the mountain has come. One who is born in the forests has come. First, she calls the head of the family and then the women of the family and discusses about the family feuds. When there is any interruption or cause for distraction, she makes loud noise and stops others from interrupting. To keep her mood active she makes different sounds and recites some *Thottam*.

Malavaayi continues her oracular forecast. To keep her mood active different sounds are made.

കല്ലടിഞ്ഞ കല്ലടിക്കോട് നാല്പത്തിരണ്ട് അടിവാരം

നീലിയെന്നൊരു ഇളമ്പിലാവ് കാളിയെന്നൊരു കരിമ്പാട് കുട്ടാട്കുടുപാട്

മലയപ്പൊന്നവൾക്ക് നിവർത്തിക്ക്

വിളിച്ചു വിളിപ്പുറത്തും നടക്കും വഴിയീലും മലയപ്പൊന്നവളുണ്ട്

She applies (കണ്മഷി) *kanmashi* (eyeliner) to make her looks sharp and fierce. She puts a black spot on the forehead. To warm up and regain her active mood a peculiar step is taken and a big sound is made. She gives (ഭസ്മം) *Bhasmam* (ash) to the devotees and opens screwpine bag with the sickle. She then takes തവിട് (*Thavidu*) (remnant of offering) from the വട്ടി (*Vatti*) (screwpine bag) and gives it to the devotees. With the sickle, she hits on the necklace and on her hands.

Now it is seven o'clock in the morning. The audience is in a mood of intense devotion. Many family feuds come to the fore. Women become happy when their in-laws are reprimanded. When the forecast is found right, *Malavaayi* goes round the *Malavaayithara* and reiterating it. If the oracles are found wrong, she makes loud noise, recites some *Thottams* and changes the stand. She takes firm and speedy steps. She prays to the deities and comes back as if she has new enlightenment. Occasionally she demands മരവെള്ളം (*maravellam*) (Tree liquid, toddy). Then calls (നേരാങ്ങളേ, നേരെകുഞ്ഞാത്തുനേ) "*nerangalle, nere kunjathoon,*" (direct brother, direct sister in law) in intimate words. Gives a different interpretation, elicits necessary clue from the public, argues and establishes her arguments. Somehow, she convinces the audience.

3.14.11. Concluding ceremonies

It is on the south of the Malavaayithara, *Bhagavathy Kalam* is drawn. *Bhagavathy Kalam* is for the *Kodungallur Bhagavathy*. For preparing the background for the *Bhagavathy Kalam*, charred paddy husk is spread for black background. On the black background, a geometrical drawing is made using white colour (rice powder). There are sixteen squares in the *Kalam*. Squares in the *Kalam* are filled with yellow, red and white colours. The corner squares and adjoining squares are coloured in white. Other squares are filled with yellow and white colours. An outer square is also made for the *Kalam*. Between the inner square and outer square, a peacock couple, facing each other, are drawn.

Near the *Bhagavathy Kalam*, a small *Kalam* is drawn for the Devi of the *Thattakam* (local presiding deity). It is drawn in white colour. Drawing nine small squares, they are filled with yellow colour. A plantain leaf bit is kept in every square. In the middle square, a big plantain leaf piece is kept. On all leaf bits, raw rice and *Avil* are placed. In front of both *Kalams* traditional bell metal lamps are lighted. '*Guruthy*' a red blood like solution symbolic of animal sacrifice is kept in a plate in front of the *Kalam*.

In the mean time, arrangements are made for the next rituals. Atmosphere of a *Kaavu* is created on the eastern side of the performance space. A small, makeshift temple is created using plantain stems. A plantain plant with bunch of plantain is erected on the side of the temporary temple. Branches of *pala* tree and banyan tree are planted on either side. A blazing torch is erected in front of the temporary *Kaavu*.

Arrangements are made for the rituals. A *Kalam* (floor drawing) is drawn in front of the temporary *Kaavu*. A traditional bell metal lamp is placed in front of the *Kalam*. Wicks dipped in oil are also lighted in two pieces of coconut. It is placed on either side of the *Kalam*. Two pieces of 'Pindi' (stem of plantain tree) is erected on it. Incense sticks are also burnt. Nearby the *Kalam*, a rice measure full of paddy is kept. *Pookkula* (bunch of coconut flower) is erected in the rice measure. A plantain leaf is placed in front of the *Para* (rice measure). Rice paddy and different flowers are kept in it. *Pallival* (long sword of Devi) is kept erected. An arrow is made of coconut leaf and it is erected near the *Kalam*. *Malavaayi* calls the other oracles "neredathimare" (elder sisters).

When it is 9-30 in the morning, beating of drum begins. A plantain leaf filled with paddy is placed in front of the *Malavaayithara*. Two men wear costumes of oracles. They represent the tutelary deity of the locality. They are in red dress. They wear (അരമണി) *Aramani* and (കാൽച്ചിലമ്പ്) *Kalchilampu*. (It is an iron stick full of bells in the form of rings. *Chilampu* is kept in the left hand and a *Pallival* is kept in the right hand.

Malavaayi who had been hitherto giving (കല്പന) *Kalpana* (divine forecast) stops it and calls the oracles (നേരേടത്തിമാരേ) "Neredathimare" (elder sisters). She seeks the permission of other deities to retreat. Offerings are made in front of the *Kaavu*. 'Tellpodi'-rosin powder is thrown to the (പന്തം) *Pantham* (fire torch). Another oracle comes with a long stick. He is (മുത്തപ്പൻ) *Muthappan* – (great grandfather). He also makes some forecasts. Then a rooster is killed under the *Pala*. Temporary *Kaavu* erected with the

plantain is destroyed and a *Pantham* is erected in its place. *Malavaayi* holds the fowl in her mouth biting it. She moves among the audience. She and other oracles bless everybody present. Paddy (വിത്ത്) (*Vithu*) seed is measured with *Para* and it is put on the plantain leaf in front of the *Malavaayithara*. This ritual is called (വിത്തളവ്) "*Vithalavu*" (measuring of seed) usually found in almost all fertility rites. Oracles throw bits of tender coconut leaves and flowers. The atmosphere of a battlefield is created. This is a *Kaavutheendal* (polluting the shrine). By this time, it is ten o' clock in the morning. The audience is in a mood of intense devotion. *Mudiyaattom* would be going on during this time.

Women conduct the *Mudiyaattom*. It is not at all pre-planned. As the *Malavaayippaattu* continues, women instinctively move to the rhythm and it becomes a group dance. More and more women join the group. They untie their hair knots and dance to the rhythm turning their head and lifting their hair up and down. Now the music and song gains a speedy rhythm. The dance soon comes to a climax. Some of them begin to faint. Now the music changes to *Kottiyadikkal* i.e. to a slow rhythm. *Mudiyaattom* also stops with the conclusion of the frenzied music. *Mookkaan Chaathan* pierces an arrow through the *Appam* and coconut pieces.

With the closing of *Mudiyaattom*, the performer of *Malavaayi* sweeps the floor with a broom. *Mookkaan Chaathan* sprinkles water. Every nook and corner of the space is cleaned and sanctified. Now the space has transformed itself into a venue for an informal assembly. Everybody has assembled near the *Malavaayithara*. *Mookkaan Chaathan* changes to a jocular mood.

Then the popular humming of the *Paraya* community starts. *Poolalom... Thaalaalom... Kadiyanakkam* begins and the drum beating takes the fastest rhythm of *Kadiyanakkam*. Everybody is dances and rejoices. Some take toddy. *Mookkaan Chaathan* prances around. *Malavaayi* makes hooting noises. After rising to the climax, the drum beating suddenly stops. The majority of the participants are by this time in a trance. Many of them fall on the ground. Some support them, sprinkle water on the face. Every body has a satisfied look. Now it is time to take bath. After taking food together, they will go to their respective houses.

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Chapter 4

Theatrical Elements in *Malavaayiaattom*

4.1. Space

4.1.1. Limiting of time and space

In classical arts, the space specifications have been well defined. It has a specific structure. Space is marked earlier. The *Natyasastra* describes different types of space. Classical arts can limit time and space within its limits. It is the technique and background, which dictate this. In *Malavaayiaattom*, the performers don the costumes in front of the audience. It is also a part of the ritual. The head of the performance group puts the *Thalaseela* on his head. He prostrates before the elders and gets their blessings. Therefore, it is a public affair.

4.1.2. Simplicity of space

Classical theatre is complex and rigid. In the matter of time, space and text there are set rules and standards. Deviation from these basic rules is not at all allowed. There are particular positions prescribed for actors and audience. Even dressing and response of the audience is in accordance to some conventions. Classical arts are performed in temples, palaces or houses of feudal lords. In temples, there are *Koothampalams* (theatre) exclusively for the purpose of performances of temple arts. Usually classical arts are not performed outside the prescribed performance arenas. Space in classical arts has some specifications.

However, performance space of this type is totally absent in folk theatre. It is perfected through the centuries by constant adjustment to social changes by actual confrontation with the needs of the audience and the actors. The space of performance of *Malavaayiaattom* is in the natural atmosphere. *Malavaayithara*, where the performance of *Malavaayiaattom* is performed is constructed in a grove or a *Kaavu*. The performance is around the *Malavaayithara*. Around the *Malavaayithara*, there will be enough space for the movement of the performers and the audience. These platforms and other places like *Bhagavathythara*, *Muthappanthara* also will be adjacent to *Malavaayithara*. Idols of serpent deities also will be located in close proximity nearby. In all, the atmosphere of the performance place will be serene and inspiring devotion.

4.1.3. Folk arts can limit time but not space

In *Malavaayiaattom*, there is no need of limiting space and time. The performers and audience participate with the objective of propitiating the deity; they enjoy participating in the performance also. Time and space are utilized in a leisurely way.

To a certain extent, folk arts also can limit time. However, space is beyond their control. For e.g. *Vishnumoorthy Theyyam* enacts Prahalad entering the fire and Hiranya being murdered. *Theyyam Perumpuzha Achan* goes to the river and loses his way in the *Perumpuzha* River. Hence, in this case the performance space extends up to the *Perumpuzha* River. From this, it is clear that folk arts cannot limit space to a limited area of performance.

4.1.4. Techniques and background does not help contain space and time

Classical arts have definite prescriptions relating to space and time and there is the necessity of adhering to them. Its techniques and background help them to maintain these. Hence, there is the concept of space and time in its fullest sense. It is based on many technicalities. To make use of the technicalities effectively, they should be kept secret from the audience.

In *Malavaayiaattom*, the audience knows the story and the scenes. There is no audience–performer demarcation. Hence, there is no need for giving any surprises in details of space and convincing the audience. The performance is for the propitiation of the deity and not to entertain the audience to its satisfaction..

4.1.5. Spectators take their seats on all sides of the stage

One of the main differences between folk and other theatre forms is that in folk theatre spectators take three sides of the stage. However, in *Malavaayiaattom* the stage is around *Malavaayithara* and in a circular shape. The performance takes a circular movement and the audience has no restriction regarding the seating. There is no limitation for audience in movement. Some among the spectators join the performers and later return to the audience. When some enter the performance arena, they are accommodated as the actors.

According to Richard Schechner, “The simplest arrangement is, of course, an open area with a performance in the centre and the audience on all sides.”¹

To quote Balwant Gargi, "The spectators take their seats on three sides of the improper stage, which is a raised open platform."²

4.1.6. Aryan influences led to the building of the theatre including stage

It is after the influence of Sanskrit drama that the proscenium theatre and stage were introduced. However, the stage and buildings restricted the scope of performance. Now open-air theatre is being introduced. However, the mode of acting and use of space remains that of the Sanskrit theatre.

Malavaayiaattom is performed in the open air. The entire environment becomes part of the space. As the performance progresses, space also changes. All surroundings nearby are utilised by the performers and the audience shifts accordingly. During performance, *Malavaayi* goes even as far away as one hundred metres.

To quote Stella Karanisisc, "Ordinarily the performances were in the open air, natural concession to the climate of the Kerala Coast. But the Aryan influences led to the building of the theatre including stage, dressing room."³

4.1.7. There is no proscenium like stage settings

The periphery of the *Malavaayithara* will be open space. However, the surrounding space is considered as holy. In some places, *Malavaayithara* is in a secluded place surrounded by bamboo. Only when the performance approaches, the *thara* and surroundings are cleaned and made sacred with the smearing of cow-dung. However, the whole place and surroundings become the stage as soon as the performance begins.

According to Balwant Gargi, "Life in India is in the streets, shops, stalls, rituals. Bathrooms are exposed to the sun and the glare of

the people, so is the folk theatre. The idea of closed theatre is almost foreign to the Indian masses. With the educational system, the British introduced picture frame stage.”⁴

Dr, A.K.Nambiar describes folk theatre thus, “There is no well fabricated stage. The stage of Kerala folk dramas is very flexible. Paddy fields, grounds or front yards of houses, precincts of *Kaavus* are temporarily converted as stage. Every house and surroundings are sometimes changed as stage.”⁵

According to Suresh Awasthi, “The ordinary space used for a variety of social and secular performances can be fields after the harvest, market squares, public parks and gardens, street and fair grounds.”⁶

4.1.8. There is no performance space detached from the audience

The performance of *Malavaayiaattom* being in a familiar place people easily adjust to the condition. The performer and audience being very familiar with the condition, they move freely during the performance. There are no inhibitions like stage fright. The rituals and scenes performed have not to be specially arranged. The performance space being the same for years favourably influences the performers and audience who sink into one as the performance progresses.

As against modern performances, the dwelling places of the *Paraya* community and the performance space of *Malavaayiaattom* are the same. Hence, they are at ease during the performance. They are not at all concerned about returning home after performance. Their homes being

close by, the performers and the audience are in an ideal condition to participate in the performance. This makes the occasion a pleasure.

4.1.9. Performance space is animated and transformed

The space of *Malavaayiaattom* is flexible. In folk theatre, there are two kinds of space, transferred space and found space. During the performance, the audience move to different places and the space is changed or sometimes shifted. Paddy fields, playgrounds, *Kaavus*, all these become arenas for folk arts. *Padayani* starts from a distant place. In *Mudiyettu*, there is *Kalamezhuthupattu*, *Kalampooja*, wiping out of *Kalam*, *Thiriyuzhichil* etc. They are performed at one place while performances of *Kaali* and *Darika* takes place at different places. In *Kaaliyoottu Kavilmadapura*, precincts of temple and *Mandapa* fall into the category of space. However, in *Theyyattom* the space changes according to rituals. In *Malavaayiaattom* along with rituals around *Malavaayithara*, rituals are conducted in *Bhagavathythara* and *Muthappanthara*. The closing rituals are conducted in the created atmosphere of a *Kaavu* by planting plantain tree and branches of banyan and *Pala*. Light arrangements, mainly country torches and bell metal lamps are also shifted. In the traditional theatre, both the performance space and the audience space are animated and transformed in endless ways by the actor's movements.

According to Suresh Awasthi, "Theatre does not simply occur in any available space. It creates its own space and alters the available space. The main factor is the presence of the possessed body of the actor. A given space acquires new forms

and its dimensions change according to where the actors take up their position.”⁷

4.2. Actor

Folk performances like *Malavaayiaattom* speak directly to the people. There is less dependence on established aesthetic principles. The performance system is relatively open, with less attention paid to preserving traditional performance techniques.

4.2.1. Limitations of the performer

Modern drama depends on technicalities. Through drama, it tries to create an illusion of realities. Drama has become a kind of mental conditioning. Like cinema, in modern drama the performer has many limitations. His performance depends on stage settings, props, lighting, electronic devices and many other equipment. He has to face the audience always, it being a proscenium theatre. This limits the scope of his movements and dialogues. Modern stage settings are barriers to the performer. The field of theatre, more than in others is, continually confronted with the interplay between reality and appearances. Many of the diffuse and apparently obvious opinions about the theatre and its history are in fact due to an optical inversion. The actors cannot take shelter behind the wings or seek help from sets. They have to depend solely on their art, learned with great care from their teachers. The lack of a conventional stage lends power to the drama.

According to Balwant Gargi, “The folk theatre does not strive to create an illusion of reality. It breaks the illusion and creates in turn a world of its own. The bareness of the stage is a gain.”⁸

4.2.2. Freedom of the actor

The script of *Malavaayiaattom* is a myth as part of local story of the *Paraya* community. Everybody knows the story. Every scene and frame and its sequences are in the minds of the people. Hence, nobody finds any difficulty in understanding the theme of the story. As against classical theatre, performers of *Malavaayiaattom* are not professionals. The performer of *Malavaayi* sometimes changes. Every body will be equally well versed with the successive scenes. As there is no written script, performers have ample freedom to make some changes according to the situation. In *Malavaayiaattom*, there is no proscenium stage. For the performer there is space free movement. Every activity of the performer is exposed to the audience. He has no shortcuts but to live as the character. This gives him enough freedom in acting.

According to Kuttikrishna Menon V.M., "Folk artists do not perform according to set rules of the classical theatre. Hence, they perform quiet naturally. Feelings of villagers are depicted in the village performances."⁹

4.2.3. Creation of space by the actor

In *Malavaayiaattom*, costumes are worn in the arena itself. The performance starts with the wearing of costumes. The limits of the space are not decided earlier. The ritualist does this. Rituals start from the *Malavaayithara* and ends with the theatre practices around. Until the beginning of the rituals, the *Malavaayithara* and surroundings do not become the performance space. The atmosphere of the space changes with the recitation of the *Thottam* about *Kalladikode* Mountains and the seat of

Malavaayi. The space is converted into the ravines of the *Kalladikode* Mountains. *Malavaayithara* is converted to be the seat of *Malavaayi* through the *Thottam*. The actor changes the premises as space.

To quote Schechner, "Just as a farm is a field where edible foods are grown, so a theatre is a place where transformations of time, place and persons, (human and non-human) are accomplished."¹⁰

Schechner is of the opinion that, "The flexible treatment of time and space –the ability of one space to be transformed into many places through the skills of the formational view of character (role doubling, role switching) and a close contact with the"¹¹

According to Suresh Awasthi, "The actor therefore determines largely the nature of scenography, with stylized and symbolic make up, gorgeous costumes and huge, fantastic headdress; he stands on a bare stage disengaged from any kind of décor and creates a vivid scene with his own dynamic presence. The scenic effect is strengthened by the actor's codified gait, choreographic acting and symbolic hand gestures."¹²

4.2.4. The actor is not technically supported

In modern visual arts, whole performance is centred round the director and the technicians. Even a paralysed man can do the role of a stunt character. This is possible due to modern animation techniques. Nevertheless, in *Malavaayiaattom* the actor is not technically supported. He is close to the audience. There are no electronic devices or doubles to support the actor.

4.2.5. Mental preparation

Formerly members within the family performed *Malavaayiaattom*. They comprised the members of the particular family and the invitees who are close relatives. Forty or fifty years ago, the majority of the audience were well versed in the rituals and the sequences of *Malavaayiaattom*. Hence, the performance was made on one's own initiative and there was no dearth of performers. For the performance of certain characters, like *Malavaayi*, even four or five performers adorn the costumes in a single performance. Before the performance day, the performers had to remain in meditation for several days. He had to keep aloof from the outside world to prepare for taking up the assignment. This helped him to perform effectively, for possession by the deity, this mental preparation was necessary.

To quote Hari.G.Govil, "The artist, according to the injunction of Hindu canons, was to withdraw himself from turmoil and distraction, to enter into the inner silence and draw forth from his heart the form of beauty." ¹³

4.2.6. Environmental acting

The performer of the *Malavaayiaattom* fully utilises the premises around *Malavaayithara*. When *Malavaayi* is in a trance, she, in fury, goes around the premises. Her movement is unpredictable. *Malavaayi* goes to far off places and searches for *Mookkaan Chaathan*.

The story of *Malavaayiaattom* is believed to have occurred in the forest. It is to recreate the atmosphere; a *Kaavu* is created around the *Malavaayithara*. Around the performing space branches of *Pala*, banyan and a plantain tree are planted. A temple is made of the trunk of the plantain

plant. Space acquires variations with the movements of the spectators and actors.

The space of folk theatre is very much conducive to an actor who is capable to perform according to the available conditions of space. In folk performances like *Malavaayiaattom*, performance is in an open atmosphere as against classical or modern theatre.

According to Suresh Awasthi, "Environmental conditions exist as part of the space and also affect the character of space which acquires variations with the movements of the spectators during the course of performance and the changing of the performance area by the actors." ¹⁴

4.2.7. Stylized acting

One peculiar feature of *Malavaayiaattom* is stylization. The general belief that only realistic acting is appealing is incorrect. This is established by folk dramas existing here for centuries. In old theatre forms, stylized acting is given importance. However, there have been battles in the folk theatre forms; they are not depicted in a realistic way. In *Mudiyettu* and *Theyyam*, there are war scenes. However, actual war is not enacted. In *Malavaayiaattom*, there is battle between *Malavaayi* and *Mookkaan Chaathan*. It is enacted in a stylized way. When *Malavaayi* and *Mookkaan Chaathan* takes bath, water is kept in a brass plate and towel is dipped in it to symbolise bathing.

4.2.8. Improvised acting (manodharmabhinayam)

Improvised acting is a peculiarity of folk theatre. This is present in *Porattu*, *Kothamoori* and *Malavaayiaattom*. Acting according to

Manodharmam is one of its characteristics. Speaking instant dialogues in the place of script is improvised acting. In it, the actors identify themselves completely with the role so that they become immersed in them.

V R.Devika is of the opinion that, "Improvisation is an important aspect of the folk and the classical dances of India." ¹⁵

Acting is a creative activity. In *Malavaayiaattom*, the performance moves forward based on improvised acting of *Mookkaan Chaathan*. He changes the course of the performance. He uses his skills in tackling the audience, continuation of rituals and shifting of the scenes. He sings songs whenever it is necessary. *Mookkaan Chaathan* tells stories and accommodates audience as part of the performance.

Through interaction with the audience, *Mookkaan Chaathan* performs the role of *Suthradhara* or storyteller in classic theatre. He, from the beginning itself, establishes good rapport with the audience. His sense of humour, general knowledge and artistic qualities make him popular among the audience instantly. When *Malavaayi* becomes furious and needs more space to perform, she dances holding a country torch. People move and make space. When audience begin to sleep, *Mookkaan Chaathan* either distributes black tea or applies sandal paste or share out offerings like *Appam*. *Mookkaan Chaathan* uses all techniques of act, like role doubling, transformation act etc. He is an actor, storyteller, ritualist singer and dancer rolled into one.

According to Dr, Vayala Vasudevan Pillai, "This improvisation is quite mental. Mind is the source of inspiration of these factors.

Training in improvised acting is to acquire inspiration from this

source of mind. Experiences of individuals, society and even the race exist in the conscious and subconscious states of mind. A good actor emotionally accepts this and offers it on the stage."¹⁶

Performance of *Mookkaan Chaathan* is very flexible and it adapts to the conditions prevailing during the performance. It changes according to the response of the audience. The atmosphere of the venue of the performance of *Malavaayiaattom* is very informal. The mood of audience or the performance style of *Malavaayi* may change at any time. *Malavaayi* is a fierce deity. When she becomes ferocious, the total atmosphere and mood of the audience change. *Mookkaan Chaathan* has to be careful to perform according to the circumstances need. There are no pre-set dialogues.

4.2.9. Audience are accommodated into the part of the performance,

It is very interesting that the majority of the audience of *Malavaayiaattom*, even some women, are in a drunken state. However, they do not cross the limits of decency. Even when they behave excessively they are accommodated as the part of the performance. Some former performers, who are drunk, even when they are in a very old age, interact with the performers and participate in the songs and dances. They sink as one among the audience and performers in different roles. However, nobody tries to impede them. They are also accommodated as part of the performance. Usually *Mookkaan Chaathan* uses them as a prey for his jokes. They are asked to dance and his dialogues become a part of the performance.

Sometimes a drunkard may become violent. He may be an important person and cannot be dealt with easily. On that occasion, *Mookkaan*

Chaathan deals the situation very tactfully. He acts as if the drunkard is a deity itself and their dialogues become part of the performance. He initiates some humorous exchanges. When *Malavaayi* is in possession and in a very grave mood, there is no scope for *Mookkaan Chaathan* to burst jokes, and he chants *thottam*, praising *Malavaayi*. When a child cries, he takes it to the *thara*, gives it some *Appam* or other offerings to sooth it and thereby the child stops crying.

In classic art also, discretionary acting is seen. However, majority of them are pre-set dialogues. In some art forms, there are discretionary dialogues. In folk arts an actor enacts something more than one character. They have sometimes-different masks. With a slight change, the characters also can be changed. In *Kaalan Kolam*, the same actor enacts the hunter and the hunted (*Kalan, Markandeya*). It is thus birth and death. The enigma of death and birth is depicted. Transitional period of the characters is short.

With every performance, the style, dialogue and gestures of *Mookkaan Chaathan* changes. He adds new folk songs. Some songs are discarded. The latest social and political issues are dealt with in the dialogues of *Mookkaan Chaathan*. The general awareness and the way the issues are presented before the audience are marvellous. He gets different responses from the audience in every performance. Hence, though the theme and the text of the audience are stereotyped, with every performance it achieves a new dimension.

According to Victor Turner, "Moreover, few rituals are so completely stereotyped that every word, every gesture, every scene is authoritatively prescribed. Most often, invariant phases

and episodes are interdigitated with variable passages, in which, both at the verbal and nonverbal levels, improvisation may not be merely permitted but required.”¹⁷

4.2.10. Transformation

Through this complex milieu of gestures, sights, sounds, smells, tastes and touches, the audience is not transported but transformed. The festivals and the rituals of *Malavaayiaattom* form the core are truly theatre and truly ritual in every sense of the words. *Malavaayiaattom* is performed based on the *Malavaayippaattu*. Accompanied by the *Malavaayi* song, the rhythm of drum beating and lighting also changes. Under the leadership of chief singer of *Malavaayippaattu*, some changes are made in the space. More country torches are erected on the space. Some fire sticks (*Kolthiri*) is given to *Malavaayi*. *Mookkaan Chaathan's* dialogues also induce her transformation. This is enough to transform anybody into a state of possession. During *Arulapad*, different expressions pass through *Malavaayi's* face. Sometimes people standing behind the audience are brought in front of the *Malavaayithara* and blessed.

According to Schechner, “In some ritual theatre the officiators are very like actors in aesthetic drama. There shaman working a cure must effect change in the patient and often does this by transforming into another being; but at the end of the performance the shaman must return to her/his ordinary existence.”¹⁸

Whereas in classic arts act transference is seen, the assumed form is seen present in folk arts. When the costumes of *Malavaayi* are adorned, the

performer becomes *Malavaayi* herself. The performer is least bothered about the perfection of the performance. His mental state is quite different from that of an ordinary actor in a drama.

According to Balwant Gargi, "Observers of minute details of life, the players use the minimum to the maximum advantage. The same dance steps with a different step can represent a strutting general, a limping beggar and a waddling moneylender. Often the costume remains the same but the character changes."¹⁹

4.2.11. Shifting of roles

Mookkaan Chaathan is a good example for shifting of roles, act transference and getting the audience involved in the performance. Occasionally he is engaged in out of role activities like distributing black tea, applying sandalwood paste and other multifarious activities. This helps him to shift from the role he is doing to another role.

When the performance of *Malavaayiaattom* is about to end, even when the dances are going on, *Malavaayi* and *Mookkaan Chaathan* jointly clean the performance space. One cleans the space with the broomstick, while another sprinkles water on the floor. In folk performances, cleaning is a part of the rituals. After those offerings like toddy, *Payasam* and *Appam* are distributed among the audience. Every body shares it as a blessing.

To quote Richard Schechner, "After the performance came the clean up, the travel home, the distribution of meat, fasting and the telling and retelling of stories about the sing-sing. By means of the performance the basic relationship-one might say the

fundamental relationship-between the invading and the host group was reserved.”²⁰

According to Richard Schechner, “At the level of he staging there are costumes and masks, exercises and incantations, incense and music, all designed to “make believe” in the literal sense-to help the performer make her/himself into another person or being.”²¹

4.2.12. Stamina of the performer

The blessings last for hours. The performance of *Malavaayi* might have started hours before that. She always keeps moving. In the space, only a loud voice will be audible. Therefore, she has to speak taking much effort. It is a strenuous effort for her to keep moving and making loud noises. The performer should have good physique and stamina for this.

4.2.13. Body language

There is a wrong notion that the success of performance depends on the stage settings. However, observance of theatre forms like *Malavaayiaattom* will make it convincing that their success of performance depends on body language. In the performance of *Malavaayiaattom*, body language is given importance. *Mookkaan Chaathan* is the important performer in *Malavaayiaattom*. He performs wearing a mask. Mask is used to project the movements of body. Though *Malavaayi* does not wear mask, she has facial make up. The aim of facial make up is to substitute mask. The whole performance centres round the body movements of *Mookkaan Chaathan* and *Malavaayi*.

Richard Drain remarks that, "I strive to show in these pages that scenic art must be based on the one reality worthy of theatre, the human body." ²²

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4.2.14. Alienation

In modern performances, the actors are attached to the characters. The stage of performance, time schedule and settings force him to assume a separate mood. He identifies himself as the character. The actor in *Malavaayiaattom* lives as the character in the play. However, he is always in a detached mood. Informal performance space and related rituals help him to keep this mood of detachment.

According to Suresh Awasthi, "In Indian tradition, actor does not fully identify with the role. He remains aloof so that he can present the character as showman. Actor and character are two poles of a duality which have been the subject of considerable historical and theoretical investigation and debate." ²³



4.2.15. The performer does not deliver the dialogue directly

When attention of the audience is detracted from the performer, *Malavaayi* makes loud noise and attracts everybody to her. For this, she uses some recitals. If somebody still does not attend she calls by the relationship, such as either young brother or elder brother.

Mookkaan Chaathan does not deliver the dialogue directly. The performance being made in the open air in quite informal surroundings, it is not possible to deliver the dialogue directly as the beginning part will go unheard. To overcome this he uses some sound or word. Before starting a dialogue, *Mookkaan Chaathan* uses the word *Angananganae...* The literal

meaning of the word is “just like that.” However, the meaning has no relevance. He makes a sound of cough also to attract the audience. He starts with the sentence that “I am going to tell a story.” Alternatively, “I am going to narrate an incident.” Naturally, these are interesting to everyone. The audience remains attentive. At times, he sings some folk songs also. Whichever the performance team, the performer of *Mookkaan Chaathan* will have a repertoire of folk songs. He uses it at the right moment.

4.2.16. All forms of acting and dance forms come one by one in different scenes.

The actor of *Malavaayiaattom* has to perform all types of acting. He must be a dancer and a gymnast. The performance lasts for hours. For this, he should have good stamina. Then only the performer can withstand the strain of prolonged performance. In *Malavaayiaattom*, Thandavastyle is popular. Lasya style of acting is very rarely found. It is because of this reason *Mookkaan Chaathan* uses mask or *Malavaayi* has facial make up which resembles mask. The aim of using mask is to project body language.

Throughout the folk performance of *Malavaayiaattom*, which lasts for more than twelve hours, various activities of human life are enacted. They include various rituals, agricultural vocations like sowing of seeds, reaping, cleaning of paddy, striking the hay etc. Other than this, social activities, sharing of toddy, departure of friends like the leaving of the *Nayadis* are also enacted. Social feuds like fight between *Malavaayi* and *Mookkaan Chaathan*, compromise, hunting of wild boar etc. are also enacted very effectively. All forms of acting and dance forms come one by one in different scenes.

Though *Malavaayi* is believed to have supernatural powers, she enacts the life of a quite ordinary human being. Personal intimacy and mutual love of Dalit people is depicted in the performance very beautifully. It is evident in the scene of *Nanjum Nayattum*.

After a day's strenuous work, taking bath, *Malavaayi* and *Mookkaan Chaathan* return very late. By the time, they return to the toddy shop the shopkeeper would have closed the shop and gone to sleep. They awaken the toddy shop owner and drink toddy together. First he hesitates to give toddy because they have some outstanding balance to pay. There is a friendly quarrel between them. *Malavaayi* offers to settle the account the next time, to which the toddy shop owner concedes at last. After drinking the toddy, the toddy shop owner offers her some more toddy free. When going home, *Malavaayi* offers to give the shopkeeper jackfruit when she comes next time.

To quote Pramod Kale, "There is no lore, no craft, no learning, no art, no yoga and no action which cannot be seen in the theatre. Theatre is the re-enactment of the lives and ways of people, passing through the various phases and enriched by different Bhavas." ²⁴

As *Malavaayiaattom* lasts for ten to twelve hours, it is rather impossible for the same man to perform the character throughout the performance. Hence, change of performer is necessary in some cases. In some places, the first performer of the *Malavaayi* when the *attom* begins will be the eldest male member of new generation of the family. However, in many places this system is not followed strictly. Lack of training for the performance might

have been the reason for not following the practice strictly. To redeem from illness or some other untoward incident there is a vow that a particular person will perform as *Malavaayi*.

4.2.17. There is no duality of actor and character

Art means recreating society. However, this concept was not present before. Hence, there was no consciousness that the performer and the actor are two. The oracle becomes the deity himself. There is no duality of actor and character. The consciousness that the performance and group should succeed and he should contribute his level best to this end makes the dance and drama assume artistic nature.

In folk arts like *Malavaayiaattom* harmonious blending occurs. The performer acts when he reaches the space wearing the costumes of *Malavaayi*. He becomes the deity itself. He is not bothered about the perfection of the performance. His mental state is different from that of a theatre artist.

4.2.18. Performer- representative of both deity and audience

There are no intricate mudras in *Malavaayiaattom*. Hence, they are easily intelligible. The steps and actions are part of life situation and natural. Hence, audience can easily join the performer. The performances being part of social and economic life of the *Paraya* community, like harvest, sowing of seeds and other agricultural activity, the spectators can easily imitate the rhythm. Therefore, they dance with the actor. Every spectator becomes an actor. There is effective interaction between the performer and the audience. The performer represents *Malavaayi*. Hence, the audience stands with devotion before the performer. He hears their grievances, gives them advice

and blesses the audience. Thereby participation of everyone is assured in the performance.

4.2.19. Enactment of hunting

Hunting of wild boar is enacted in *Malavaayiaattom* very elaborately. The animals in the forest are disturbed and forced to run. They follow the wild boar. It moves from one hill to another. The movements in this scene are good example of stylized enactment seen in folk theatre forms.

Hunting is the oldest vocation human beings engaged in. Naturally, he included his main vocation in his paintings and performances. Enactment of hunting is the peculiarity of traditional performances. The opinion of Uma Anand is pertinent here.

According to Uma Anand, "He lived by following and killing his prey. In pre-historic paintings found on the walls of cave in Spain and south of France we see these brave, intrepid fighters, armed with tiny bow and arrow or blunt-headed spear, attacking the huge buffalo or the red deer." ²⁵

4.2.20. Performing territory

Each family that performs *Malavaayiaattom* has its own performing territory. Annually performers make the rounds to the shrines. They are well acquainted with the rituals, songs, dances and invocation of the deities, which one practiced within these boundaries. They know the variations from one shrine to another shrine. These territories are so well defined and well bounded that competition among performing families for patronage seems to be non-existent.

4.2.21. Shamanism

The strength and stamina of the working class is evident in the giving of blessings by *Malavaayi*. The blessings last for hours. During this time, *Malavaayi* assumes the role of a mother, sister, sister-in-law and daughter.

The audience of *Malavaayiaattom* are very keen to get the blessings of *Malavaayi*. During this time, she calls every body, '*Kuttatu, Kutupaatu*'. First, she calls the head of the family. She then tells him about the efficacy of the *Attom*, remarks about the problems the head of the family had to face after the previous *Attom*, forecasts the problems he has to face in the future. Some hints are given about the foes and friends of the head of the family and *Malavaayi* soothes him. She assures him that *Malavaayi* will be with him in "*Eettalum Pettilum.*"

After a prolonged talk to the head of the family, the eldest of the women members is called. *Malavaayi* hints to her about the insults she has to face from her in-laws. This gives her great satisfaction. Now she is in a mood of victory because *Malavaayi* recognises the insult she receives. It is spoken out in public. However, *Malavaayi* is not prepared to give her an easy walk over. She has to take care of the other side also. Most probably, the opposition parties would be the women who have been given away in marriage. The head of the family will not like insulting his sisters. In this case, *Malavaayi* adopts a technique. She tells that if female members married off are not satisfied and not given due recognition in their parental home, it will be a curse on the family. *Malavaayi* warns the head of the women to ensure that women married off should be given due share and they should be given satisfaction. Otherwise, the result would be disastrous.

She calls one by one, very cunningly elicits their problems and gives advice. They are persuaded to speak out the problems publicly. Sometimes, the rival party is also called and they are persuaded to come to a compromise. They are given *Thoolarpodi*, *Prasadam* of *Malavaayi* and asked to share. With this, she suggests some rituals to be conducted to remove the curses. The rituals include what is due to her also. She collects money for the rituals conducted by her. Some come forward, prostrate before her and voluntarily give her *dakshina*. Sometimes it may be an offer to the deity for curing a disease or gaining of something.

In *Malavaayiaattom*, during the enactment of *Karithiri*, the performance goes to the level of a supernatural state and shamanism. The atmosphere of the space is very conducive for this. Big country torches are placed in different parts of the space. *Malavaayi* takes one *Kolthiri* (a fire stick with two ends tied with cloth) and keeps it biting with his teeth. *Kolthiris* are held in either hand. One man holds a big fire stick in front of her. Bits of tender coconut leaves are thrown on her. Now *Malavaayi* is enacting a furious scene. She is in a state of being possessed and very angry. The orchestra is in quick rhythm. The atmosphere is very fearsome. The bright light of fire sticks, quick rhythm of the percussion instruments and the *Malavaayi* song eulogising *Malavaayi* make the atmosphere preternatural. *Malavaayi* is possessed. The rhythm of music and the light passes to the audience like electric current. The audience comes to the *thara* and dances. Slowly women in possessed state come near the *thara* and start *Mudiyaattom* (Twirling of Hair).

According to Richard Schechner, “Interestingly the behaviour of people as spectators differ greatly depending on whether these individuals comprise an integral or accidental audience-and this difference is not what one would expect.”²⁶

To quote Claude Lewis Strauss, “When the shaman feels that the audience is with him and follows him he becomes still more active and this effect is transmitted to his audience. After shamanising, the audience recollects various moments of the performance.”²⁷

4.3. Actor training

Many among the *Paraya* community are well versed with in details and story of the performance of *Malavaayiaattom*. From a very young age, they had been watching a number of performances in their households and habitats of their relatives. Some, who are interested in the performance and acting, learn the *Malavaayippaattu*. They are aware of the sequence of the performance also. Gradually they learn by heart what rituals are to be followed in the sequence of the performance.

4.3.1. Initiation

Before adorning the costumes of *Malavaayi*, the actor has to undergo some initiation ceremonies. Then only he becomes a full-fledged artist. It is by putting the *Thalaseela* of *Malavaayi* that the initiation ceremony is conducted. Only after the initiation ceremony, can one put *Thalaseela* of *Malavaayi* on his head. Usually the maternal uncle initiates one. A ceremony is conducted for the initiation. He puts *Thalaseela* (headdress) on the head of the initiand. In turn, the initiand gives him one dhoti, a dakshina with betel

leaves and Arecanut. He blesses the novice by putting the hand on the initiands head. In almost all ritual performances, there is training and initiation.

An initiation is a ceremony in which as Richard Schechner remarks, "A new generation is instructed is made fit to be integrated into the community of adults. And on this occasion, through the repetition, the re actualization, of the traditional rites, the entire community is regenerated." ²⁸

4.3.2. Trainers and time of training

Even now, only the members of *Paraya* community perform *Malavaayiaattom*. Still the performance is confined to the *Paraya* community. Hence, only members of this community take interest to be trained in the performance. It is learning by doing. The male children who accompany either maternal uncle or father take interest in mastering the art. After the initiation ceremony, he dons the costumes occasionally. As days pass by he becomes an expert in the performance. Novices learn informally by accompanying elders during festival seasons.

In the opinion of Wayne Ashley and Regina Holloman, "Training of folk theatre usually takes place within the immediate family." ²⁹

4.3.3. Enable actors to be mentally prepared

The effectiveness of acting in *Malavaayiaattom* is because the performers do not act but live in the performance. To identify with the character the performer takes penance for seven or eleven days before the performance. With this meditative exercise, mentally he is prepared to take up the assignment. He feels that he is the deity itself. Some old people said

that they used to take twenty-one days 'Vrata' (penance) before *Malavaayi* was enacted. With this, he loses the mood even to smile. After the Vrata, the performer is in a very serious frame of mind. The performance depends on the preparation of the actor. If the performance is not up to the mark, the reason attributed was that the preparation for the performance was not effective.

To quote Richard Schechner, "Training and rehearsals are designed to hide most of this process or to bring it entirely in line with playwright's intentions as envisioned by the director so that the performance reveals not the actors but the characters they are playing." ³⁰

4.3.4. There are some dos and don'ts, which the performer must follow

There is enough freedom to the performer in folk theatre like *Malavaayiaattom*, though there are some precedents the performer has to follow. There are some dos and don'ts, which he must follow. The performance being full of rituals, the performer should adhere to some sets of rules. The trainers and elders give the necessary advice, which the performer is required to strictly adhere to.

According to Ian Watson, "The traditional oriental performers on the other hand have a base of organic and well tested "absolute advice" that is, rules of art which codify a closed performing style to which all the performers of a particular genre must conform." ³¹

4.3.5. Different branches to be specialized

Like many other performing arts, *Malavaayiaattom* has different branches to be specialized in, by an artist. An eminent artist generally

achieves mastery over all such branches. They are recitation of song or *Thottam*; make up including preparation of costumes, playing of instruments and dancing. There are many *Thottam* songs pertaining to *Malavaayi*. Some of them are lengthy texts including the legend. Myth of *Malavaayi* and *Mookkaan Chaathan* is the most important. *Malavaayiaattom* is such a lengthy performance because of the length of the *Malavaayippaattu*. *Malavaayiaattom* being a long story recited in song accompanied by music, it is full of rituals and dance associated with the song.

4.3.6. *Malavaayippaattu*

The *Malavaayippaattu* is passed on from mouth to mouth. It is to be learned by heart. Only by watching a number of performances, can one memorise the song and recite it by heart.

4.3.7. Daily techniques

Performance of *Malavaayiaattom* is based on body movements. However, the performers do not need much effort to acquire the flexibility of the body. Most of the performers are manual labourers, when the period of performance comes; it is a matter of two or three days to acquire the necessary flexibility of the body. As micro level acting is almost absent in *Malavaayiaattom*, there are only natural movements of the body. The performer reaches to the form very easily.

To quote Eugene Barbara and Nicola Savarese, "The way we use our bodies in daily life is substantially different from the way we use them in performance. We are not conscious of our daily techniques. [.....] The principles governing a performance scenes bios or life might be, lies in understanding that the daily

techniques, the techniques which do not respect the habitual conditionings of the body.”³²

4.3.8 Training to complete the singing of song within specific time and rhythm

The chief of the performance troop is the singer of *Malavaayippaattu*. It is on the *Malavaayi* song that the whole performance is based. Unlike classic or modern theatre forms, the song and the performance need not synchronise. The whole performance includes different scenes like *Arimpuncha*, *Nanjum Nayattum*, *Thirunandam* and *Balipooja*, *Chembu* etc. For each stanza of the song, a particular scene is enacted. The style of performance of the actors changes according to different scenes. The performer is trained to complete the singing of song within specific time and in a specific rhythm. Through the *Malavaayi* song, the whole myth of *Kalladikode* Mountains and *Malavaayi* is sung. It is a kind of story telling through song and dance.

4.3.9. Text of *Malavaayiaattom* has to be studied from the mouth of a guru

itself

Different texts of *Malavaayiaattom* exist. It varies from performance group to performance group. There is no written text. It is orally transmitted from generation to generation. *Malavaayippaattu* is the speciality of each performing troop. It is transferred to close confidants only. *Malavaayippaattu* lasts for about eight hours to be sung completely. It is sung in a peculiar tone. Due to its peculiar accent and unclear words, it is not possible to catch it merely by hearing it while singing goes on at the performance accompanied by the beating of the drums. It has to be studied from the mouth of a guru itself.

4.3.10. Actor should study many folk songs, parodies and anecdotes

After the individual training is complete, the novice is allowed to participate in the performances conducted in the family or among close relatives. With three or four performances, he learns how to perform in the group and to interact with the audience.

For performance as *Mookkaan Chaathan*, the actor should master many skills. He should know local myths prevailing in the region. He should be well versed about the places of worship, local history, history of the family and their relatives. He should study many folk songs, parodies and anecdotes.

4.3.11. The teaching of various skills is spread over a number of years

The teaching of various skills in *Malavaayiaattom* is spread over a number of years. For *Mookkaan Chaathan* the more difficult training in mono acting and dance are taught only after the young man passes the age of eighteen. By that time, he would have studied many folk songs. He learns many stories from his gurus and other sources. It depends on the aptitude of the performer. The gesture language necessary for narrating and enacting the legends are also taught. In addition, training is given in both rhythmic patterns and steps required for mono acting.

4.3.12. Training usually goes for several hours at night

Teaching of *Malavaayi* song takes hours. There is no question of writing down the song. Moreover, even now some of the performers are illiterate. Such training usually goes for several hours at night. For the performer of *Malavaayi* it is said by some elders that years ago there was

the practice of doing massages. This is to get flexibility of the body, stamina and better movements.

4.3.13. The state of being possessed and its specialization

In *Malavaayiaattom*, no specific instruction is given to the youth on how to allow the deity to possess him. The dance steps and rhythm patterns are by now engrafted in his body from constant practice. The years of observation certainly play an important role in providing a map of the parameters, which circumscribe the possession state and inform the young boy of the proper demeanour to be embodied for the duration of the dance. After the initial performance, a young actor becomes a specialist in one aspect of performance. It may be either in singing the *Malavaayippaattu*, performing as *Mookkaan Chaathan* or *Malavaayi*. Some become well known for abilities as master painters of the floor drawings, some others are known for their histrionic abilities in enacting, narrating and mono acting stories; usually these people are fit to perform as *Mookkaan Chaathan*. Still others are known for their efficiency and complete possession states so that they can perform *Malavaayi* well.

4.4. Audience

The modern man's claim that he preserves the traditional ritual art is merely rising out of conceit. In fact, in his attempts to preserve those arts, what he really does is to keep up the strength of his own 'Being in it'. In addition, the pleasure he derives is nothing more than self-exultation. He gains from his interaction with the traditional ritual arts.

4.4.1. Village people are part of the nature

The peculiarity of the folk art forms like *Malavaayiaattom* performed without stage or costumes is that they are more emotional than the western theatre. Village people are part of the nature and they can easily mingle with the surroundings. They are born and they live in nature. They lead a simple life in harmony with nature. Instead of mounting and conquering Mount Everest, they find pleasure in worshipping the mount of God. Artistic achievement of a society is the yardstick of its civilization. It is this worldview, which gives satisfaction to the performers of folk theatre forms like *Malavaayiaattom*.

4.4.2. Devotees and the ritualistic arts performed are supreme

Malavaayiaattom, in any condition is a spectacle meant to be displayed. Obviously, in it spectators are an inevitable factor, which is made indispensable to performers. Audience are more concerned about the efficacy of rituals enacted in the performance. Pleasure and aesthetic appeal achieved through excellence of performance are more predominant than any other factor in the context of theatre, whereas the ritual art has entirely different aims as its objectives. In ritual art like *Malavaayiaattom*, there are neither spectators nor performers. Nor is there a systemized performance or framework for exposition, the devotees or the believers and the ritualistic arts performed are what are supreme. Style of performing is secondary. Furthermore, performers as such are no great factor. The possessed *Malavaayi* and the all-pervading *Mookkaan Chaathan* are uppermost. Pleasure and aesthetic appeals are not its aims. Faith and devotion are the primaries. Therefore, in theatre like *Malavaayiaattom*, there has been an

aspect of duality. In the case of rituals, the aim has been and is proofs of consummated sublimation.

4.4.3. Man's susceptibility to tradition

The fact that *Malavaayiaattom* is even now a popular performance among the *Paraya* community subscribes to the fact that man's susceptibility to tradition is just like the bondage he bears with his mother's womb through the umbilical cord. On the material plane that bondage does not persist as it was at the time of birth, nor should it. It is subject to change and transformation. However, spiritually that attachment never vanishes.

It is because of this affinity people gather to watch the performance of *Malavaayiaattom* even in this computer age.

4.4.4. The audience are integral

The audience of *Malavaayiaattom* is an integral audience. It is easy to manipulate and elicit attention from the accidental audience. However, integral audience is well versed with the rituals, text and every scene of the performance. Hence, to manipulate the attention of the audience, much expertise and skill is needed.

According to Richard Schechner, "The best way to understand between ritual theatre- such as initiation rites, marriage ceremonies, funerals etc – and aesthetic theatre is to appreciate the variety of roles the audience plays. The audience is not an ether/or stagnant lump. Changes in an audience occur during the performances as well as from one performance to another." ³³

4.4.5. The seating arrangements of the audience is not according to hierarchy

In classical theatre the seating arrangements of the audience is also according to caste or social hierarchy. People from the lowest strata of the society are not at all given admission. Moreover, the spectators will be well versed with the theories of Natyasastra.

In theatre other than folk, there is no interaction between the audience and artists. Any type of interaction is not at all expected. The audience is expected to be silent spectators. In *Malavaayiaattom*, the performance space is quite different. There is no stage of Proscenium style. Seating arrangement, light arrangement or curtain is completely absent. Usually the whole surroundings of the environment where the performance is made becomes space. Therefore, the mood of the audience of *Malavaayiaattom* is entirely different from that of other forms of performances.

4.4.6. There is no actor audience demarcation

The chief peculiarity of audience in tribal and village performances compared to those of modern performances is that there is no actor audience demarcation in folk performance like *Malavaayiaattom*. In folk performances, there are only participants, not audience. In other art forms people come to see and enjoy the performance. The performance will be conducted in a separate stage made for the specific purpose. The seats of the audience will be arranged at a reasonable distance to get a clear view of the performance. For special effects used on the stage, specified seating arrangement is necessary. The audience who are viewing popular drama watches it with a scientific attitude. They are concerned about the

arrangements in the stage, light and sound system. Every dialogue and expression of the artists is judged according to pre-set standards.

To quote Kapila Vatsyayan, "The last and the final question is who are the audiences and how do they differ from those of the tribal and village dances and community singing. In the latter, there is hardly any distinction between the participator, the actor-dancer, musicians and the audience; all join in." ³⁴

4.4.7. Based on interaction of the audience

In some ritual forms especially which are more devotional in nature, even when there is no audience, the performance is made. Mudiyettu is an example for this. However, in the case of *Malavaayiaattom* this is not possible. *Malavaayiaattom* is full of scenes based on interaction of the audience and actor.

4.4.8. Each spectator is able to modify his relationship scene by scene.

People changed places in mid scene during the performance of *Malavaayiaattom*. Though the audience might have watched the performance several times, they get additional meaning with each performance. Change of scenes and rituals necessitates change of space. This also makes him to move from one place to another. It is each audience educating itself concerning the difference between performances and theatre.

According to Richard Schechner, "Instead of being in a pre-determined relationship to the theatre event each spectator was able to modify his relationship scene by scene." ³⁵

Balwant Gargi gives the following remarks on audience of folk theatre, which is applicable in the case of *Malavaayiaattom*, "The spectators are participants in the performance. They cheer, laugh, weep and suddenly become silent as the movement demands." ³⁶

4.4.9. Spectators are less concerned about the theatre complex

Though *Malavaayiaattom* is performed around the *Malavaayithara*, the performance space differs from one another. Wherever the performance space of *Malavaayiaattom*, the people are least bothered about the space and surroundings. They assemble for the performance as a matter of participating in the rituals. They are interested in the rituals and the performance. Besides that, they like the pleasant atmosphere and the company of their loved ones.

According to Chummar Choondal, "Ordinary spectators, the bulk of people, both upper and lower classes are less concerned about the theatre complex. They are mainly concerned with the sacredness and religious spirit involved in the performances." ³⁷

4.4.10. Spectator is able to modify his relationship scene by scene

In modern performances, there is no audience- performer interaction. The fixed-seat arrangements and modern theatre techniques actually mesmerize the audience. The audience is a prey in the hands of theatre activists and with illusionist activities, he is brain washed. However, in folk performances like *Malavaayiaattom* the spectator is free mentally and physically. He is not a prisoner of the situation. The theatre event remained

the same regardless of what perspective spectators adopted. Nevertheless, each spectator was able to modify this relationship scene by scene.

According to Richard Schechner, "Each spectator was self-conscious enough to move to where the action was, station herself in an advantageous position to see, and decide what her relationship to the theatre was to be. Often enough people changed places in mid –scene."³⁸

4.4.11. The way the dramatist has chosen to deal with the story

In *Malavaayiaattom* performance, the same myth is enacted in every performance, every year. The text and rituals are the same. Any change is rather impossible. But people turn up to see how *Mookkaan Chaathan* performs at that time, how he deals with the audience and what all stories and anecdotes he is going to tell, what folk songs he is going to sing and how *Malavaayi* and audience are going to respond to the new techniques of *Mookkaan Chaathan*.

Mookkaan Chaathan uses a variety of techniques to attract and motivate audience. He does some magic, makes toys, mimics, tells stories, dances, sings and occasionally interacts with the audience. He blesses them, serves eatables and toddy. On some occasions, he forcibly makes them drink toddy, which leads to some lighter moments.

According to Victor Turner, "The interest for the spectator lay, therefore, not in the novelty of the story, but in seeing how the dramatist had chosen to deal with it."³⁹

4.4.12. Problems of everyday life weaken mental absorption of the spectator

People attend folk ritual theatre forms like *Malavaayiaattom* for many reasons. They include getting blessings from the deity, enjoying the company of the beloved and appreciating the skills of the actors. Hence, the mental state of an audience in modern theatre and folk theatre like *Malavaayiaattom* are quite different.

To quote M.Christopher Byrski, "The decision of a prospective spectator to witness a theatrical performance implies his heart constant (hridayasamveda)-the most necessary precondition permitting one to appreciate a work of art." ⁴⁰

However, the myth of *Malavaayiaattom* centres round *Kalladikode* Mountains and the feud and compromise between *Malavaayi* and *Mookkaan Chaathan*, many social and family issues are highlighted. Although all the matters dealt with in the performance are concerned with the ordinary life of the spectator, he attends the performance if he identifies with the scenes in the performance.

To quote M.Christopher Byrski, "By means of aesthetic perception, he experiences happiness and despair of the world, uncircumscribed by any particular time or space." ⁴¹

4.4.13. Audience co-operate in organising the performance

Most of the participants would have watched the performance several times. When the *Malavaayi* song is sung, they also join the singers. Every body will be at least humming with the singers. They are well acquainted with the music and the myths of *Malavaayi*. They know what all sequences

are going to take place. They know the actors, the story and their gestures. Hence, there is good rapport between the performers and the audience.

Malavaayiaattom being a ritual theatre, the audience are participants in the rituals. Hence, every one present takes it as a privilege and considers it auspicious to participate in one ritual or other. The performance also being part of a ritual, the audience do some rituals and interacts with the performers. Some among the audience are artists of *Malavaayiaattom*. They come forward to adorn the costumes of *Malavaayi*. Others will take some instruments.

Black tea is served to the audience occasionally. *Mookkaan Chaathan* plays an important role in keeping the performers and audience live throughout. After the beginning of the performance, nobody leaves the place. Because they come to watch, all the scenes enacted there. They like to spend the whole day in the company of their beloved and most acquainted deities as with their friends and relatives.

4.5. Actor-audience relationship

4.5.1. The audience as collaborator

In *Malavaayiaattom*, there is no actor audience divide. During the performance, actor audience divide vanishes. The performance is made in open air. It is around *Malavaayithara*. The whole space changes as stage. Any one can participate in the performance. As the performance progresses, artists and spectators dissolve into one.

4.5.2. No actor audience divide.

Mookkaan Chaathan's role is a participatory one. In his dialogues, especially on current affairs, he uses plenty of sarcasm. He tells what the

non-professional wants to say, but not able to give vent to his feelings due to some taboos. Audience identifies him as one among them.

According to R.G.Collingwood, "In so far as the artist feels himself as one with his audience, this will involve no condescension on his part; it will mean that he takes it as his business to express not his own private emotions, irrespectively of whether any one else feels them or not, but the emotions he shares with his audience." ⁴²

4.5.3. Rituals do not distinguish between audience and performers

Ritual folk drama like *Malavaayiaattom* exists in a village or small group level. The performers are members of the community and therefore known to most of the audience. The performances are given on special occasions only, most commonly a seasonal festival. Popular theatre often derives from folk theatre but the players are professional and the audience comes from places other than the community in which the players live.

In the opinion of Victor Turner, "Ritual, unlike theatre, does not distinguish between audience and performers. Instead there is a congregation whose leaders may be priest, party officials or other religious or secular ritual specialist." ⁴³

In *Malavaayiaattom*, there is no demarcation of performer and audience. The performance is made not facing the audience, but the *Malavaayithara* as centre. Audience are participants. Audience and actors will move towards each other. *Malavaayi* blesses the audience. *Mookkaan Chaathan* converses with the audience. This is one important feature of tribal and other traditional performances.

According to Uma Anand, “They were-each man, woman and child- active participants and equally involved in the ceremony; as concerned as the priest and the dancers in the outcome of the spells. There was no division between “actor” and “audience” in either action or intent.”⁴⁴

4.5.4. Audience-actor unification

In *Malavaayiaattom*, audience-actor unification is spectacular. This is most evident when *Malavaayi* and *Mookkaan Chaathan* go to the toddy shop and during the performance as *Nayadis*. Even though *Malavaayiaattom* is a ritual theatre during these enactments, it assumes the form of a secular theatre. In these scenes, acting is quite natural. Every comment from the audience is accommodated as part of the performance. There is spontaneous change of scenes. When one from among the audience asks for toddy, he is described as a late night traveller, but he is invited to the toddy shop and given toddy. Thereby that member of the audience also becomes an actor in the performance. More than the performers, the audience take the play in different directions. Even a drunken man who cannot stand steadily is accommodated into the performance. *Mookkaan Chaathan* subjects him to some mockery, which is enjoyed even by the wife of the drunkard. However, he is not looked down upon. His reactions are not considered as nuisance either. It is with all respect that he is accommodated into the performance. This aspect is the peculiarity of folk performance.

Richard Schechner is of the opinion that, “In addition, the boundary between the performance and everyday life is shifting

and arbitrary, varying greatly from culture to culture and situation to situation.”⁴⁵

4.5.5. Characters coming among the audience

Characters coming up from among the audience are found in many folk art forms. *Kaali* in *Mudiyettu*, *Kakkalan* in *Kakkarassi Natakam* etc. In *Malavaayiaattom*, there are many such scenes. This is found in classical arts also like Kathakali as found in Dhaksha yaga. Vir Badra and *Bhadraakaali* enter from outside space. In *Kuchela Vritham*, also *Kuchela* comes from the crowd.

4.5.6. Communicative relationships

Some rituals concentrate on the sacrifices and recitation of *Thottam*. *Malavaayiaattom* is performed with an efficacious end. In *Malavaayiaattom*, as usual in folk ritual performances, even though there is an efficacious aim, theatre elements are added abundantly so that the ritual performance becomes appealing to the masses.

Folk and popular drama must use a variety of techniques to focus the attention of the audience on the performance. Consequently one encounters clowning, dancing, singing, instrumental music, bombastic speeches and other highly stylised types of performance as part of the repertoire of effects in countryside drama.

Since rituals are extremely formal and their performance is commonly given over to an ordained member of the priestly class, there is a greater tendency toward stability in such practice. *Malavaayiaattom* is a unique traditional expression, because it calls for such a high degree of performance co-ordination for meaningful interaction. These play activities

are organized so that communicative relationships of two different kinds are established, between the individual players, the players and the audience.

4.5.7. Accommodate any type of audience

The role of *Mookkaan Chaathan* being informal, he can accommodate any type of audience. The techniques used by *Mookkaan Chaathan* to keep the audience active are worth emulation. He participates in supplying black tea also. After *Pooja*, he distributes *Prasadam* including *Appam* to the audience. He passes through the thick crowd to reach a spectator sitting far. He personally applies sandal paste on the forehead of the devotees, especially those who are sleepy. He establishes good rapport with each one among the audience through one or other ritual.

4.5.8. *Malavaayiaattom* is perfected to the needs of the audience and the actors

Folk performances like *Malavaayiaattom* are based on artist-audience interaction. It is flexible in the case of time space and theatre text. Everything changes according to the needs of the artists and audiences. The texts and even rituals are very flexible.

According to Balwant Gargi "The classical dance drama with its thick textured music and gesture language are esoteric. The folk theatre forms are perfected through the centuries by constant adjustment to social changes by actual battling with the needs of the audience and the actors." ⁴⁶

4.5.9. Relationship between audience and performer

In classical arts, there is separate seat for audience. As there is no audience in *Malavaayiaattom*, the need for separate seat does not arise.

However, in *Theyyam* separate places are earmarked for different castes. Though separate places are earmarked according to caste, being a caste based performance; this demarcation is not based on the audience but as participants of the ritual.

In classical art, audience has no direct relationship with the performer. There is specific demarcation of audience and space. However, in folk arts there is direct relationship between audience and performer. *Malavaayiaattom* is the sublimation of the concept of god of the villagers. This is part of his life itself. There is scope for interaction with the performer or the character. From the visual relationship of the performer and the audience, the relationship becomes that of participants and ritualist. There is interaction between performers, participants and space.

Richard Schechner writes about western theatre, "Our culture is almost alone in demanding uniform behaviour from audiences while clearly segregating audience from performers and audience from others in the area who are neither audience nor performers."⁴⁷

Anita Ratnam Rangaraj has rightly remarked, "The fickle audience with its likes and dislikes is proverbial. The glamour, the élan of the theatre, is the product of the two. The theatre "lives" through the exchange between them or so it is said."⁴⁸

4.5.10. Expresses emotions that are not his own, but his audience's as well

It was through folk art forms village people, especially those who were downtrodden in society, gave vent to their suppressed feelings and emotions. These were not their personal problems. They expressed their

dissatisfaction against the upper class society through these media. *Malavaayiaattom* being confined to the *Paraya* habitats, they had enough freedom to give outburst to their emotions against society. That is why the performance became appealing to the common masses. *Mookkaan Chaathan*, in his sarcastic dialogues, aired these emotions and encouraged public to respond.

R.G.Collingwood is quoted in this connection, "If what he is trying to do is to express emotions that are not his own merely, but his audience's as well, his success in doing this will be tested by his audiences' reception of what he has to say. What he says will be something that his audience says through his mouth and his satisfaction in having expressed what they feel." ⁴⁹

4.5.11. Variety of techniques to focus the attention of the audience

The fixed stage of the sophisticated theatre calls for a different performer-audience relationship than that of the folk or popular traditions. The theatregoer commonly sits in one place and the players therefore may co-ordinate their activities in one direction. They are able to regard each member of the audience as an individual and may appeal to the individual's capacity to make connections and therefore to have insights not available to a milling audience. The fixed theatre can count on a higher degree of concentration on the action. This situation may create an effect of greater complexity.

On the other hand, the space of *Malavaayiaattom* is in the open air. It cannot be forecast as to which direction people will face while watching the performance. The atmosphere being informal, even the presence of the

audience is not assured. It is by using many skills *Mookkaan Chaathan* and *Malavaayi* keep the audience for hours until the performance ends, that too throughout a night.

4.6. Music

Music is found as a universal expression. Some societies create rhythmic music. However, strict rhythm is not adhered to in several societies. In some societies, certain element of music is repeated. In another, it may not be the practice. The difference is noticed not only in the expression but also in style.

4.6.1. Dialogue has only secondary importance compared to dance and music

In tribal theatre, dialogue is not very important. Among traditional communities like *Parayas*, they enact actual life conditions. Very complex matters as dealt with in modern theatre are not seen in *Malavaayiaattom*. Their enactments are mostly related to life situations like hunting and agriculture. In some cases, there is no necessity of verbalisation at all. Hence, in traditional performances like *Malavaayiaattom*, dialogue has only secondary importance compared to dance and music.

Kapila Vatsyayan: writes on traditional theatre, "An analysis of music and dance of these nearly thirty-eight million people shows that these tribes make little or no distinction between verbal and non verbal communication systems and techniques. Expression is total." ⁵⁰

According to C.R.Rajagopalan, "Magical messages of music in the space are an active ingredient which induces dance. Folk

visual arts are extra sensual performances where *Thottam*, dance and instruments are in fusion.”⁵¹

4.6.2. Rhythm is the dominating factor

One of the main differences of folk theatre forms like *Malavaayiaattom* with other forms like modern and classical theatre is that folk performances are in *Thandava* style. They give less importance to micro level acting being participatory performance. Beating of percussion instruments in quick rhythm is the style of tribal and folk performances like *Malavaayiaattom*.

According to W.D. Hambly, “In most musical performances of primitive people, rhythm is the dominating factor.”⁵²

4.6.3. Drumming and dancing create and modify moods

Malavaayiaattom performances are popularly social gatherings for rejoicing and worship. The quick beating of drums and movements according to this rhythm changes the mood of the participants and purifies their minds.

According to Richard Schechner, “The chest beating sequence and other displays among primates, use drumming and dancing, making and then moving to self made rhythms. These displays occur among individuals and among groups; they are often accompanied by hooting and other vocalizations; they create and modify moods.”⁵³

4.6.4. Hooting and clapping for rhythm

During the performance of *Malavaayiaattom* both performers and audience hoot, clap their hands and tap legs. Drumming and using of instruments are of later origin in the history of theatre. It is to be presumed

that for rhythm non-availability of instruments was not a handicap to the traditional people. The presence of hooting and clapping in the art forms of the primitive people is ample proof for this.

According to Hambly, W.D. "In the dances of present day primitive people there is considerable hand clapping, combined with slapping of the legs and thighs, set a very remote date our earliest progenitors had in their own contours an ever ready percussion instrument." ⁵⁴

4.6.5. The music in *Malavaayiaattom* is not a means; it is the thing itself

In the performance of *Malavaayiaattom*, through out the performance there is drum beating and *Malavaayi* song. Participants enjoy the music. Almost everybody knows the rhythm of music. However, spectators stay alienated. They murmur and tap their hands to the rhythm of music.

To quote Richard Schechner, "Spectators keep their critical faculties intact. This does not mean that they are not moved-but they are moved into the music not beyond it. The audience is not quite. I mean they not only accompany the music, they talk to each other –not loudly. But always there is a buzz." ⁵⁵

4.6.6. Music during *Oottariyikkal*

The whole performance of *Malavaayiaattom* centres round the *Malavaayi* song, which tells the story of *Malavaayi* and *Mookkaan Chaathan*. The music of the performance starts with *Oottariyikkal*. In *Oottariyikkal* at least two *Marams*, two *Chendas* and one *Kuzhal* is used. *Oottariyikkal* is the counterpart of *Keli* in *Kathakali*. The rhythm is as follows.

First Maram

Kitham Kitham

Thakinthim, Kadithaska, Kinthanka, Kinthanka Kadinthanka Kinthanka

Second Maram

Than ham Kadinthanka Kinthanka

Kinthanka, Kadinthanka Kinthanka

Humming of the song

Poolam poola lom

Poola poola le Poole le

Poolalom poolalo

Poolalale poolale

When the Malavaayiaattom begins the Vaythari changes

First Maram

Dhim Dhim Dha Thatim

Second Maram

Thanthankitha, thanthankitha tha tha

Adimalavaram Kalladikkodallo

Kalladikkodallo Manikka Malanadu

The music in *Malavaayiaattom* is in the typical tune of the *Paraya* community. The lines and words of the *Malavaayippaattu* are broken according to this tune. After every step, there is a humming aaaaayy. Everybody joins the percussionists in the humming. Some devotees who know *Malavaayippaattu* sing along with the singers.

4.6.7. Nedumpaattu

There are two types of melody for *Paraya* songs. One is *Nedumpaattu* and other is *Kurumpaattu*. In *Nedumpaattu*, the rhythm is very slow. The rhythm is rather sorrowful. In general, by nature, *Parayas* are peace loving and they suffer their adversities silently. Therefore, this attitude towards life is evident in their music also. Hence, the popular music of the *Paraya* community is *Nedumpaattu*. Both *Nedumpaattu* and *Kurumpaattu* are sung in *Malavaayippaattu*.

4.6.8. Kurumpaattu

Kurumpaattu is in quick rhythm and sung usually during hilarious occasions.

4.6.9. Kadiyanakkam

Kadiyanakkam is a very attractive rhythm of percussion instruments of the *Paraya* community. It is popularly found among those regions where *Malavaayiaattom* is performed. In other parts, they have a similar rhythm called *Kottippaattu*. In *Kadiyanakkam* two *Marams*, two *Chendas* and one *Kurumkuzhal* are used.

There are two types of rhythms in *Kadiyanakkam*. One is *Chitakkai* and the other is *Edanjukottal*. The latter is very interesting and is a competition among the percussionists for one-upmanship. One has the opportunity to use discretion (*Manodharmam*) and change the course of the music according to ones skill.

4.7. Instruments

Instruments used in the performance of *Malavaayiaattom* are *Chenda*, *Maram* and *Kurumkuzhal*; there should be at least two *Marams*, two

Chendas and one *Kuzhal*. However, more than this number is usually used in the performance. Those who come to attend the performance bring the available musical instruments with them.

4.7.1. Chenda

Chenda is a very popular percussion instrument in Kerala. It is widely used in folk performances throughout the state.

4.7.2. Maram

Maram is a percussion instrument like *Chenda*. Its name has regional variations. It is called *Para*, *Para Chenda*, etc. which varies from region to region. The shape of *Maram* also varies according to region. However, the sound of the instrument is almost the same. It is very interesting that the sound of *Maram* has much resemblance with some musical instruments of Africa and Latin America. It is evident from the coincidence that music has a parallel metamorphosis. Music of the primitive people, which is connected with the vocation of agriculture, manual labour and hunting, must be of the same rhythm. As society deviates from this vocation and there is not much physical exertion, the common rhythm changes, it is to be presumed.

The sound of *Maram* will make reverberations in everyone's mind. It tends to move everybody's legs and hands even if one is least interested in music. This is because *Maram* produces a sound, which is identical to the basic rhythm in the human mind.

4.7.3. Kuzhal

Kuzhal is a musical instrument peculiar to the *Paraya* community. It is smaller than *Kurumkuzhal*. The sound of *Kuzhal* is very melodious and appealing. Though the musical instruments used in the performance of

Malavaayiaattom are the above said, the costumes of *Malavaayi* and *Mookkaan Chaathan* play a major part in the music concert. The chief costumes, which have musical impact, are the *Aramani* and *Kaalchilampu*. *Mookkaan Chaathan* wears *Aramani* around his waist. *Malavaayi* wears both *Aramani* and *Kaalchilampu*. Both these appendages to the costumes make very loud sound, which becomes part of the music instruments.

4.8. Dance

4.8.1. The living has rhythm within it

Performance of *Malavaayiaattom*, especially the dance and rhythm suggest the fact that even the primitive man in his awakened thought could clearly see that life manifests itself in rhythm. Heartbeat, breathing, walking, all these signs of living body are rhythmic. The difference between the living and the dead is that while the former has rhythm within him, the latter has no rhythm. Therefore, his faculty of reasoning suggested to him that if he engages himself in some kind of exalted rhythmic activity like dance and music, it could be a more exalted form of celebrating life. That is why man began dancing long before he learnt speaking some kind of dialect. Many scholars are therefore of the opinion that dance is the mother of all arts.

4.8.2. Dancing, music, singing and recitation are the basic elements of theatre art

The performance of *Malavaayiaattom* is full of dance and music. Dance is the predecessor of Theatre. To analyse *Malavaayiaattom*, the role of dance in folk theatre is to be studied.

In this connection, opinion of M.Christopher Byrski is quoted, "Dancing, music singing and recitation all are called Silps. All are

the basic elements of theatre art and all are given a considerable metaphysical importance in the ritual of the sacrifice.”⁵⁶

4.8.3. Dancing came into being at the beginning of all things

Dance evolved from the basic instinct of man. Dance in *Malavaayiaattom* has much resemblance to that of other traditional groups. This is ample evidence to show the primitive nature of the ritual art form. Dance being related to the music and rhythm, it is quite natural that the rhythm and instruments used by the *Paraya* community have much resemblance to that of other tribal societies of Asian, African and Latin American countries.

Dancing evolved from the physiological features of man. When extra energy is produced due to intense happiness, to release it, instinctively man moves his limbs.

To quote Paul Younger, “It could seem that dancing came into being at the beginning of all things and was brought to light together with Eros, that ancient one, for we see this primeval dancing clearly set forth in the Choral dance of the Constellations and in the planets and fixed stars, their interweaving and interchange and orderly harmony”⁵⁷

According to V.M.Kuttikrishna Menon, “Actually, dance nowhere evolved from religion. Dance has been neither offspring nor friend of religion. During rituals, to give vent to his feelings human beings resorted to dance.”⁵⁸

These statements reveal that the basic dance forms, music and rhythm have a universal basis. As stated earlier there are mainly two types of rhythm used in *Paraya* music. It is *Nedumpaattu* and *Kurumpaattu*. Naturally, the

dance steps of *Malavaayiaattom* are also based on these two rhythms. Hence, members of the *Paraya* community easily master the dance forms of *Malavaayiaattom*. Participants also go with the rhythm, which is quite popular.

4.8.4. The Thandava dance is of Dravidian origin

Thandava style of dance is seen in *Malavaayiaattom*. In performances of Dravidian origin, *Thandava* style of performance is prevalent. *Thandava* style of dance is attributed to Lord Siva.

According to Paul Younger “The *Thandava* dance is in origin that of Pre-Aryan divinity, half-god, half-demon, who holds his midnight revels in the burning ground.”⁵⁹

M.D.Raghavan has distinguished between two styles of performance, “According to style, dancing has been termed as *Thandava* or the masculine and the *Lasya*, or the familial and the more graceful style, examples of both of which abound in the folk dances of Kerala.”⁶⁰

4.8.5. Macro movements are given importance

In the dance of *Malavaayiaattom*, macro movements are given importance, which is a character of tribal dancing. Single movements are repeated. In the steps of both *Mookkaan Chaathan* and *Malavaayi*, importance is given to the movements of ornaments like *Kaalchilampu* and *Aramani*. With the sound of these decorative ornaments and percussion instruments, dance of *Malavaayiaattom* becomes a heavenly experience.

Opinion of Kapila Vatsyayan is worth mentioning. “At the tribal level, style is evolved through emphasis on particular parts of the body, particular limbs, as macro movement.”⁶¹

4.8.6. Words of singing and dance do not synchronize

The words of *Malavaayiaattom* song and rhythm of dancing do not synchronize on many occasions, which are quite natural among folk performances. However, dance synchronizes with the rhythm of the instruments.

According to Kapila Vatsyayan , “The relationship between the word and the movement is loose, not tightly structured. The thematic aspects of these dances and songs range from fertility to agricultural functions or the presentation of stories from the epics.”⁶²

4.8.7. The circular dance movement is an inspiration from the sun

The performance of *Malavaayiaattom* is around *Malavaayithara*. The performance is full of circular movements around *Malavaayithara* in a clockwise direction. The circular movement popular among tribal and folk performances is based on inspiration from the sun.

To quote M.D.Raghavan, “The circular dance movement is considered as an inspiration from the sun-the movement being sun-wise or clock-wise, east south, west-north. Circular dances, whether the dancers dance with or without an entered point, are magical in function.”⁶³

4.8.8. Image dance is represented by the war dance or weapon dance

Performance of *Malavaayiaattom* is the story of *Malavaayi* and *Mookkaan Chaathan*. During their odyssey, both of them lock horns. The fight between the two is an important scene of the performance. It must be because of the martial spirit inherent among the Keralites, that war dance or weapon dance acquired much importance. This instinct must have led to the evolution of *Kalaris* and other Martial art forms in Kerala.

According to M.D.Raghavan, "A type of image dance is represented by the war dance or weapon dance, of which there are a good number, as may well be expected to a region such as Kerala where the martial spirit has always been dominant."⁶⁴

4.8.9. Everyone dance, sing or beat drum

Dance is performed in *Malavaayiaattom*, not to entertain the audience. In this art form, there is no audience. The performance is purely participatory. Almost everyone participating in the performance dances, sings or beats drum. It is only recently that participation decreased and some people became passive spectators.

To quote Jiwan Pani, "Many tribal and non tribal communities, who have not yet built a wall of artificiality between them and life, now also dance not to entertain an audience but to celebrate life."⁶⁵

4.8.10. The rhythm of the folk art forms is basic and related to their life

The traditional folk music and dance forms evolved and exists being part of ritualist theatre. The contention that due to its religious base they exist even now is not correct. It has been established that dance did not

originate from religion and it is pre-religious. Traditional Performances like *Malavaayiaattom* have more tribal characteristics than religious features. It exists even now because the rhythm of the folk art forms is basic and related to their life. Modern or classical drama based on religion cannot last longer.

Jiwan Pani remarks, "It was the traditional folk forms of music, dance and theatre that survived them and the imposition of an alien culture with hardly a mark of injury. They continued in an unbroken tradition- responding, absorbing and evolving as they have always done to the needs and urges of the common people." ⁶⁶

4.8.11. Rhythmic patterns to win the favour of the gods

Like any other primitive dance forms rhythmic patterns are important in the performance of *Malavaayiaattom*. This expresses the tribal qualities of the theatre form. It is believed that supernatural forces can be appeased by eulogising them. They must have also experienced that rhythmic patterns made them happy.

Mrinalini Sarabhai is of the opinion that, "In very ancient cultures dancing was closely connected with ritual. Rhythmic patterns seemed to be the simplest method for the earliest man to win the favour of the gods, for weather, for his crops, for auspiciousness in birth, marriage and death, in hunting the wild beats of the jungle and the defeat of the enemies." ⁶⁷

4.8.12. Dancing is an activity that counteracts the forces of death

Ancient people had a positive worldview on death. They considered death to be a return to god. Hence, they believed that with death they are

escaping from the miseries of this world. Therefore, they used to dance with the dead body. Even rejoicing at death is the worldview of the folk and traditional societies. In Japan and even in some states in India dance and music at death prevail. Among *Paraya* community, Chakkadukottu even now exists. Some elders of the community say that in the ancient period Chakkadupattu was accompanied by dance also. This peculiarity of aboriginal culture survives even now among the *Paraya* community.

According to Mrinalini Sarabhai, "Then there was the funeral dance, which can be found in certain parts of India even today, one for instance, being amongst the Todas of the Nilgiri Hills where men dance around the funeral hut, during the last rites; and the Moharrum dances of Mymensigh, where they move to the tune of the dirges, weaving red scarves." ⁶⁸

4.8.13. Dancing with lighted wicks in hand, is popular among the folk

In *Malavaayiaattom* performance, wick lamps and fire torches are abundantly used. Use of electric light is completely absent. Some informants said that use of bell metal lamps are of recent origin. *Malavaayi* in some scenes performs biting fire sticks and holding them in her hands. *Mookkaan Chaathan* also dances holding a wick lamp very close to his face. *Malavaayiaattom* begins with *Kalasattom*, which is a dance holding wick lamps on a glass tumbler. Dancing with lighted wicks is popular among traditional communities.

Mrinalini Sarabhai narrates another instance of dancing with wick, "Dancing with thick-lighted wicks in her hand, she makes an impressive entrance." ⁶⁹

4.8.14. Dances of *Malavaayiaattom* resemble the traditional war dances

Dances of *Malavaayiaattom* resemble the traditional war dances prevalent in different parts of the world. The costumes of *Malavaayi* depict a war hero more than that of a woman. She has headdress, thick metal plates on the chest, metal strips connecting her nostrils and wings on both sides of her head, *Vanchi* on the shoulders and the sickle in her hands she resembles a Greek war hero.

To quote Shanti Swarup D.B. "A number of brass ornaments hanging across the chest, a plated basket decorated with bison horns on the left arm and a spear in the left hand, complete their elaborate toilet." ⁷⁰

4.8.15. *Mudiyaattom*

Performance by women is a good yardstick for analysing the culture of a society. *Mudiyaattom* exists in folk societies where primitive culture exists. *Mudiyaattom* evolved from the instincts of the primitive people. Roots of the Kerala art forms can be identified here. Hair is the symbol of womanhood. It is also the symbol of mother goddess. Years ago, hundreds of women arrived at the *Kaavus*, polluted it and performed *Mudiyaattom*. This was the practice. Women had no inhibition in doing it. This is evident from the local history.

Now this practice has ceased to exist. The main reason for this is that the performance is viewed with contempt. Even now, many folk art forms have no entry to the temples. They can go only up to the *Arikkandam* earmarked separately for the so-called outcastes. Whereas classical art

forms can go inside the temple premises, folk art performers, belonging to the scheduled castes cannot do so.

While men sing *Malavaayi* songs, beating the drum and blowing the *Kuzhal* women move their head and swing their head according to the rhythm of the percussion instruments. They move around the *thara*. With the *Malavaayi* song, drum beatings, sound of the *Kuzhal*, acting of *Malavaayi* and *Mookkaan Chaathan*, added with *Mudiyaattom* of the women, the *Malavaayiaattom* performance becomes a theatre experience.

Facing the east, they untie the knotted hair with their right hand. With this, they attain the posture of dance form of the *Mudiyaattom*. There will be five to twenty members in the group. There are three styles of *Mudiyaattom* prevailing in Kerala, according to geographical division, *Thalayattom* in south, *Mudiyaattom* in the middle and *Mudiveesikkali* in northern Kerala.

To quote C.R.Rajagopal, "In one style, the head is swivelled to either side. In another style, the hair is flung to either side with hands. Steps of legs, movement of hands and the number of steps are also different. Styles vary according to the variations in music. The chief performer of *Mudiyaattom* leads in showing the change of steps. The movements in *Mudiyaattom* are not as to project the shape of human body. Moreover, it is not at all exhibitionist in nature, or there are no subtle movements as in *Lasya Abhinaya*. They use the names like *Vattachuvadu*, *Aanachuvadu* and *Veesichuvadu* etc." ⁷¹

4.9. Costumes

4.9.1. The costumes are inherited from the ancestors

The family or troupe that performs *Malavaayiaattom* as the case may be owns costumes for different characters in *Malavaayiaattom*. Usually they are inherited from the ancestors and they consider it as a very valuable asset. When the performance season is over, it is kept in a sanctified place as a treasure. If there is any patchwork needed, they do it themselves. Only in rare cases, they are taken to a tailor. Before using the costumes, certain poojas are conducted and the performer prays before it is worn. After completion of the performance, it is kept before the traditional lamp.

According to Nemichandra Jain, "Dress, ornaments and painting have a vital role in dramas as they are used with difference to the appropriate sentiment intended to be represented according to customs of the provinces and circumstances and after taking into consideration the age and creed of the people." ⁷²

4.9.2. Stylized form

In costumes, stylized form is found in *Malavaayiaattom*. Small lines drawn on the face give the characters supernatural dimension. *Thalaseela*, a black cloth covered on *Malavaayi's* head, represents long thick hair. Their make up, hair and clothes are arranged in a stylized manner. This helps create the deity's supernatural air, which creates devotion.

4.9.3. Costumes of *Malavaayi*

Costumes of *Malavaayi* have much resemblance between that of other Mother Goddesses performed by the *Paraya* community like *Kaalikettu*, *Kolanmudi* and *Kaalis*. Common features of these mother

goddess forms are *Kaalchilampu*, *Mularu*, *Ekiru*, *Marthali*, *Mudippuvu*, *Aramani*, *Vanchi*, *Pallival* and *Chettian*. Ornaments as a whole are called '*Aniyalanga*'.

4.9.3.1. *Kaalchilampu*.

Kaalchilampu is worn on the ankles. They are oval shaped bell metal hollow rings. Inside them, there are metal balls. When these metal balls move, sound comes out of the *Chilampu*. *Kaalchilampu* is very heavy. While dancing with it for hours, there are chances of wounding the ankles. To prevent this, a special ankle pad is made for protection. It is made of screw pine mat. In some performances, cloth is tied like a protective pad instead of screw pine mats.

4.9.3.2. *Aramani*

Malavaayi wears *Aramani* on her waist. *Aramani* is a bell metal belt full of big bell metal bells attached to it. In almost all ritual performances, oracles wear *Aramani*. It makes sound with every movement of the performer. During the blessings, to attract the devotees, she twists her waist to make sounds with the *Aramani*. It is worn after all dressing and it helps to keep the dress tight.

4.9.3.3. *Marthali* (necklace)

Marthali is a bell metal Necklace. It is a string of coins like plates of different shape tied together. It hangs on the chest in different layers. It is tied around the neck like a necklace. Other mother goddess performers also use this.

To quote Chummar Choondal, "Crown made of coconut leaves is adorned on head. Face is painted in black. Floral garland is worn

on neck and hand. He is wearing red, silk dhoti. Laced skirt of *Velichapads* (Oracle) and *Aramani* is worn above these costumes.”⁷³

4.9.3.4. *Mularu (mulachiratta)*

Another prop, which identifies *Malavaayi* as a female god, is the *Mularu* or *Mulachiratta*. *Mulachiratta* is a bell metal replica of breasts. Its diameter is about three inches. Almost all female goddesses in folk performances wear this. It is tied around the body with a string.

4.9.3.5. *Thalaseela (headdress)*

The most important of the costumes is the *Thalaseela* of *Malavaayi*. It is usually black in colour. Now a days other dark colours like brown are also used. One elder person remarked that *Thalaseela* should invariably be black in colour. It is necessary to project *Malavaayi's* face and her facial expressions. White small cowries are stitched to the edge of the *Thalaseela*.

The *Thalaseela* looks a very old cloth. Many troupes said that they got it from their ancestors. One performer said that when the *Thalaseela* he got from his uncle was worn out, he cut the edge including the cowries and got it stitched to a new cloth. On many occasions, the *Thalaseela* of *Malavaayi* is removed from her head. In *Mudiyettu* when *Kaali* is in furious mood and likely to attack physically, her headgear is removed. On similar occasions *Malavaayi* touches her head on the *Malavaayithara* and simultaneously her *Thalaseela* is removed.

There are some rituals before putting *Thalaseela* on the head of the performer. The chief *Malavaayi* singer puts it on the head of the performer.

With the wearing of the *Thalaseela*, the performer is believed to have attained supernatural powers. He ceases to be a human.

4.9.3.6. White cowry shells

The edges of *Thalaseela*, which Malavaayi wears, are decorated with white cowry shells. White cowry shells are symbols of fertility.

Sabitha Radhakrishna is quoted here, "White cowry shells are associated with female fertility. These tribes from Turkey use the small conch shells with the spiral interior, for the rain bringing ritual and incorporate them among tassels and decoration of woven bags, used for storing domestic vessels." ⁷⁴

4.9.3.7. *Jekaru* or *Mudippuvu*

The face of *Malavaayi* looks very frightening. *Jekaru* or *Mudippuvu* are two wooden planks fitted on either side of *Malavaayi's* face, in front of the ears. The shape of *Mudippuvu* is like a wing. It is painted in golden colour and it seems to be a part of her face. To reduce weight, it is made hollow or filled with lightweight substances. In these props, *Malavaayi's* face appears supernatural.

4.9.3.8. *Chettian*

On her face, *Malavaayi* wears *Chettian* and *Jekaru*. *Chettians* are bell metal stripes, which connects the nostrils to upper side of the ears on both sides. They are curved. It is tied to the back of the head with a string, supported on the nostrils. It seems as if there are two long fangs coming out of *Malavaayi's* mouth. *Chettian* gives a fearsome look to the face of *Malavaayi*. It resembles whiskers or horns. Being made of bell metal, it

shines in the light of the country torches and *Malavaayi's* facial make up is projected.

4.9.3. 9. *Kazhuthoottam* (bell metal necklace)

She wears a bell metal necklace on her neck. It is semicircular in shape. The width of the necklace is about two inches; the necklace has some designs. In the light of the fire torches the necklace shines and light is reflected on *Malavaayi's* face, which projects her expressions. She wears another bell metal chain also, called *Marthali*. It is a bunch of circular and semicircular bell metal plates, down up to the waist.

4.9.3.10. Sickle

Malavaayi holds a sickle in her right hand. There is a long handle for the sickle. The sickle is decorated with small iron rings. It is made of iron.

4.9.3.11. *Vatti*

Vatti is a screwpine bag. It is kept on the left armpit of *Malavaayi*. It is full of *Thoolarpodi* or *Thavidu*. *Thavidu* is given as *Prasadam* (offerings) to devotees.

4.9.3.12. *Vanchi*

Vanchi is another costume worn by performers of *Kaali* of the *Paraya* community. It is fibre, made from a particular type of 'lady's finger' plant. Beating, the stem of the plant, it is converted into fibres. This fibre is whitened dipping in colours and the ends are given red colour. They are woven into a string like a flower garland. It is usually coloured white or red and white. *Vanchi* is tied on both hands, just below shoulders and on the wrists. When *Malavaayi* raises her hands, the *Vanchi* splits as if it is flowering.

4.9.3.13. Traditional 'thattu'

The dress of *Malavaayi* is almost like that of an *Ottamthullal* artist. *Malavaayi* wears a traditional 'thattu'. The chief singer of the *Malavaayi* song helps her to wear the 'thattu'. On it a white dhoti made stiff with rice water is folded in small folds is worn. Over it, a folded red cloth is put on. Above it, a red silk cloth is tied. On it, colourful readymade dress is also tied.

4.9.3.14. Facial make up

White lines are drawn with sandal paste on the forehead. White lines are drawn around the eyes also. Rice powder is used for preparing the paste. This projects the expression of her eyes. Small lines in facial make up are aimed at creating a superhuman appearance.

4.9.4. Costumes of Mookkaan Chaathan

Costumes of *Mookkaan Chaathan* are very simple. The mask is his speciality. He wears the traditional 'thattu'. Before wearing the mask, he ties a towel on his head. Other characters in the roles like *Nayadis* and toddy vendor are in their ordinary dress. The percussionists present enact these roles. They wear no separate costumes.

4.9.4.1. Mask

Mookkaan Chaathan is not considered a handsome figure. The mask he wears corroborates that concept. The mask is usually made of *Murikku* wood. The top of the mask is shaped like a rose petal. The colour of the mask is usually pink. The top of the mask is like a crown. Some designs are made on the crown. Masks differ from one to another. In some masks, only simple designs are made. Others bear pictures like traditional lamp, elephant flowers etc. A round projection is made on the top of the ear. Holes are

made in front of the eyes and mouth. The mask is tied on the performers head with a string. To keep the balance of the mask, the performer bites the stick like projection attached to the portion of the mouth. The mask is painted before the performance season begins. Special *poojas* are made to sanctify the mask. The mask is discussed separately.

4.9.4.2. Sticks

Mookkaan Chaathan holds two sticks in his hand. They are about sixteen inches long. One stick is made of areca and the other bamboo.

4.9.4.3. Aramani

He wears an *Aramani* on his waist. It is made of bell metal.

4.9.4.4. Dress and make up

Mookkaan Chaathan wears a *Banian* (vest). It seems to be of recent origin. The mask covers his face only. Hence to cover other parts of his head a big towel is tied on his head before the mask is worn. He wears a *Thattu*, a special style of wearing dhoti, tucked in a clew. Above the dhoti a red silk cloth is also worn. It is on this cloth *Aramani* is tied. He applies sandal paste all over his body. Sandal paste is applied on the legs and the body. Sandal is applied on the upper arm and lower arm also, keeping the hands folded.

4.9.5. Subtle line drawn helps the characters attain a superhuman state

As stylization is one peculiarity of *Malavaayiaattom*, in the matter of costumes stereotyped custom is followed. This is seen in facial make up and colour. Subtle lines drawn help the characters attain a superhuman state. Long and luxuriant hair is with this motive. That is why hairstyle, costumes and make up are done in stereo type manner.

According to Nemichandra Jain, “A keen appreciation of colours is marked feature of the oriental play, for in the representation of great legendary heroes, divinities and mythical beings, the elements of place, time, age; rank and profession were never lost sight of.”⁷⁵

Nemichandra Jain adds, “The dress of actors is carefully regulated especially as regards colour which evidently was regarded an important item in the matter of sentiments.”⁷⁶

4.9.6. Connection between mother goddess cult and red colour

Popular colours used in the costumes of *Mookkaan Chaathan* and *Malavaayi* are black and red. Black and red colours are the special features of the aboriginal people. *Mookkaan Chaathan* also wears red dhoti. In the background of white colour, red and black colours are projected in the light of country torches. The colour of costumes of Mother Goddess in whichever part of the country maybe, is red.

According to C.R.Rajagopalan, “Stripes in red and black colours are the peculiarities of red Indians. Long dresses with these types of long stripes are worn from children and elders on the shoulders.”⁷⁷

C.R.Rajagopalan adds, “In the processions at night both fusion and fission of colours are seen in luxurious costumes and props. Basic colours are tried to keep in folk arts. These colours are separated using black and red colours.”⁷⁸

The connection between mother goddess cult and red colour is noted by Sabitha Radhakrishna also, “Bandini in red, green and

yellow is worked on the clothes offered to Sitalmata goddess. The mother goddess in all parts of the country like Amman in the south and Durga in Bengal are offered vigorous red clothing.”⁷⁹

4.9.7. Colour of the costumes

Important colours used in the performance of *Malavaayiaattom* are red. In *Theyyam* also red is the most important colour. *Theyyam* has three stages, *Thottam*, *Vellattom* and *Theyyam*. In these three stages, red is prominent. Except in *Theyyams*, which uses tender coconut leaves, red is prominent in every other *Theyyam*. In the headgear of *Theyyam* also, red is important. Even though the headgears are made of tender coconut leaves, its edges are decorated with materials of red colour. Headgears and hands are decorated with ‘*thechi*’ flower. The oracles donned as *Devi* in all *Kaavus* in Kerala are in costumes of red colour.

To quote Sarah Caldwell, “It seems that in Kerala, there is a powerful need to over compensate for female redness (with all its symbolic concomitants) by the application of outward whiteness.”⁸⁰

4.9.8. Among the tribes and other traditional people red dominates

Red colour being the colour of blood, domination of red is seen among the tribes of many countries.

Sabitha Radhakrishna remarks, “Among the Turkish tribes, red dominates and this could be attributed partly to acceptability of indigenous red yielding substances and partly to ancient association with red, representing life blood and its vital energies.”⁸¹

4.10. Mask

Micro level movements are given importance in modern acting. It is part of the modernisation and technological innovations in theatre. However, this type of acting is effective only in ideal conditions of audience-actor positioning, lighting and many other factors. However, in the performance of *Malavaayiaattom* it is mass acting. There rhythm and quick movements are given importance. The style of dance is more *Thandava* than *Lasya*. The use of mask bars the chance of subtle movements of face and the body movements are paid greater attention.

Uma Anand remarks that, "An actor's body is his stock in trade. To an actor his body is an instrument, a tool of the craft and Bharatha enjoins the actor to take good care of it by way of physical exercises to keep it in perfect shape. To that actor and the dancer the tone and rhythm of the body used in movement are important."⁸²

4.10.1. The mask dances have cultural artistic social and recreational values.

In *Malavaayiaattom*, *Mookkaan Chaathan* uses colourful Masks. Primitive societies even now use mask. Masks were used to imitate wild animals during the evolutionary period of theatre. Facial make-ups substituted mask. Masks are used to project body movement also.

According to D.B Shanti Swarup, "The mask dances of rural Bengal, presenting a beautiful blending of classic and religious motifs with unsophisticated forms of folk expressions, have cultural and artistic significance as well as social and recreational values. There is a variety of masks of divine and supernatural

beings, such as cultivators, labourers, whilst the animal masks represent the tigers, elephants, horses, oxen, bears and other animals.”⁸³

It is believed by primitive people that when man wears a mask, spirits animate the mask.

According to Richard Schechner, “The dancing is a performance, but of a special kind. It is thought that when a man wears a mask he is ‘animated by the spirits which are derived from the myths.’ Each Hevehe has name because each is a spirit. The spirit moves when a man is in the mask. Conversely a man dances well only when he is moved by the spirit.”⁸⁴

4.10.2. Absolute separation between the performance and the performer

Masks are used to separate the performer from the performance. He becomes another being. When his face is covered, the performer loses his identity. His facial expressions, emotions, are not exposed and do not make any effect among the audience.

To quote Richard Schechner “There is absolute separation between the performance and the performer; a separation that encourages exchange and transformation.”⁸⁵

4.10.3. Masks help the performers to separate from this world

Masks help the performer to separate him from this world and to feel that he is otherworldly. This helps him to get over from the constraints of every day life.

To quote Uma Anand, “In this early rite we find several different aspects of theatre, as we know it, present. There are the men

who dress up in masks and skins to play a part other than what they are in everyday life, who correspond to actors.”⁸⁶

The aim of wearing of the masked headdress was to achieve a magic impact. Primitive people used mask not for disguise alone.

According to Uma Anand, “The wearing of the masked headdress was not merely to “impersonate” another being but had a magic significance-for the dancer believed that he actually became the deer or the buffalo whose horns and hide he wore.”⁸⁷

Mask is very effectively used in the performance of *Malavaayiaattom*. With mask, the following objectives are achieved.

When there was no loud speaker, the mask could perform the amplification of sound. *Malavaayiaattom* is performed for more than twelve hours. Nobody can keep facial expressions effectively for such a long period. The mask effectively compensates this shortcoming.

The face of *Mookkaan Chaathan* is expressionless. This gives him ample chance for effective transference of role. With a mask depicting cruel face, it is not possible to enact a comedy role or it is not also suitable to enact serious rituals with a comedian’s face. *Mookkaan Chaathan*’s face is neither comic nor serious. It suits every expression *Mookkaan Chaathan* enacts.

Moreover, with expressionless face, dialogue of the actor is projected. In the absence of a mask, the spectators will naturally watch keenly every facial expression of the performer, whereas the face being lifeless, the words are paid attention to. Hence, the dialogue of *Mookkaan Chaathan* becomes very effective.

Body language is effectively used in *Malavaayiaattom*. *Mookkaan Chaathans* every movement is dance. He moves with a peculiar step. He twists his waist while walking. This makes the *Aramani* move and make sound. With these steps, he can catch the attention of the audience very easily.

The mask of *Mookkaan Chaathan* is painted in light colour. The colour of the face is painted in pink. In the light of fire torches, the only light available in the performance space, the face of *Mookkaan Chaathan* is easily visible.

The making of the mask is also very peculiar. It is very effective from the theatrical point of view. The mask is made from 'Murikku'. It is a wood light in weight. Therefore, the performer does not find it difficult to keep the mask on for a long time.

The mask of *Mookkaan Chaathan* includes not only face but the crown also. Hence, the face is fully covered by the mask and the hair is not seen from the front view. The crown part of the mask is usually painted with the figures of elephant, lotus, traditional bell metal lamp etc. The crown part is carved in a floral shape. Though the mask is tied to the back of the head with a string, it is balanced by biting on a projection on the part of the mouth. Because of speaking while holding the mask biting a projection from it, the sound of different performers appears the same. This gives continuity of performance to the acting of *Mookkaan Chaathan*. The audience hears the same accent and sound.

The technique of mask as used in *Malavaayiaattom* can be emulated effectively in modern theatre. The colour selection of the mask, maintaining its balance by biting it can also be adopted in the modern theatre.

4.11. Make up

Malavaayi does not use mask. However, she has facial make up. It is in place of masks, that facial make up is done. With *Malavaayi*, wearing ornaments with golden colour, colourful costumes and mask the performance of *Malavaayiaattom* is a colourful event. The make up of *Malavaayi* resembles the characters found in other folk theatre performances.

Remarks of Adya Rangacharya are quoted here, "The most impressive part of this folk play is the picturesque make up and the colourful costumes. Against green, blue and red garments a golden breast –plate, armllets and necklaces are worn."⁸⁸

Malavaayi and *Mookkaan Chaathan* are the main characters in the *Malavaayiaattom* performance. *Mookkaan Chaathan* uses mask. Hence, he has no facial make up. Sandal paste is applied on his legs and hands. As for *Malavaayi*, the facial make up is to make her figure fearsome. She wears a black cloth decorated with white cowry shells on its edge, on her head. Lamp soot is applied on the rims of her eyes to project the movements of her eyes. Lines are drawn on the eyelids and below the eyes with sandal paste. Sandal paste is applied on her legs and hands. In *Malavaayiaattom*, there are no subtle movements. *Thandava* being the style of performance, body movements are given importance. Still the simple make up helps *Malavaayi* to keep her ferocious look.

According to Balwant Gargi, "For their make up the actors use lamp soot, red and white pigments and oil giving an amber sheen to the face." ⁸⁹

4.12. Lighting

Different techniques are used to project the face and body of the performers.

4.12.1. Holding wick lamp very close to face

In a number of scenes, different techniques are used to project the face and body of the performers. As part of the rites, in a very spectacular scene, *Mookkaan Chaathan* holds a wick lamp very close to his face. Though it is part of the rites performed by him, it surpasses the advanced techniques of light and shade, and it cannot be substituted more effectively even with a 2000 watt light.

4.12.2. Fire sticks are lighted on either ends

Kolthiri, traditional fire stick, is also used on one occasion. Both *Mookkaan Chaathan* and *Malavaayi* use this traditional torch (*Kolthiri*) in 'Karithiri' ritual. In this scene, fire sticks are lighted on both ends and she holds them in the hands and holds one between her teeth. This scene is very fear inspiring and the fury of *Malavaayi* is easily projected through the light arrangement, which is very effective.

4.12.3. Fire torches

Malavaayiaattom is a rare ritual theatre, which still preserves its primitive nature. The peculiarity of the art form is being maintained even today. *Malavaayiaattom* is performed in open air. The major part of the ritual is performed at night. The nature of primitive and tribal art is that the

performance in the night is around a fire created for the purpose, as was the case of many folk and tribal rituals. The use of *Aatta Vilakku* must have been the replica of the earlier method of lighting arrangement.

Though nowadays electric light is widely used, the performance mainly depends on the traditional lamps and the fire torches. Electric lights are confined to the premises surrounding the performance space. Gaslights also are used for lighting only the premises.

Besides, on the *Malavaayithara*, traditional lamps are lighted on other *Tharas* like *Muthappanthara Bhagavathythara* and other deities who are worshipped in that particular area. *Pooja* is done in these places. The idols are decorated, with red cloth. Colour of cloth used in folk art forms is usually red and white. These colours are easily recognised in the light of the country torches at night. The traditional lamps and utensils like *Kindi*, plates etc are made of bell metal. In the light of country torches, in the background of darkness of night, these glow like fire and become an attractive spectacle. This effect is totally absent on broad day light or even in the light of fluorescent tubes.

4.12.4. The actor and his make up are the vital instruments,

Characters in *Malavaayiaattom* have simple make up. However, they are enough to convey the message they want. It is the performance techniques adopted by the performers, which make the lighting in *Malavaayiaattom* marvellous.

According to Yoti Lane, "It seems to me that on the whole atmosphere is best conveyed by the actor and his make up,

because in theatre the actor is the vital instrument, not the stage designer nor the electrician.”⁹⁰

4.12.5. Country torches

One elderly man said that before electricity became popular, country torches were erected in the nearby premises of the performance place. Even now in some places, electric light is totally avoided. The costumes of the performers and decoration of the performance space are ideally suitable for use of country torches. The performance space is decorated with tender coconut leaves. These reflect light and shine in the darkness.

4.12.6. Black headdress

Malavaayi wears a headdress, which is black. Black colour of the headdress helps to divert everybody's attention from her head and so the face is prominently projected. The edge of the headdress (*Thalaseela*) is bordered with cowries. Cowries being white in colour lend easy reflection.

4.12.7. Ornaments made of bell metal

The *Chettian* and other *Aniyalanga* (ornaments) are made of bell metal. The *Jekaru* is a wing like wooden plank tied in front of her ears. It is painted in golden colours and the country torch light shows this out with prominence.

4.12.8. Vanchi

Vanchi (bunch of fibres) is tied on the shoulders and on the wrist. *Vanchi* is of white colour. Its edges are painted red, which gives good colour contrast and reflects light.

White sandal paste is applied on the forehead of *Malavaayi*. Thick lines are drawn below her eyes. This projects the eyeballs and her expressions can be easily seen.

Costumes of *Mookkaan Chaathan* also are made to be projected in the country torch light. The mask of *Mookkaan Chaathan* is painted in light colour. The paintings on the mask are done in Black and red. The face of *Mookkaan Chaathan* is visible even in a dim light. *Mookkaan Chaathan* wears a red dhoti in the traditional '*thattu*' form.

4.12.9. *Mookkaan Chaathan's* mask is projected

On important occasions when facial expressions are to be highlighted special light arrangements are used. The techniques used in these scenes are worth emulating. On certain occasions, when *Mookkaan Chaathan's* mask is to be projected, he holds a wick lamp very close to his face. This is enough to draw everybody's attention to his mask.

We cannot but marvel at the technique of lighting during the *Karithiri*. It is the most spectacular scene of *Malavaayiaattom* performance. This scene is very fearsome also. We will doubt whether the suppressed feelings of anger of this community, which is one among the lowest of the *Dalit* community who are suffering for centuries due to exploitation in the name of caste, are given vent to, through this scene.

4.12.10. *Kolthiri*

'*Kolthiri*' is used in *Karithiri*. *Kolthiri* is made with areca splints of about one foot length. On both ends of the splints, cloth is tied. The *Kolthiri* is dipped in gingili oil. During this enactment, the light arrangement is fully

utilized to project *Malavaayi* as very fearsome. *Malavaayi* holds one *Kolthiri* in her mouth biting and holds one each in either hand.

Now, she opens her eyes wide. She makes some peculiar sounds also. This is enough to quicken anybody's heartbeat. Children begin to cry. Now, two men walk in front of *Malavaayi* holding big country torches. Everybody will marvel at the acting skill of the performer and the scientific techniques of light arrangement used by the folk, gained from their traditional experiences.

4.13. Dialogues

Malavaayiaattom is a performance, which lasts for more than twelve hours. The whole performance depends on *Malavaayippaattu*. The chief performer of the *Malavaayiaattom* sings *Malavaayippaattu*. He is the head of the performance troupe. The recitation of the song has to be completed. *Malavaayi* keeps mum to the sarcastic uttering of the *Mookkaan Chaathan*. The role of *Mookkaan Chaathan* and that of *Malavaayi* are opposing ones. Throughout the performance, *Malavaayi* keeps a fierce mood. She always dances, though at times, others replace her in the not much important scenes. However, in scenes like, *Kulikuri*, *Karithiri* and at the time of blessing, the chief *Malavaayi* performer adorns the costumes of *Malavaayi*.

Mookkaan Chaathan makes the night a hilarious occasion. The performer of *Mookkaan Chaathan* should be an all rounder. He should invariably possess many qualities. He should know the rituals of *Malavaayiaattom* completely. For this, he should be aware when and where different steps of *Malavaayippaattu* begin. A person, who knows the technique of effectively dealing with people and who is able to use them as

instruments for his mockery, only can wear the mask of *Mookkaan Chaathan*. He should also try to accommodate different types of people to the main fold of the performance. In making mockery, he should desist from insulting others. He does magic with words. After using distorted words, he asks for pardon for the slip of the tongue occasionally. *Mookkaan Chaathan* is the best example for using of techniques of audience manipulation in folk theatre.

4.13.1. Loosing of the initial words or sentences does not happen

In theatrical dialogues, there is chance of losing the initial words or sentences due to lack of attention. This does not happen in the case of *Mookkaan Chaathan*. Before starting a dialogue, *Mookkaan Chaathan* shakes his hip. At this, the bells of *Aramani* sound loudly, which attracts the attention of the audience. Instead of coming directly to the dialogue, he uses some *Vaytharis (humming)*. This is to attract attention of the audience. Naturally, these sounds come above all other sounds and the dialogues of *Mookkaan Chaathan* are easily heard.

4.13.2. The power of repetition and naming

Mookkaan Chaathan repeats some dialogues. By repeating the same dialogues, the performer intends to drive the points into the minds of the audience and win them over to his viewpoint.

According to Richard Schechner "What is of interest here isn't the matter of myth but the power of repetition and naming (Monotony too) to establish the presence of a situation –in-its-entirety." ⁹¹

4.13.3. Fun in parodying usually being at somebody's expense

Though *Mookkaan Chaathan's* dialogues are full of sarcasm and parodying, he does not hurt anybody deliberately. Moreover, the audience present are his relatives or family and community members who are very dear to him.

To quote Felicie Hughes-Freeland and Mary M. Crain, "Another way in which humorous performances may affect life outside the performative space is related to the fun in parodying usually being at somebody's expense."⁹²

Though *Mookkaan Chaathan's* dialogues are full of sarcasm, it does not insult others.

M.K. Ayyappan's remarks substantiate this opinion, "To lessen the fury of *Neeli*, *Mookkaan Chaathan* acts some mimics. He bravely mocks those in the high echelons of the society. Sometime these dialogues slip to the level of obscenity but everybody enjoys and nobody resists him."⁹³

Mookkaan Chaathan's dialogues are very sarcastic. In keeping the audience active throughout the night, he uses many performance techniques. The performer *Mookkaan Chaathan* uses the following techniques.

- (i) He cracks instant jokes.
- (ii) *Mookkaan Chaathan* tells many stories, riddles, proverbs through out his performance.
- (iii) He also shares the job of distributing black tea to the audience.
- (iv) He applies sandal paste on the fore head of the audience.

- (v) He moves freely among the audience so that everyone sleeping is forced to awake indirectly.
- (vi) *Mookkaan Chaathan* does some magic also. He does some tricks with his stick and towel.
- (vii) He speaks with double meaning.
- (viii) He does and leads many rituals.
- (ix) *Mookkaan Chaathan* distributes toddy to those present for watching the performance.

Mookkaan Chaathan keeps two sticks in his hands. One is made from Areca trunk and other tamarind wood. He makes sound hitting the two sticks together. In some scenes, he sits on the two sticks balancing. *Mookkaan Chaathan* sits on these sticks with ease. He wears a 'thattu' (a traditional form of wearing dhoti). Over it, he wears a red silk dhoti. The contrasted colours shine in the fire torch light. Hence, his dress though very simple is very attractive, especially at night.

4.13.4. Active audience participation and sexual dialogues

The chief peculiarity of the dialogue of *Mookkaan Chaathan* is that he remarks about sex both explicitly and covertly. This is the best example of sex education prevalent among the primitive societies. These people do not consider speaking of sex a taboo. While uttering the dialogues, he imitates sexual actions and demonstrates it symbolically. He remarks about oral sex also. *Mookkaan Chaathan's* dialogue does not remain a monologue. It is because of the active audience participation. Men, especially elders actively participate in the sexual dialogues. Even though their children and grand children are with them, they do not consider it a taboo. His dialogues are full

of double meaning. Spoonerism is also used lavishly. He tells many stories connected mostly with illicit sexual relationships. They are accompanied by folk songs. Many songs are composed instantly. Even on these occasions, *Malavaayi* may be in a serious mood. However, that does not matter to *Mookkaan Chaathan*. He mocks her. Both the character of *Malavaayi* and the performer of *Malavaayi* are made tools for sarcasm of *Mookkaan Chaathan*. Even when the performance is in a most tense situation, *Malavaayi* is in great fury and people are in a mood of intense devotion, *Mookkaan Chaathan* does not hesitate to crack some jokes. This changes the mood of the performers and the audience. Spectators, especially children heave a sigh of relief.

4.13.5 Good general knowledge and current affairs

Mookkaan Chaathan should have good general knowledge and knowledge of current affairs. He refers to latest political and social issues. It is remarked very naturally and without hurting others. While this researcher was taking some photographs and recording songs, *Mookkaan Chaathan* spoke about piracy of folk songs and its misuse. The dialogues of *Mookkaan Chaathan* are natural and a most effective way of social criticism.

The most effective technique, which *Mookkaan Chaathan* uses to keep the participants live throughout the performance is, his deliberate attempt to make the audience participate in the performance. In modern or classical performances, a drunkard can disrupt the performance. While, in *Malavaayiaattom* these type of people are boons. *Mookkaan Chaathan* uses them as effective tools. He calls them to the centre space and encourages them to sing, dance or do anything they like to do. He interprets others

dialogues in a most sarcastic way. He cracks some jokes at the expense of the drunkard. Most probably, the drunkard might be one of his close relatives.

4.13.6. Dialogue in toddy shop

Acting in *Malavaayiaattom* reaches its full theatrical dimension while enacting the scenes of going to toddy shop and the departure of the *Nayadis*. *Malavaayi* also takes active participation in these scenes. They call the sleeping toddy seller and ask for toddy. The shopkeeper tells that there are dues pending. *Malavaayi* soothes the toddy shop owner and offers him jackfruit when they come next time. The toddy shop owner budes. They engage in a very intimate and informal dialogue, which depicts the love, intimacy and helpfulness among the villagers. The toddy tapper is called *Thandan* with reverence. Lower caste people call *Eahavas*, *Thandan* with reverence. They bid good-bye in a most intimate way. While enacting the scene they drink real toddy and even serve some among the audience. For this, they are called as passers by and they enter into some dialogue. In this scene, acting is performed very easily. We cannot distinguish the dialogues as part of the performance or out of performance. The acting is very easy and natural to that much extent.

4.13.7. Blessing of Nayadis

Blessing of *Nayadis* is a scene where archaic language is used. The words used in this dialogue shows that *Malavaayiaattom* has a very primitive origin. A peculiar type of language is used in this scene. The *Nayadis* bless in return for the alms given to them.

4.13.8. *Arulapad*

While giving blessings (*Arulapad*) *Malavaayi*'s dialogue extends up to three to four hours in the morning. It starts at about six o'clock in the morning and goes on up to nine o'clock. It may extend even up to five hours. The main performer of *Malavaayiaattom* blesses the devotees and makes oracular forecasts. During this time also, she will be dancing. She pretends to be in a state of possession, though actually she is performing with full sense. It is only pretence for a psychological purpose. She will be twisting her waist so that the bells of *Aramani* ring and make sound. She sways forward and backward. To keep her mood active and convince the devotees she makes peculiar sounds and recites *Thottams*. She keeps the sickle in her right hand. In her '*Vatti*' (a small bag made of screwpine) *Thoolarpodi* (a type of *Thavidu* given as *Prasadam* to devotees) is kept. During blessing, she takes *Thavidu* from the '*Vatti*' with the *Val* and gives it to the devotees.

Malavaayi calls everybody to the *Pandal*. She declares that one who is born in the mountain has come. One who is born in the forests has come. First she calls the head of the family and then the women of the family. She calls everyone, "*Nerangale*," (direct brother), "*Neredathy*," "*Aniyathy*," (sisters), "*Nere Kunjathune*" (sister in law). Most probably, she will be aware of the family feuds because these people are very overt in their behaviour. Hence, their family feuds are public. They do not keep it as a secret. The performer of the *Malavaayi* having good contacts knows the relationships and the problems. He is interested in these matters also. He uses it during blessings to placate the feuds of the devotees.

First, she calls the head of the family. She explains the efficacy of the 'Attom'. Further rituals to be followed are also explained. Then the women of the family are called. They are advised that women married off should be treated well. She recalls some incidents. Women married off are called and advised that their in-laws should be respected.

Many family feuds come into the fore. Women become happy when their in-laws are reprimanded. When the oracular forecasts are found right, *Malavaayi* goes round the *Malavaayithara* and proclaims it. If the oracles are found wrong, she makes big noise, recites some *Thottam*.

കല്ലടിഞ്ഞകല്ലടിക്കോട് നാല്പത്തിരണ്ട് അടിവാരം. നീലിയെന്നൊരു ഇളമ്പിലാവ്
കാളിയെന്നൊരു കരിമ്പാട്

കുട്ടാട് കുടുപാട്. മലയപ്പൊന്നവൾക്ക് നിവർത്തിക്ക്. വിളിച്ചു വിളിപ്പുറത്തും നട
ക്കുംവഴിയിലും മലയപ്പൊന്നവളുണ്ട്

She takes firm and speedy steps. She prays to the deities and comes back as if she has new enlightenment. Occasionally she demands *maravellam* (മരവെള്ളം). Tree liquid (toddy). Then calls *Nerangalle*, *Nere Kunjathoon*, (നേരാങ്ങളേ, നേരെകുഞ്ഞാത്തുനേ) in intimate words. Then she gives a different interpretation, elicits necessary points from the public, argues and establishes her arguments. Somehow or other, she convinces the audience.

The dialogues of *Malavaayiaattom* have the power to produce a soothing effect in the minds of the devotees. The language used is slang of the *Paraya* community. Hence, it has much impact on the audience. Whenever there is a distraction from the audience, or the audience tends to lose interest and speak among themselves, *Malavaayi* makes peculiar

sounds and roars. The techniques used in these scenes are worth emulating.

The dialogues of *Malavaayi* in the blessing session in effect are counselling and psychotherapy. Many family feuds cease to exist after the *Attom*. They feel that *Malavaayi* is always with them as assured by the performer of the *Malavaayi (Eettalum Pettalum.)*. വിളിച്ചു വിളിപ്പുറത്തും നടക്കുംവഴിയ്ക്കും മലയാപ്പുറന്നവളാണ്. Some of the audience said that even after the completion of the performance, these words of the *Malavaayi* reverberate in their ears. This gives them enough strength to face difficulties.

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Chapter 5

Factors Influencing Theatre

5.1. Actor has to appease the deity and feudal lord also

The performers along with trying to propitiate the deity have to appease the feudal lords also. The performers are usually from the lowest strata of the social order. The feudal lords had the power even to end their life. The rulers conferred these feudal lords with the power of "*Kollum Kolayum*" (power to kill people. Hence, the lower caste people led a life of misery and fear. The *Janmis* (feudal landlords) can inflict any punishment on him without ascribing any reason. Wherever the performances are made, may be in public or feudal houses, the feudal lords will be important spectators. The performers are aware of this factor.

When the artist bows before the deity, he bows before the feudal lord also. Even during the performance, he has to take them into confidence. In *Pulluvanpaattu*, the remuneration given by the patrons are an important part in the song. The description about the amount, of clothing and rice given is the main part of the *Pulluvanpaattu*. During the performance of *Theyyam*, the artist calls each of the lords and eulogizes the part they have played in organising the performance. It is said that in the yesteryears if anybody was left unmentioned, after the *Kaliyattom* was over, he is taken to the property owner's house and beaten.

Malavaayiaattom is performed in *Paraya* habitats. They belong to the untouchables and high caste people kept off from them and their habitats.

So it was been a private affair to the *Paraya* community. Moreover, *Malavaayi* is considered a ferocious deity and high caste people wanted to keep off from her. They were comparatively free to perform, the participants being low caste people. They did not have to face the wrath of the society, especially feudal lords and upper caste people.

5.2. For the performance, the artist had to be content with the trifle he receives

For the performance, the folk artist had to be content with the trifle he receives. During the festival seasons like Onam and Vishu, he has to depend on these lords.

However, for the performance of *Malavaayiaattom* higher caste people do not turn up. Till recently only people of *Paraya* community came to watch *Malavaayiaattom*. Even then, *Malavaayi* being the presiding deity of *Oti* cult, people were afraid of the deity.

During the period of performance of *Malavaayiaattom*, people of *Paraya* community used to go round in the costumes of *Kaali*. Landlords and other upper caste people did not show reticence to give them something in kind as offerings.

5.3. Gender issues

Tribal culture is based on gender equality and division of labour. This aspect is evident in the scenes of *Malavaayiaattom*. The theme of the performance is the fight between *Malavaayi* and *Mookkaan Chaathan*. Nobody wins or loses in the fight. At last, they concede this matter and come to a compromise. Hence, there is no superiority of men or women. Both are recognised as equally powerful.

Compared to upper caste women, low caste women enjoyed much freedom. The superiority of *Malavaayi* over *Mookkaan Chaathan* asserts this fact.

In this connection, Sarah Caldwell is quoted here, “Traditional lower- caste women, by contrast, although also living in their matrilineal and patrilocal families, were probably less restricted in their movements and behaviour than they are today.”¹

Having convinced the fact that they are equals and there is no question of winning or losing, *Malavaayi* and *Mookkaan Chaathan* come to a compromise and decides to work together in *Nanjilum Nayattilum*. As a gesture of goodwill, they jointly engage in hunting expeditions and agricultural activities.

Though nobody wins or loses in the performance, the superiority of female character is visibly evident in every scene of the performance. This would not have been possible had the community in which the attom was performed for centuries was one where there was no gender equality. Throughout the fight in the *Malavaayiaattom* though *Mookkaan Chaathan* fights, he is always in the defensive. *Malavaayi* is always on the offensive and *Mookkaan Chaathan* is conciliatory in attitude.

5.4. Myth of Malavaayiaattom helps to conquer fear of death.

Malavaayiaattom is based on the myth of *Kalladikode* Mountains and the myth of *Malavaayi*. The story behind the performance has a binding force on the members of the *Paraya* community. They have a feeling of common ancestry and common patronage of the deity. This gives them immense strength and self-confidence to face problems in life.

According to Uma Anand, "It symbolises man's longing for a new, fresh beginning- it expresses his hope for a new, fresh beginning- and it helps him to conquer his fear of death. It is myth that has shaped powerful beliefs and, as we shall now see, led to ceremonies that directly established theatre." ²

5.5. Economic content

Malavaayiaattom is an offspring of rituals and religious life of the Paraya community. They have their roots in religion and rituals. *Malavaayiaattom* is connected with agriculture and fertility cult. Even arts connected with religion are linked with the vocation of agriculture. Religious festivals are celebrated during the period of prosperity. For e.g. in Kerala, festival season starts from the month of *Kumbhom*. *Malavaayiaattom* is also performed during this period. This month is the period of harvest. The people live comparatively in peace and during this period, they have leisure to engage in cultural activities.

Art and culture flourished during the feudal period. Feudal lords were the patrons of art forms. Power and wealth were concentrated in their hands. Hence, they could afford to patronise festivals. Performers of folk art forms were people among the lowest strata of the society. They were mostly from scheduled castes. Even without patronage, it was their practice to celebrate every agricultural activity. From preparation of the soil for sowing the seed to harvesting, every step of his work was accompanied by music and dance. This made his work easy and gave him enjoyment.

After the harvest, the agricultural worker is either partially or fully unemployed. Hence, for money and entertainment they engage in

performances. These performances fetch them income in the form of both cash and kind. Hence, the change of economic structure has very much to do with the extinction of folk art forms like *Malavaayiaattom*.

5.6. Influence of caste.

Social structure of Kerala is based on caste hierarchy. It is possible to get rid of class hierarchy. If one poor man, a worker, amasses plenty of money by some means, his position in society changes. He gets a new status and becomes member of a new class. Whereas backwardness due to class can be got ridden, that of caste is very rigid. Caste demarcation is based on birth. Hence, society does not recognise one even if he or she adopts a new religion. The caste system is so rigid in our society.

Rituals of different castes have been quite different for centuries. They had their own customs, tradition and cultural heritage. Some time back it was easy to recognise one based on his customs and manners. This has changed with education and social mingling. However, caste system has become rigid. People have become more caste conscious than decades ago.

Each folk art form of Kerala is related to a particular caste performing it. Each caste has its own performance traditions. *Pulluva* community performs *Pulluvan* song, *Kaalakali* by Pulayas, and *Thira* by Mannans. *Theyyam* is performed by castes like *Malayan*, *Anjoottan*, *Munnoottan*, etc. Other castes also have their own performances. It was their vocation also. Moreover, they are part of their tradition and culture.

The members of the *Paraya* community perform *Malavaayiaattom*. *Malavaayi* is the tutelary deity of the community. The performance is part of

their culture. In every habitat of the *Paraya* community, there is *Malavaayithara* and *Malavaayi* is worshipped. *Attom* is also conducted annually. The performers of the *Attom* are the members of the *Paraya* community. It is the feeling of oneness due to the feeling of belonging to a single caste and their presiding deity being *Malavaayi*, that they conduct the performance regularly.

Kapila Vatsyayan is of the opinion that, “Nevertheless it is useful to bear in mind that while genres can be divided on the basis of content and form, they can also be classified in terms of the particular communities who have been the repositories of particular forms.”³

It is because of the belief that *Malavaayi* is their tutelary deity and the performance of *Malavaayiaattom* will bring relief to their sufferings that the members of the *Paraya* community perform *Malavaayiaattom*. The performer has also firm belief in the myth. He undergoes possession because of this belief. He also believes that by performing the ritual, the deity will be satisfied with him. Hence getting a chance to perform is taken as a privilege.

5.7. Influence of money power, political power and economic exploitation

During the feudal period, patrons of folk art forms were feudal lords. They were owners of temples and other places of worship. Land also belonged to them. Money and power were concentrated in their hands.

Folk art forms are performed in different conditions. Ritual performances like *Malavaayiaattom* are conducted during the festival

season. There were secular art forms also which were performed for entertainment only. Whatever the nature of the art forms may be, they are structured to make it acceptable to the higher echelons of the society.

The folk artist gets only a trifling amount for the performance. As he had no other alternative, he has no other go but to be satisfied with what he gets. He has firm belief in the efficacy of the rituals. Hence, though he is underpaid, he cannot retreat from the performance for fear of curse and retribution. This feeling lands him in a vicious circle. Of late, folk artists have become a much-wanted group. They have become susceptible to much exploitation by government and so called intellectuals. Political parties use them to make their processions colourful. The artists in their cumbersome costumes have to travel a long distance in the scorching summer for a trifle. In the name of tourism, performance is arranged for foreigners. Now a days, visual media is exploiting the folk artists for commercial purposes.

5.8. Nature and man

Man is a part of nature. He feels at home in the natural surroundings. Hence, he has an intense desire to go back to the nature. Unlike other art forms, folk arts like *Malavaayiaattom* are performed in natural surroundings. There are no sophisticated light arrangements, sound system or curtain in folk theatre. Usually folk performances are made in the surroundings of *Kaavus*. There will be a banyan tree or '*Pala*' near the *Kaavus*. In some cases, the venue will be a harvested field. Here spectators are drawn into the presence of nature and become an integral part of the nature. The space is not pre-determined but organic and dynamic.

5.9. Social liberation

People belonging to the lower castes now known as scheduled castes, were segregated, calling them out castes. However, these people are performers of folk art forms. They are usually agricultural workers. They have to keep a particular distance, as their access will pollute the high castes.

However, during some folk performances, though for a moment, the performer is elevated to a high position. He is the personification of the deity. In performances like *Malavaayiaattom*, the disguised form is the god itself. Hence, devotees, whatever their position in the caste or social hierarchy, stands before him with folded hands. He blesses the devotees. He gets an eminence, which he cannot dream of in real life. Hence, the performance is a fulfilment of a dream. When he bows before the high caste lords on 364 days a year, the lords bow before him one day in the year, which gives him immense satisfaction. At least one day in the year he is liberated from bondage. The *Paraya* community, performers of *Malavaayiaattom* were untouchables and among the lowest strata of social ladder. By enacting different roles, which invite devotion, their personal ego is fulfilled.

5.10. Supernatural belief

The origin of rituals is from belief in the supernatural. At first worship of supernatural beings was very simple. Man was living in the forest and he was concerned only with the natural forces, which he had to confront. These included *Indra* (thunder), *Varuna* (wind) and *Agni* (fire). It was later on only new gods and goddesses emerged. During the early period, environmental worship was prevalent. Serpent worship and *Kaavus* were part of

environmental worship. During the pre-historic period, the form of worship was very simple. However, when caste system evolved and society was restructured in a hierarchical order, a powerful priestly class evolved. To establish their suzerainty they made the form of worship very rigid and complicated. Religion became highly ritualistic and full of sacrifices. With this, everything concerned with religious rites were codified in the form of Vedas and its subsidiaries and epics. A large number of gods and goddesses sprang up.

Rituals came into being to propitiate the deities. Gods and goddesses were characterised with qualities of human beings. Hence, it is believed even now that these deities are satisfied by offerings. When he or she is in a mood of fury, he spreads epidemics, famines and other disasters. Hence, every village and locality began to worship its own tutelary deity. They believed that if they were not propitiated there would be disaster. Along with the worship of gods and goddesses, demon worship also became prevalent. They were all mythical heroes, the story of which is very popular in the area of worship. The people on a particular day of the year or as a vow disguised as the deity and enacted her story.

Malavaayi is worshipped as the tutelary deity of the *Paraya* community and some other *Dalit* communities. Other castes are also aware of the worship of this deity by the *Paraya* community and they fear the deity. She is still in the minds of these communities as a fierce deity. The majority of the members of these communities believe that by appeasing the deity they get peace and prosperity.

Malavaayiaattom being a performance requiring the involvement of many people much effort is required for the conduct of the performance. Moreover, the performance requires full involvement and vigorous activities, which needs much physical exertion. It is because of the firm belief in the blessings of *Malavaayi* and the efficacy of the rituals that the performance is made with so much effort.

5.11. Dual roles-artist has to collect his remuneration also

Unlike artists of classical and modern art forms, folk artists as in *Malavaayiaattom* are in a precarious condition. In classical and modern theatre forms, the performers act according to set rules. They strictly adhere to the script. Activities in the stage go on scene by scene according to the script. The actor has no right to deviate from the set rules. The organiser of the performance pays the artist. However, in folk art forms, the performance is not confined to a particular space. In some places, the artist may be visiting house to house as part of the ritual. Along with the dance or performance, he has to collect his remuneration also. There is no set rate or standard collection. Therefore, he has to set the performance in such a way that he can elicit maximum dole from the spectators. Having close interaction with the audience and performance being made in an informal atmosphere, this method becomes very easy.

5.12. Performers use many techniques to elicit money from the audience

In *Malavaayiaattom*, both *Mookkaan Chaathan* and *Malavaayi* use many techniques to extract money from the audience. During the rituals, *Mookkaan Chaathan* distributes remnants of offerings to the devotees. He

also applies sandal paste on their forehead. As a mark of respect audience give money to the performer.

During the time of forecast, towards the end of the performance, *Malavaayi* foretells that there are some curses affecting the devotees. To get rid of these curses, *Malavaayi* is to be propitiated. For this, she fixes an amount. If the devotee tells that the amount is exorbitant, *Malavaayi* announces some concessions.

In '*Pulluvan pattu*' the doles given by the house owner as remuneration is part of the song. By reciting this, the usual remuneration expected is specified suggestively. Naturally, the spectator is happy to pay the remuneration expected. This avoids bargaining and fosters intimacy between the two.

To quote Breht, "Every Chinese coolie is forced to take part in world politics to earn his daily bread. He is bound in all utterances to his destiny of the age regardless of what his situation in life might be." ⁴

5.13. Actors have multifarious roles to perform

In *Malavaayiaattom* performance, the actors have multifarious roles to perform. The role of *Mookkaan Chaathan* is worthy of special mention. Though *Malavaayi* is worshipped much, it is *Mookkaan Chaathan* who makes the performance live. He makes the performance attractive to all especially women and children. He has to do many rituals from beginning to end of the *Malavaayiaattom*. Throughout he has to keep a comic mood. Before the actual performance, he helps to prepare the materials for the rituals. *Mookkaan Chaathan's* performance starts from a room set apart for

Poojas inside the house. From there he starts singing and dancing. After that, he has no rest. *Malavaayi* is substituted at times. However, in the case of *Mookkaan Chaathan* this practice is absent. One performer performs throughout. He arranges *Pooja* materials during the performance and makes it available. After *Pooja*, *Mookkaan Chaathan* personally applies sandal paste on the forehead of the devotees. For this, he moves among the audience. The time being after midnight, many will have started sleeping. While making way, through the audience, he asks them to move to allow him to pass. Black tea is supplied occasionally. *Mookkaan Chaathan* takes initiative to do the job by moving among the audience. During grave scenes like *Karithiri*, when whole focus is on *Malavaayi*, she is in a very serious mood and the devotees are fully concentrated on her; there is no scope for *Mookkaan Chaathan's* dialogues. At that time, *Mookkaan Chaathan* helps in holding *Pantham* in front of *Malavaayi*. During the closing ceremony of the *Attom* as part of the rituals, *Mookkan Chatham* sweeps the floor with a broomstick and sprinkles water.

During the major part of the performance, *Malavaayi*, being a fierce deity utters no word at all and she is in a grave mood. However, during the close of the performance she takes the role of blessing. At this time, *Malavaayi* assumes the role of a psychotherapist and a counsellor. She hears the woes of the devotees, finds solution to their problems and patches up differences.

5.14. The performer often has a second or third occupation

Performers of *Malavaayiaattom* are not full time professionals. Usually they are agricultural workers. Only during the festival season, they can make

money from the performance. Hence, they have to engage in some other professions. This is the case of performers of most folk art forms.

According to Richard Schechner, "The performer often has a second or third occupation. However, this does not mean that his skills as a performer are amateurish; far from it, a connection to a community may deepen all aspects of the art."⁵

5.15. Development has reduced many folk artists to a mere labourer

Today the picture is different. Industrialisation and agricultural development have provided enormous purchasing power to the common person in the villages. Television in almost every home has brought about a revolution in the cultural inputs and traditions. The entire complex of the performing arts, theatre, folk performances and religious traditions are gravely affected resulting in a transformation. Development has reduced many folk artists to a mere labourer- the unequal fruits of development.

Now the performers are in a very precarious condition. Even though during feudal days he was less paid, the element of belief was there. Therefore, outside the performance, he was called for some ritual functions.

To quote Alka O. Pande, "On the one hand, he is bearing the burden of a great heritage and on the other hand, effects of development are pushing him back repeatedly. As the folk performer carries on with the family treasures, the legacy of his ancestors, he also faces of the assaults of the electronic media where melody, lyrics and a shared heritage are being completely overshadowed by globalization."⁶

During feudal period, power and wealth were concentrated in the hands of feudal lords. Without the knowledge and patronage of these lords, no activity whether it may be cultural or artistic, was possible.

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Chapter 6

Fertility cult as depicted in *Malavaayiaattom*

Fertility cult can be found in almost all traditional societies. Before human beings began to worship the established form of religion, they were worshipping nature. Wondering at the power of natural forces like thunder lightning, sun and air, they began to worship them. So also, they worshipped earth. They considered earth and nature as mother. *Malavaayiaattom* includes among the theatre forms performed to propitiate the mother goddess.

Almost all scenes of *Malavaayiaattom* are related to agriculture and fertility. In every ritual, symbols of fertility like paddy, rice, flowers and natural colours and toddy are seen. In the scene of *Nanjum Nayattum* clearing of forests, ploughing and sowing of seeds are vividly enacted.

6.1. The fertility inherent in nature is animated by the fertility of the gods

Earth has always been considered as a goddess. Mother goddess is a term widely used. Mother goddess is related to reproduction and fertility. For prosperity of earth, people believed that mother goddess is to be propitiated. It is to propitiate her that traditional societies celebrate festivals in the name of mother goddesses. *Malavaayiaattom* is one among such art forms performed by the agricultural society to propitiate the mother goddess.

As stated in *Aditi*, "Godly fertility may be represented in the plant and animal forms. The fish, the turtle, the water snake and the

fully opened lotus, borne of water, represent its generative power.

The lord Vishnu in his incarnation as a turtle is represented as the base for the churning of the primordial ocean of milk.”¹

6.2. Music, dance and drama are accompanied by agricultural activities.

The performance of *Malavaayiaattom* is a conglomeration of music dance and drama. Like any other propitiation dances, it is a natural evolution of tribal performance. In traditional societies, agriculture was accompanied by music, dance and drama. The origin of this can be traced from tribal societies.

According to Kapila Vatsyayan: ., “Here music, dance and drama have been woven into agricultural survivals and continuities of tribal society can be discerned in the agricultural rites connected with sowing, reaping and harvesting.”²

6.3. Worship has numerous manifestations

Worship of supernatural beings is popular all over the world. In the traditional worship forms, there are some common factors. Sacrifice of animals and even human beings, erecting memorials are some of them. *Paraya* community erects structures in burial places as death memorials. It is usually nearby these structures that *Malavaayiaattom* is performed.

Sacrifice of cock is even now prevalent in *Malavaayiaattom*. Toddy is supplied lavishly. Both men and women drink toddy. These are symbols of fertility cult.

R.S.Mann substantiates this fact. According to him, “For the worship of supernatural, cock, goat or buffalo sacrifice and rising

of death memorials are suggested and adhered to. Liquor is the most preferred offering.”³

6.4. Fertility includes not animal alone, human fertility as well

From pre historic age onward, fertility rites included both animal and human fertility. Presence of a picture of a woman with a banyan tree grown from her womb is ample evidence to support this argument. Breasts of *Malavaayi* are a symbol of fertility. The top of *Mookkaan Chaathan's* mask is the shape of a lotus petal, which is symbol of fertility.

Richard Schechner remarks that, “But it was not animal fertility that Stone Age humans celebrated. Figures, carvings, paintings and symbols depict human fertility as well. The most ancient are of enlarged vulvas and/or huge thighs and buttocks (not unlike what females of some non-human primates display during estrus), or of pendant, milkful breasts. Then come the ubiquitous phallic symbols, many of them exaggerated replications of the original, others more far-fetched.”⁴

6.5. Coconut

In one of the most important *poojas* of *Malavaayiaattom*, *Nanjum Nayattum*, *Malavaayi* and *Mookkaan Chaathan* engage in fierce battle. After the battle, they come to a compromise. As part of the compromise *Malavaayi* and *Mookkaan Chaathan* rolls two coconuts to each other. This is considered as a friendly act. Coconut is an indispensable item of the Keralites. It is used for conducting *Poojas*. Coconut water is sprinkled in rituals as an offering. For every deity, separate *Poojas* are conducted by

breaking coconut. A separate wick lamp made like a bag filling raw rice is lighted in the coconut piece. The bag is dipped in coconut oil and lighted.

Mookkaan Chaathan pierces a stick through *Appam* and coconut. For preparing *Payasam* coconut is used. Dried coconut husk and coconut shell are used as fuel. Plantain leaf is also a part of the ritual.

6.6. The coconut palm

The association between the goddess and the coconut palm is further supported by the fact that new toddy-tapping operations may only commence on Tuesday and Fridays, inauspicious days sacred to *Bhadraakali*. Old toddy tappers recite mantras and prayers to *Bhadraakali* before cutting the bud to extract toddy. Bhagavathy is the spirit of the coconut as well as of rice and paddy.

Space of the *Malavaayiaattom* is decorated with tender coconut leaves and mango leaves. Tender coconut leaves have been used for years to decorate places and to create a festive look. The colour of the tender coconut leaves being cream it suits any colour background. Tender coconut leaf is hung on a string either splitting it near the sticks or tying on the tip. Usually almost all folk artists are experts in making attractive figures with the leaves. Many techniques are used in making these toys and figures. Birds, balls, rings, belong to the category. A special type of whistle (*Ola Peepi*) is also made of coconut leaves. Some moving figures are made using the stick of the coconut leaves as spring. Even other religious sects also have adopted coconut leaves as sacred.

The coconut tree is closely associated with fertility of young virgin girls in ritual. The homology between coconut trees and women is also expressed in folklore about breasts.

To quote Sarah Caldwell, "This analogy between coconut and breast is more striking as the coconut fruit contains a sweet refreshing liquid known as 'milk.' The offering of tender coconut juice is a special way of honouring a guest who arrives at ones home and the squeezing of the grated coconut meat to extract the thick white milk provides an essential ingredient in most Kerala curries. Amongst the many breakfasts made of rice and coconut, *Chiratta Puttu* is striking for its breast like shape, formed from the half coconut shell moulds used for steaming the cakes."⁵

Every important ritual event is marked with the presence of a coconut flower (*Pookkula*) standing in a *para* (rice measure). This along with the traditional brass lamp is the most commonly recognised symbol of prosperity and happiness in Kerala. Christians celebrate a festival called *Kuruthola Perunnal* (Tender coconut leaf festival).

Mookkaan Chaathan makes bows and arrows using the tender coconut leaf.

6.7. Arecanut tree

Like the coconut tree, the Arecanut tree also is the symbol of fertility. The scathe of the areca palm is used to make masks of the *Kolam* of *Padayani*. Arecanut is considered as very auspicious. Its colour is compared to that of gold. So also, betel leaf is compared to female sex organ. Both men and women chew Arecanut and betel leaves with lime in Kerala. This is

also related to sex and fertility. On every auspicious occasion in Kerala, materials indispensable are betel leaves, areca nut, paddy and raw rice. Like any other rituals, in *Malavaayiaattom* betel leaves and Arecanut are used.

6.8. The Val (sickle) of the low-caste female agricultural worker

The sickle of *Malavaayi* is present all over the performance in its original form and as a symbol. The performance starts after bringing the sickle and other goods for ritual by the head of the women in the family. The sickle is the shortened form of the long sword bend at the end or '*Pallival*'. Before starting the poojas, it is erected on the *Malavaayithara*, which is the main centre around which the performance is conducted. One sickle is drawn on the *Malavaayithara* with rice powder.

According to Sarah Caldwell, "The most important icon of Bhagavathy, her *Val*, the sickle shaped iron sword that embodies her essence and power, also unambiguously expresses this idea. Both the agricultural sickle and Bhagavathy weapon are made of iron, which is very durable and strong also, has the power to repel and destroy evil spirits." ⁶

6.9. Bamboo, coconut leaves and trunk of areca tree

The preparation of space of performance of *Malavaayiaattom* is remarkable. A temporary shed for the performance of *Malavaayiaattom* is made of bamboo and coconut leaves. Trunk of Areca tree is also used. Most of the materials used in the space are obtained from the coconut tree.

6.10. Cow Dung

Cow dung is also a symbol of fertility rites. Cow dung is used to sweep the floor of the space of *Malavaayiaattom*. Cattle being an integral

part of cultivation, not only cattle, especially cow, but its excreta is also considered as sacred and having medicinal value. *Panchagavya*, five items obtained from cow is considered as having much therapeutic value. Pollution like '*Theenda*' is believed to be removed by sprinkling cow dung slush. After outbreak of contagious diseases like small pox, cow dung water is sprinkled in the premises and floor of the house as it is anti viral. Cow dung is also applied on the body when there is an insect bite.

6.11. Broom stick

Broomstick is made by tying spines of coconut leaves bound together. Broom has an important place in the rituals of *Malavaayiaattom*. After the completion of the main rituals, *Malavaayi* herself sweeps the floor. The temporary shed (*pandal*) for the performance is thatched using intertwined coconut leaves.

6.13. Toddy

Toddy is from the fermented sap of the coconut palm. The *Chotta* or bud (is used in the female puberty ritual) is tied with a thread and the tip sliced off. The tapper uses an animal thighbone to tap gently the sides of the bud up and down to heat it up thus drawing the sap of the coconut up to the tip of the bud. A clay pot is placed mouth down and at an angle to collect the sap. Every few days the sap is collected and drunk as an alcoholic beverage. This beverage, favoured by village men, is said to be invigorating and refreshing. Its taste is musty and sweet. Left to ferment, it turns into vinegar.

Sarah Caldwell describes the relationship between toddy tapping and sexuality, "The action of toddy tapping has obvious parallels

to human sexuality. Toddy drains the essential fluid from the tree through its flower bud, which is metaphorically associated with the female genitals in the puberty ritual discussed above. The phallic appearance of the bud and the obvious symbolic parallel of the tapping action to the production of semen from the penis, by heating and stimulation the exterior surface in order to draw the clear, milky fluid from the rounded tip are hard to miss but was not consciously admitted by anyone.”⁷

6.14. Mango leaves

Mango leaves are also used to decorate the space. Mango leaves gives greenery to the place. Green colour is exhilarating to the eyes. Tender coconut leaves and mango leaves having contrasting colours give the atmosphere serenity.

6.15. Plantain

Plantain is a symbol of fertility. It is considered auspicious. Full plantain plant with bunches of plantains on it is erected on either side of the entrance of important festive places like marriage halls, meeting places and even in front of the venue of meeting of the political parties. Even now, this is seen popularly in Kerala. Plantain leaf is also an important symbol of fertility in Kerala. Food is served to guests on plantain leaf. During the celebrations like *Onam*, *Vishu* and other events like birthday parties ‘*Sadhya*’ (elaborate luncheons) is served in plantain leaves. In every feast, plantain fruit is an important item. It is served with the meals.

Materials for rituals like rice measure, paddy, flowers, traditional lamp etc. are kept on the floor on a big plantain leaf. It is believed that by keeping

them on the plantain leaves, the sanctity of the materials is enhanced. Plantain leaf pieces are kept in the columns of *Kalams*. Small plantain bits are kept on the glass and on it, wick lamp is lighted.

6.16. Rice

Almost all of the lowland area of Kerala between seashore and mountain is cultivated with paddy and coconut. Paddy is the staple food of the people of Kerala. Rice from the fields is kept in large storage chests called *Pathayams* (big storage chests) for use throughout the year. Rice and paddy are used in almost all rituals. *Malavaayi's* connection with rice is expressed in *Kalam* (Ritual drawing of *Malavaayi*). The *Kalam* is drawn with rice powder and dried leaves.

6.17. Organic Colours

Organic colours are used to make *Kalams*. These are also symbols of fertility. Rice powder is used for white colour. Burnt paddy husk is used for black colour. Yellow powder is made powdering turmeric. For green colour, leaf of *Vaaka* tree is dried in sunlight and powdered.

6.18. Cutting White Gourd, Cock

Sacrifices were formerly made for the rejuvenation of earth goddess. It is believed that like a woman losing her blood through menstruation, Mother Goddess also loses her vital blood and this has to be compensated by giving her blood to recoup her vitality. It was for this purpose sacrifices were made. It is believed that formerly human beings were sacrificed. *Thookkam* may be the remnant of this practice. Later it was shifted to animals. Of late, it is replaced by cutting white gourd or other vegetables as

a symbolic act. In the case of *Malavaayiaattom*, even now cock is sacrificed in the concluding rites.

6.19. Long hairs

Long hairs are symbol of fertility and abundance. *Mudiyaattom* has been one of the rituals in many performances like *Thumbithullal*, *Sarpakkalam* etc. *Mudiyaattom* is a part of *Paraya* rituals. For every ritual, they add rhythm and devotion by doing *Mudiyaattom*. *Mudiyaattom* is the symbol of plenty and fertility. It is the symbol of womanhood also, which is a synonym of fertility.

6.20. Branches of banyan tree and pala tree

The closing ceremonies of *Malavaayiaattom* have much resemblance with that of other mother goddess performances. An atmosphere of *Kaavu* is created near *Malavaayithara*. For this, branches of banyan tree and *Pala* tree are planted. A plantain plant with a full bunch of plantain is also planted near this place. A small beautiful temple is constructed using sliced plantain trunk. Oracles destroy this as part of *Kaavu* 'Theendal' (Pollution of *Kaavu*). After a long fight, *Malavaayi* and *Mookkaan Chaathan* come to a compromise. Nobody wins or loses. As a symbol of compromise, they share different work. They beat the harvested paddy plants with sticks to glean the paddy left over after threshing and make hay. The paddy thus got is the traditional right of the agricultural worker. The striking of the straw, extracting paddy and cleaning of the paddy is vividly enacted in the *Nanjum Naayaattum*. Banyan tree, *Pala* and *Kaavu* are symbols of fertility. Plantain also is symbol of fertility and greenery. Agriculture implements like *Vettukathy* and sickle are used in the rituals, which are symbols of fertility.

6.21. Offering of Guruthy

Like any other Mother goddess cult, *Guruthy* is offered in *Malavaayiaattom* also. Offering of *Guruthy* is part of mother Goddess cult. *Guruthy* is symbol of blood. It is blood red in colour. When lime is mixed with turmeric powder, the mixture becomes red like blood. As the popular colour in mother goddess cult all over is red, symbolising, blood, *Guruthy* represents real blood. As women lose blood periodically due to menstruation, it is believed that for the fecundity of the earth also, this loss of blood is to be recouped. For the well-being of the society, individuals have to make sacrifices. For this, human beings were sacrificed and blood was offered to the mother goddess. Later, sacrificial animals replaced human beings. Stray cases of offering of human beings are even now reported.

As quoted by Sarah Caldwell, "As he explained it this offering of *Guruthy* by sprinkling of the red water in the ground represents the menstruation of Bhagavathy. The earth gives birth to plants in the same way a mother gives birth to a child after the menstrual period. Therefore, the earth also must be mature." ⁸

6.22. The puberty rites

In every society there are aesthetics based on the impact of each colour on ones mind. The colour related to primitive societies is red. The first colour, which made man wonder, is the colour of blood. Being the colour of blood, the red colour gained sanctity. Red colour has magical association in primitive sorcery. Blood is an important offering in rituals related to animal sacrifices. This colour sends the actor into a trance. Following this, audience overwhelmed by this sight are drawn into the belief in the efficacy of the

occult are subdued to the efficacy of the occult beliefs. In these cases, unconscious due to the colour occur. *Guruthy* made of mixing turmeric and lime has power of making such unconsciousness.

“Pouring of *Guruthy* is an important step of ritual. When the flow of this colour becomes the efficacy of the ritual, that colour acquires the meaning of magical and social position.”⁹

6.23. Cowry shells

Cowry shells are symbols of fertility. Cowry shells and female sex organs are almost similar in appearance. The edge of headdress of *Malavaayi* is decorated with cowry shell, which is a symbol of fertility.

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Chapter 7

Transformation Through Theatre

Though many experiments have been made for decades, peculiarities of folk theatre like *Malavaayiaattom* are not imbibed in modern theatre effectively. Hitherto we have not been able to create many theatrical forms introducing the influence of the traditions of our folk theatre. Only visual effects of folk theatre are understood and introduced in the modern theatre. This is only a tip of the iceberg. Folk performances are abundant in performance techniques. *Malavaayiaattom* is a good example of folk theatre where techniques of theatre elements are effectively used. A theatrical analysis of the art form shows how marvellously its techniques can be used in the theatre. However, this is not for entertainment alone. It is with a social purpose the *Attom* is performed. It satisfies individual needs also. Multifarious social and individual problems are identified and solved through the performance.

Malavaayiaattom deals with gender issues, family feuds and many other matters. The educational value of the performance is marvellous. Even in modern society, children are not given sex education. This leads to many unhealthy trends. Children get wrong information and become sexual perverts. In the *Malavaayiaattom* performance, sex education is given to the society. Sex is openly spoken of and even symbolically demonstrated. The

techniques adopted in the performance are the best examples to show how education can be imparted to society through the medium of theatre.

7.1. Folk rituals - psychotherapy

Scientists have now conceded therapeutic value of folk art forms like *Malavaayiaattom*. It is proved that certain art forms like music are able to make the mind, even that of beasts calm, which in turn will have much psychological impact on them. This is true in the case of the performance of *Malavaayiaattom*. The costumes, light, colour, rituals and music immensely used in this art form have tremendous effect on the participants. It is because of this healing effect that magic and sorcery was used for diseases from time immemorial.

Opinion of M.V.Vishnu Namboothiry is relevant in this matter. According to him, "Some folk rituals do the function of psychotherapy also. Music therapy was prevalent in Greece during Aristotelian era. Hearing music in quick rhythm, people under psychosis are likely to be transformed into a trance and after they fall fainted." ¹

7.2. Art forms like music dance and decorations are found in every society

People of every society will try to manifest their thoughts and emotions. This is the basis of all music and arts in the universe. Anthropologists call this expressive culture. *Malavaayiaattom* performance is a part of social the mind, beliefs and emotions. One who performs is an artist. Society gives him a status unequalled. People recognise his creations. Art forms like music, dance decorations are found in every society. However,

they are different types and figures, varying from society to society. For e.g. Decoration of the body is found in every society. Actually, it depends on the cultural heritage.

7.3. Each major element of *Malavaayiaattom* enjoys autonomy

Malavaayiaattom is a performance full of dance and drama. Techniques used in this performance are worth emulating. Masks, fire and dialogues are beautifully fused in this drama to create a fascinating experience. Each element detached from the performance as a whole has an independent existence. *Malavaayippaattu* based on which *Malavaayiaattom* is performed is a way of story telling in a rhythmic style. Outside the performance, the singer of *Malavaayippaattu* can narrate the story of *Malavaayi* in a poetic rhythm.

The orchestra of *Malavaayiaattom* is also worth mentioning. The popular rhythms of the *Paraya* community are performed in *Malavaayiaattom*. 'Kinthanthakkidi', 'Ottakkai' are the rhythms popularly performed by the *Paraya* community. 'Kadiyanakkam' is another orchestra of the *Paraya* community. In certain places, it is called 'Kottippaattu' though with some variations. Though these rhythms are used in the performance, even outside the performance they have independent existence. In cultural gatherings of the *Paraya* community these music forms are played.

The performance of *Mookkaan Chaathan* has many dimensions. His performances are mostly that of a non-professional. His style of performance being sarcastic, *Mookkaan Chaathan* is a popular figure among the people. During festival seasons, *Mookkaan Chaathan* is a character, which moves from one place to another, especially for collecting donations for the

performance. Hence, *Mookkaan Chaathan* is popular among the people and the character has independent existence outside the performance of *Malavaayiaattom*.

Mookkaan Chaathan sings many folk songs during the performance. He sometimes composes songs for each performance. This is done to incorporate features of the new place and the members of the particular habitat. With every performance, current affairs are also included in the song and the dialogues. *Mookkaan Chaathan* touches, the most burning issues in the society, at the time of the performance. People also expect from *Mookkaan Chaathan* such a performance. Even though these factors have separate existence, as part of the performance they have no separate identity in the performance of *Malavaayiaattom*.

According to Suresh Awasthi, "All traditional drama is fragmented and each major element of performance namely music, movement, gestures, dance, dramatic dialogues, story and narrative enjoys autonomy and can be enjoyed separately. At the same time there is also internal unity." ²

7.4. Imitations of the main vocations

On analysis of *Malavaayiaattom* it becomes clear that folk art forms were enacted either as imitations of the main vocations of the primitive men, hunting and agriculture. Among these, hunting preceded agriculture. It was later in his development that man settled permanently and began to cultivate. Naturally, when they gathered, they imitated their brave acts sometimes with exaggeration. It was later on that rituals crept into it.

7.5. Enactment of hunting

Hunting of wild boar is enacted in *Malavaayiaattom* very elaborately. The animals in the forest are disturbed and forced to run. They follow the boar. It moves from one hill to another. The movements in this scene are good examples of stylized enactment seen in folk theatre forms.

7.6. Social change affects artistic change

The higher ups in the social hierarchy become the authorities of cultural field as well as economic field. Literature and arts come under the control of the elite. These arts are classical arts. Side by side, art forms of the so-called lower castes, like the art form *Malavaayiaattom* also existed. These are folk or tribal art forms. Thus with specialized and individualistic society, (classic societies) art also changes into specialized and individualistic patterns. To be brief, a change from one to another is transformation of art and social conditions.

7.7. Information transmitted through diverse sensory codes

Performance techniques are made use of throughout the performance of *Malavaayiaattom*. It has all ingredients of a theatre perfected through centuries. As the time of performance lasts for about twelve hours, there is enough scope to make use of these performance techniques. Music, dance, lighting, dialogue, body language, environmental acting, stylized acting, discretionary acting all find enough opportunity in the dance drama of *Malavaayiaattom*.

According to Victor Turner, "Each culture, each person within it, uses the entire sensory repertoire to convey messages. manual gesticulations, facial expressions, bodily postures, rapid, heavy,

or light breathing, tears at the individual level; stylized gestures, dance patterns, prescribed silences, synchronized movements such as marching, the moves and “plays” of games, sports and rituals, at the cultural level.”³

7.8. Natural way of story telling and enactment

Malavaayiaattom is fully a ritualistic theatre art form. Peculiarities of ritualistic theatre forms such as possession and blood sacrifice are found in this theatre. Whereas elements of classic or Sanskrit theatre is completely absent in this performance. It adopts the natural way of story telling and enactment of life of the folk. Unlike *Mudiyettu* or other *Non-Dalit* performances, *Malavaayiaattom* has safeguarded its traditional purity from the inroads of classical and modern drama.

According to Sarah Caldwell, “For historical reasons we have traced in chapter 1, upper caste Kerala arts including *Mudiyettu* combined features of the Sanskrit theatre with ritual arts whose essential features were possession and blood sacrifice. Perhaps the strict distinction south Indians draw between theatre and ritual stems in part from this dual heritage.”⁴

7.9. Individual life is projected in the background of mainstream of the society

The spectacular difference in ritual performance like *Malavaayiaattom* and non-ritual performances is that, in ritual theatre, though individual life is projected, it is in the background of mainstream of the society. In modern or classical theatre, the identity of the character is projected.

7.10. Spiritual energy of the drums

The use of drums has a similar impact in folk performances like *Malavaayiaattom* and *Mudiyettu*. The drums embody spiritual energy essential to the ritual effectiveness of the performances. In *Mudiyettu Kaali* bows to the drums upon entering the stage taking blessing from the musicians the real holders of spiritual power. A particular rhythm *Tripudam Thalam* signals the onset of the possession. The musicians play this rhythm in a frenzied pace when *Kaalis* headdress begins to slip and she lowers it seemingly uncontrollably towards the drums. The actor loses consciousness and has to be helped to his seat on the small stool before the stage lamp. In *Malavaayiaattom* also with the quick rhythm of the *Marams*, *Malavaayi* gets possessed, her *Thalaseela* is removed and to free herself from the possession she touches her head on the *Malavaayithara*.

7.11. Environment has a powerful effect on both actors and spectators

The total environment of sound, light and movement has a powerful effect on both actors and spectators. Not only sound, but also the play of darkness and light strongly affects the mood of the performance. Although nowadays-artificial lighting is used, the original lighting of *Malavaayiaattom* consists of nothing but fire torches. The audience sits on the dark borders of the stage and the light of the fire illuminates the actors, with costumes and make up. The visual effect of the flickering light on the bizarre make up and brass ornaments is quite otherworldly.

7.12. Sense of the intense liveliness of environment

The belief among folk is that the spirits are awake after twelve o' clock midnight. That is why midnight is considered as an inauspicious occasion.

People feared to go outside at this time. There are many stories about evil spirits coming out and doing havoc at this time. *Kaali* as well as other mother goddesses are considered to have powerful sway during these hours. Therefore, fights in the performances like *Mudiyettu* and *Malavaayiaattom* are performed during this time.

“In the absence of electric light one can sense the intense liveliness of plants and animals and ones own vulnerability. Dogs howl eerily in the moon light, snakes emerge from their holes underground and no one ventures outside.... Ordinary people cannot conceive the terror of the war. So this is the appropriate time, after the night has passed some 7 1/2 ‘Nalikas’ and 7 1/2 ‘Nalikas’ in the dawn. To show the terror of the war it is done at the same time.”⁶

7.13. Self -affliction rites

During the performance, at the time of enactment of *Karithiri*, *Malavaayi* is very furious and she bites her own hand. Blood comes from the wound. When *Malavaayi* is in frenzy of fury, she strikes her head with the sword. When the elders were asked, they said that in performances related to mother goddess, striking of the head with sword and lacerating parts of the body were quite usual. After that, ash is applied on the wound.

Sarah Caldwell adduces the following reason for this, “For Brubaker, self affliction rites, which voluntarily inflicts pain, humiliation and suffering upon devotees are the essential experience of the goddess’s ambivalent power. This power is essentially female and pertains to both sexuality (hence fertility,

the generation of life) and death. It is simultaneously dangerous and liberating.”⁷

7.14. The actors and audience are led together to a heightened devotion

The performance of *Malavaayiaattom* and related art forms are divine offerings, not entertainments. Its primary purpose is to please and appease the *Bhagavathy*; the reaction of the spectator is irrelevant. Yet the special circumstances under which the drama is performed lead the actors and audience together to a heightened devotional state.

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Chapter 8

Conclusion

Malavaayiaattom, replete with elements of theatre remained inert and unacknowledged for a long time. Untouchability kept people aloof from the *Paraya* habitats. Being a ferocious deity, Common people are fearful about *Malavaayi*. Moreover, *Malavaayiaattom* is devoid of colourful costumes, headgear or other embellishments that can attract photography.

Elements of classic or Sanskrit theatre is completely absent in this performance. It adopts the natural way of story telling and enactment of life of the folk. *Malavaayiaattom* has safeguarded its traditional purity from the inroads of classical and modern drama.

Malavaayiaattom belongs to the group of fertility and mother goddess cult in Kerala. It evolved as a part of fertility rites and worship of Mother Earth. To the primitive mind, human reproduction and agricultural production are closely associated. By adopting the method of sympathetic magic, the primitive people thought that nature's fertility could help human fertility and vice versa. Thus, fertility cult came into existence. Aiming at subduing nature many magico-religious rites were performed at the different stages of cultivation.

The high position of the women in the society must have been the reason for the origin of mother goddess. It may be supposed that the Pre-Aryan races deified the female principle, which ultimately developed into a cult of Mother Goddesses. During Vedic period, male gods became

important. Mother goddess cult is non-Vedic. Every goddess has both sweet and dreadful aspects. The mother who is abundant with love and affection becomes fearsome to those who attack her children. This aspect of mother goddess is depicted in *Malavaayiaattom*. Mother Goddess has both masculine and feminine attributes.

At the time of clearing forestland for habitation or cultivation, there might have been good or bad omen. These omens may have led them to set apart those places from clearing and these places might have later become Kaavus. *Kaavus* were one-time Dravidian worship places. They had very simple eco-system. Usually a small granite piece was worshipped. With the advent of Aryans and the resultant acquisition of power by the kings, society was split into different strata. The working class became the lowest in the social hierarchy. They were relegated to the background. In place of small granite pieces, big and magnificent structures sprang up. Only people of the higher strata of the hierarchy were allowed to worship in the new temples. Finally, the original owners were alienated from their worship places. They are allowed to enter the *Keezhkaavus* during the festival season. Every *Kaavutheendal* or *Padeni* is an attempt towards entry into the temples. *Malavaayiaattom* survived because of the peculiar atmosphere in which it is performed.

The *Paraya* community belong to scheduled caste. There is evidence in *Sangam* literature that during *Sangam* period an educated *Paraya* and *Pana* had equal status of a Brahmin in the king's court. No specific term can be ascribed to their name.

According to one legend, a Brahman considers himself polluted by the touch, presence, or shadow of a *Paraiyan* and will not allow him to enter his house, or even the street in which he lives. *Paraiyans* will not allow a Brahmin to enter the *Cheri*. Should a Brahmin attempt to enter their quarters, water mixed with cow dung is thrown on his head and he is driven out. This is evidence for the sanctity of the Parayas and Parachery. In some parts of Tamilnadu, there was a practice of making a *Paraiyan* walk the boundaries of a field, with a pot of water on his head, when there was any dispute about boundaries. This is evidence for the connection of the *Paraiyans* with the soil and his truthfulness.

Many among the Parayas have become famous as poets and saints. *Thiruvalluvar Nayanar*, the author of *Thirukkural* and his sister the famous poetess *Avvai* the *Vaishnavar Alwar* and the great Saivate saint *Nanda* were the most famous among them. It is very interesting that the *Parayas* all over Kerala have a secret language of their own. The chief occupation of *Paraya* is the manufacture of wickerwork.

On analysis of the structure and language of *Malavaayiaattom*, it can be presumed that the performance is centuries old. *Malavaayiaattom* is conducted in a rather small geographical area. The language has no influence of Sanskrit.

The interesting feature of their prayer is "Sathyam undakkitharane"- meaning let truth triumph. It is obvious from the *Thottams* that the performance and prayers are not for personal gains, but for the universal well-being. There is no selfish end at all. What ever may be the response;

they always stand for truth and pray for the prevalence of it. *Malavaayiaattom* is performed for a noble cause.

In *Malavaayiaattom*, there is no need of limiting space and time. The performers and audience participate in the performance not only with the objective of propitiating the deity, but also because they like to enjoy participating in the performance. Time and space is utilized in a leisurely way. As there is no proscenium stage, there is space free movement for the performer. There is a wrong notion that the success of performance depends on the stage settings. Limit of the space is not decided earlier. The ritualist does this. Until the beginning of the rituals, the *Malavaayithara* and surroundings do not become the performance space. With the recitation of the *Thottam* about *Kalladikode* Mountains and the seat of *Malavaayi*, space acquires variations. The technique of transforming the *Malavaayithara* and surroundings into many spaces through thottams and rituals deserves further study

Spectators assemble on all sides of *Malavaayithara* and move from place to place. All surroundings nearby, are utilised by the performers and the audience shifts accordingly. The peculiar atmosphere of space promotes actor audience interaction. During performance, *Malavaayi* goes even as far away as one hundred metres. Rituals start from the *Malavaayithara* and ends in the conventional theatrical practices around. Arrangement of space, techniques of manipulating the audience and establishing of rapport can be adopted in the modern performances.

Malavaayiaattom speak directly to the people. There is no dependence on established aesthetic principles. Every activity of the

performer is exposed to the audience. He has no shortcuts but to live as the character. This gives him enough freedom in acting. The actor is not technically supported. He is close to the audience. There are no electronic devices or doubles to support the actor. As there is, no written script performers have ample freedom to improvise changes according to the situation.

Before the performance day of *Malavaayiaattom*, the performer has to remain in meditation for days. The involvement of the actor depends on his absorption of the character. It is evident from this practice, that meditation can improve the performance of the actor. Meditation and penance practiced by the actors for acquiring identity with the character can be imbibed by modern theatre.

One peculiar feature of *Malavaayiaattom* is stylization. There are presentations of battle scenes, which are not realistic. Improvised acting is a peculiarity of *Malavaayiaattom*. Speaking impromptu dialogues in the place of script means improvised acting. In *Malavaayiaattom*, the performance moves forward based on improvised acting of *Mookkaan Chaathan*. With every performance, the style, dialogue and gestures of *Mookkaan Chaathan* change. He adds new folk songs and some songs he discard. The latest social and political issues are dealt with in the dialogues of *Mookkaan Chaathan*. Hence, though the theme and the text of the audience are stereotyped, with every performance it achieves a new dimension. The performance of *Mookkaan Chaathan* is the best example for shifting of roles, act transference and getting the audience involved in the performance. Occasionally he is engaged in out of role activities. This helps him to shift

from the role he is doing to another role. This aspect of the performance is worthy of emulation.

In modern performances, actors are mentally attached to the characters they enact. The actor in the folk performances like *Malavaayiaattom* lives as the character in the play. However, he is always in a detached mood. Informal performance space and connected rituals help him to keep this mood of detachment. This cannot be achieved in the proscenium stage with modern stage settings. As soon as the actor loses the consciousness that he is the part of the system, he feels he is an artist. The consciousness that the performance and group should succeed and he should contribute his level best to this end makes the dance and drama assume artistic excellence.

Mookkaan Chaathan does not deliver the dialogue directly. The performance being made in the open air in quite informal surroundings, it is likely that the beginning part will go unheard. To overcome this he uses some sounds or words. The techniques used by *Mookkaan Chaathan* in attracting the attention of the audience can be imbibed in performances connected with social developmental issues.

The actor of *Malavaayiaattom* has to perform all types of acting. He must be a dancer and a gymnast. The performance lasts for hours. For this, he should have good stamina. Then only can he withstand the strain of prolonged performance. In *Malavaayiaattom*, *Thandavastyle* is popular. *Lasya* style of acting is very rarely found. Acting is based on *Natyadharmmy*. Dialogues in this art form are intended to depict superhuman nature of the character.

There are no intricate *mudras* in *Malavaayiaattom*. The performance being part of social and economic life of the *Paraya* community, like harvest, sowing of seeds and other agricultural activity, the spectators can easily imitate the rhythm. Therefore, the audience dance with the actor and every spectator becomes an actor. There is effective interaction between the performer and the audience.

Village folk are part of the nature. The audience is concerned about the efficacy of rituals enacted in the performance. In *Malavaayiaattom*, there are neither spectators nor performers. There is no actor audience demarcation. All are participants. The audience of *Malavaayiaattom* is an integral audience. To manipulate the attention of the integral audience much expertise and skill is needed.

People change places in mid scene. Though the audience might have watched the performance several times, they get additional meaning with each performance. They assemble for the performance with the intention of participating in the rituals. They are interested in the rituals and the performance. However, the spectator is mentally and physically free. He is not a prisoner of the situation. This makes him relaxed and happy.

The same myth is enacted in every performance, every year. Nevertheless, people turn up to see how *Mookkaan Chatham* performs at that time and how *Malavaayi* and audience are going to respond to the new techniques of *Mookkaan Chaathan*. *Mookkaan Chaathan's* role is a participatory one. In his dialogues, especially on current affairs, he uses plenty of sarcasm. He tells what the non-professional wants to say and is not able to give vent to his feelings. The audience identifies him as one among

them. This is one of the aspects, which attracts the audience. This aspect, which attracts audience, is rarely found in modern drama.

Malavaayiaattom is based on artist-audience interaction. It was through folk art forms that villagers, especially those who were downtrodden in society, gave vent to their suppressed feelings and emotions. They expressed their resentment against the upper class society through these media. That is why the performance became appealing to the common masses.

Audience-actor unification is spectacular. Even though *Malavaayiaattom* is a ritual theatre, during some enactments, it assumes the form of a secular theatre. Every comment from the audience is accommodated as part of the performance. There are many scenes of characters coming from among the audience.

Play activities are organized so that communicative relationships of two different kinds are established, between the individual players, the players and the audience. The role of *Mookkaan Chaathan* being informal, he can feel at home in any type of audience. The techniques used by *Mookkaan Chaathan* to keep the audience active, can be adopted in modern theatre.

Enactments are mostly related to life situations like hunting, agriculture and fishing. There is no necessity of verbalisation at all in some cases. Hence, dialogue has only secondary importance compared to dance and music.

Drumming and using of instruments are of later origin in the history of theatre. It is to be presumed that for rhythm non-availability of instruments

was not a handicap to the traditional people. The presence of hooting and clapping in the art forms of the primitive people is ample proof for this. How clapping of hands and tapping on thighs can substitute percussion instruments is depicted in the performance of *Malavaayiaattom*.

Through out the performance there is drum beating and *Malavaayi* song. Participants enjoy the music. However, spectators stay alienated. They murmur and tap their hands to the rhythm of music.

Heartbeat, breathing, walking, all these signs of living body are rhythmic. The difference between the living and the dead is that there is rhythm within the living. The latter has no rhythm. Therefore, his faculty of reasoning suggested that if he engages himself in some kind of exalted rhythmic activity like dance and music could be more equipped for celebrating life. Dance in *Malavaayiaattom* has much similarity to that of other traditional groups. Rhythm and instruments used by the Paraya community have much resemblance to the rhythm of tribal societies of Asia, Africa and Latin American countries.

The performance is full of circular movements around *Malavaayithara* in a clockwise direction. The circular movement popular among tribal and folk performances is based on inspiration from the sun. This movement helps the mobility of performers and audience, which make the performance live. Coming to each position the spectator gets a different experience from the scenes.

The fight between the two is an important scene of the performance. It must be because of the martial spirit inherent in the Keralites. War dance

or weapon dance acquired much importance. This instinct must have led to the evolution of *Kalaris* and other Martial art forms in Kerala.

The contention that traditional folk music and dance forms exist even now due to its religious base is not correct. It has been established that dance did not originate from religion and it is pre-religious. Traditional performances like *Malavaayiaattom* have more tribal characteristics than religious characteristics. It is believed that supernatural forces can be appeased by eulogising them. They must have also felt that rhythmic patterns made them happy. *Malavaayiaattom* exists even now because its rhythm is basic and related to life.

Ancient people had a positive worldview of death. Hence, they believed that with death they are escape from the miseries of this world. Therefore, they used to dance with the dead body. In Japan and even in some states in India dance and music on occasions of death prevail. The Paraya community performs *Chakkadukottu* accompanied by beating of drums, *Kuzhal* and *Chaakakdupaattu*. Some elder people of the *Paraya* community said that during ancient period *Chakkadupattu* was accompanied by dance also. The worldview of *Paraya* community conveyed through the performance projects its superiority. Performance of such art forms help to instil hope and enthusiasm among the people.

Though stylisation is one aspect of *Malavaayiaattom*, in costumes stereo type tradition is followed. Their make up of hair and clothes are arranged in a stylized manner. This helps to generate the deity's supernatural aura, which inspires devotion.

It is proved that certain art forms like music etc. are able to make the mind, even that of beasts calm, which in turn has much psychological impact on them. This is true in the case of the performance of *Malavaayiaattom*. The costumes, light, colour, rituals and music extensively used in this art form have tremendous impact on the participants. Moreover, during oracular forecasts, *Malavaayi* solves many family problems. She instils hope and enthusiasm in the audience, which gives enough strength for them to face the adversities of life. She does the job of a counsel. A study of psychotherapeutic value of *Malavaayiaattom* can make remarkable contributions in solving many psychological and social problems.

Popular colours used in the costumes of *Mookkaan Chaathan* and *Malavaayi* are black and red. A combination of black and red colour is the special feature of the aboriginal people. *Mookkaan Chaathan* also wears red dhoti. In the background of white, red and black colours are projected with prominence in the brightness of country torches. The colour of costumes of Mother Goddess in whichever part of the country it maybe, is red. Important colours used in the performance of *Malavaayiaattom* are red and black. The oracles who play the role of *Devi* in all *Kaavus* in Kerala wear costumes of red colour. The domination of red is seen among the tribes of many countries, red colour being the colour of blood. Red and black colour in the background of white in the light shed by country torches has sensory appeal and meaning. Use of colours in the performance and their impact need further study.

Micro level movements are given importance in modern acting. It is part of the modernisation and technological innovations in theatre. In

performances of Dravidian origin, macro movements, which are a character of tribal dancing, are given importance. However, this type of acting is effective only in ideal conditions of audience-actor positioning, lighting and many other factors. However, in the performance of *Malavaayiaattom* it is mass acting. There rhythm and quick movements are given importance. The style of dance is more *Thandava* than *Lasya*. This helps in audience participation. In macro movements, there is no need of spectators.

Malavaayiaattom is in *Thandava* style. They give little importance to micro level acting. Playing of instruments, especially percussion instruments in quick rhythm is the style of tribal and folk performances. The quick beating of drums and movements change the mood of the participants and purify their minds. This aspect also is to be studied further.

In *Malavaayiaattom*, *Mookkaan Chaathan* uses Masks. Mask is very effectively used in the performance of *Malavaayiaattom*. With mask, the following objectives are achieved.

When there was no loud speaker, the mask could perform the amplification of sound. *Malavaayiaattom* is performed for more than twelve hours. Nobody can keep facial expressions effectively for such a long period. The mask effectively compensates this shortcoming. The face of *Mookkaan Chaathan* is expressionless. This gives him ample chance for effective transference of act. With a mask depicting cruel face, it is not possible to enact either a comedy role or a serious role.

Moreover, with expressionless face, dialogue of the actor is projected. In the absence of a mask, the spectators naturally watch keenly every facial expression of the performer, whereas when the face is lifeless, the words are

paid attention to. Hence, the dialogue of *Mookkaan Chaathan* becomes very effective.

Mookkaan Chaathan repeats some dialogues. By repeating the same dialogues, the performer intends to drive the points into the minds of the performers and win them over to his viewpoint.

In theatrical dialogues there is chance of losing the initial words or sentences due to lack of attention. This does not happen in the case of *Mookkaan Chaathan*. Before starting a dialogue, *Mookkaan Chaathan* shakes his hip. At this, the bells of *Aramani* sound loudly, which attracts the attention of the audience. Instead of coming directly to the dialogue, he uses some *Vaytharis (humming)*. This is to attract attention of the audience. Naturally, these sounds come above all other sounds and the dialogue of *Mookkaan Chaathan* is easily caught. The way *Mookkaan Chaathan* delivers dialogue has theatrical and pedagogic value.

Body language is successfully used in *Malavaayiaattom*. Every movement ^{of} *Mookkaan Chaathan* is a dance. He moves with a peculiar step. He twists his waist while walking. This makes the *Aramani* move and makes sound. With these steps, he can catch the attention of the audience very easily. The mask of *Mookkaan Chaathan* is painted in light colour. The colour of the face is painted in pink. In the light of fire torches, the only light available in the performance space, the face of *Mookkaan Chaathan* is easily visible. The making of the mask is effective from the theatrical point of view. The mask is made from 'Murikku'. It is a wood light in weight. Therefore, the performer does not find it difficult to keep the mask on for a long time.

Malavaayiaattom is a rare ritual theatre, which still preserves its primitive nature. This peculiarity of the art form is being kept even today. It is performed in open air. The major part of the ritual is performed at night. The nature of primitive and tribal art is that the performance in the night is around a fire created for the purpose, as was the case of many folk and tribal rituals.

The chief peculiarity of the dialogue of *Mookkaan Chaathan* is his explicit references to sex both overtly and covertly. This is the best example of sex education prevalent among the primitive societies. These people do not consider speaking of sex a taboo. While uttering the dialogues, he imitates sexual actions. He remarks about oral sex also and demonstrates it symbolically. His dialogues are full of double meaning. Spoonerism is also used lavishly. They are accompanied by folk songs. Many songs are composed instantly. The performance of *Mookkaan Chaathan* is the best example to show how sex education can be imparted to young people.

Acting in *Malavaayiaattom* reaches its full theatrical dimensions while enacting the scenes of going to toddy shop. We cannot distinguish the dialogues as part of the performance or as out of performance. The acting is natural and free from theatricalization. Like any other propitiation dance, *Malavaayiaattom* is a natural evolution of tribal performance. In traditional societies, agriculture was accompanied by music, dance and drama. Symbols of fertility are abundantly seen in *Malavaayiaattom*. Agricultural activities are vividly described. Through the performance, protection of eco system and the need for promotion of agriculture are instilled in the minds of the younger generation. The beauty of a budding plant and its different stages including flowering are described beautifully. The symbols used in

Malavaayiaattom generate an affinity with environment and agricultural activities. Techniques used to instil affinity with agriculture and environment are very useful and can be incorporated in modern performances.

In the fight between *Malavaayi* and *Mookkaan Chaathan*, nobody wins or loses. However, throughout the fight *Malavaayi* maintains superiority. Compared to upper caste women, the so-called low caste women enjoyed much freedom. The superiority of *Malavaayi* over *Mookkaan Chaathan* asserts this fact. Dalit culture is based on gender equality and sharing of jobs. This fact is evident throughout the performance. The main actors in *Malavaayiaatton* are men. The main character in the performance is *Malavaayi*. She is a strong character. She is ferocious to the enemies of her children. Through the character, the moral strength and power of womanhood is depicted. Women perform *Mudiyaattom* occasionally, which adds vigour to the performance. The performance promotes women empowerment. The theme, symbols and dialogues in *Malavaayiaatton* can be emulated for performances aimed at gender equality.

Each element detached from the performance as a whole has an independent existence. Masks, fire and dialogues are beautifully fused in this drama to create a fascinating experience. This is because of the artistic qualities of the performance. As such even when detached from its natural surroundings, *Malavaayiaattom* has existence as a theatre form.

The social structure of Kerala is based on caste hierarchy. Whereas backwardness due to class can be got ridden of, that of caste is very rigid. Caste demarcation is based on birth. Hence, society does not recognise one even if he or she adopts a new religion. The caste system is so rigid in our

society. It is only by projecting the superiority of their culture, art forms and worldview of the lower class people, the mind-set of the mainstream society towards these people can be changed. Performance of *Malavaayiaattom* promotes an attitudinal change among the public.

Devotees, whatever their position in the caste or social hierarchy, stand before the performer with folded hands. He blesses the devotees. He gets a devotion, which he cannot dream of, in the real life. Hence, the performance is a fulfilment of a dream. When he bows before the high caste lords on 364 days a year, the lords bow before him one day in the year, which gives him immense satisfaction.



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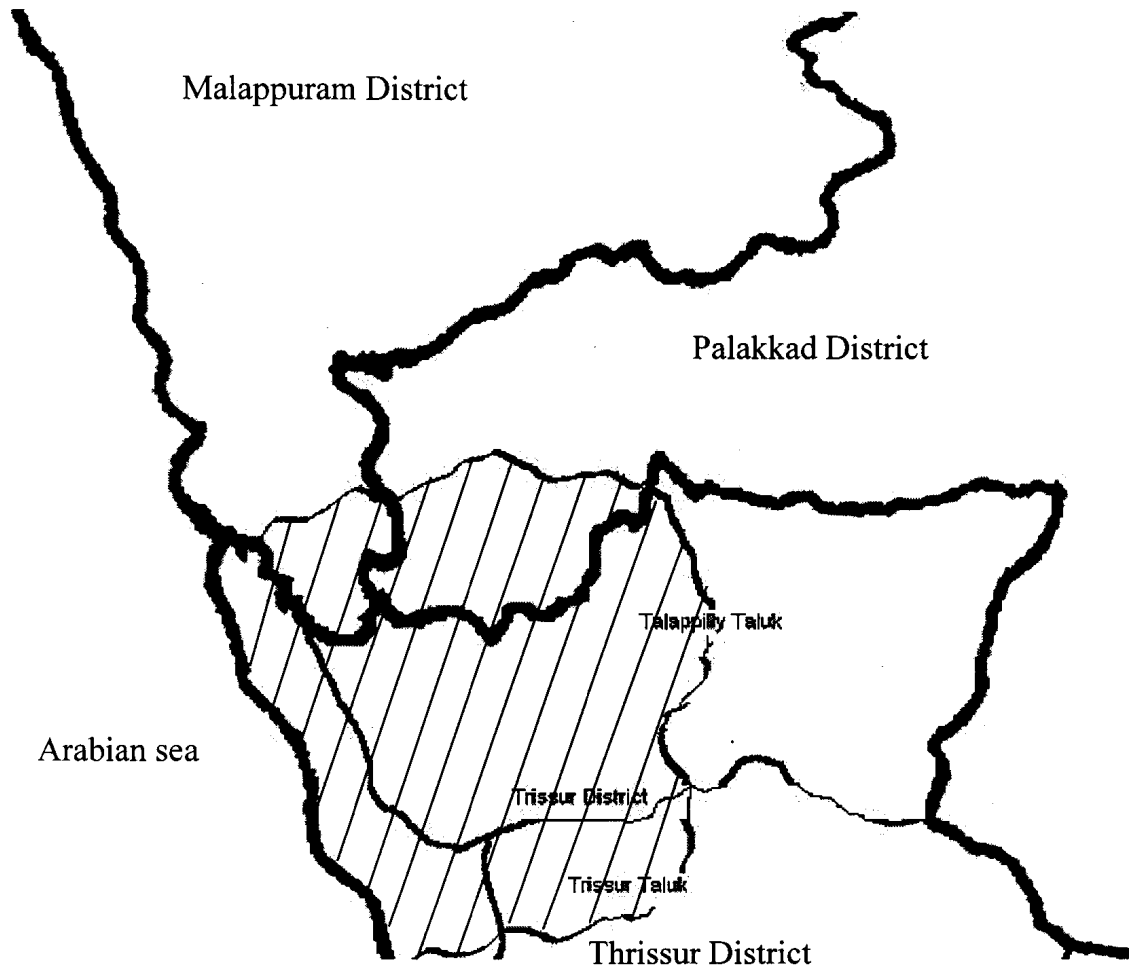
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APPENDIX I

PERFORMANCE AREA OF MALAVAAYIAATTOM



APPENDIX II

Text of Malavaayiaattom

Collected by C.C.Devan Master, Choondal house, Ayyanthole.

മലവായിത്തോറ്റം

അമ്മേ ദേവി മലവായി....

കല്ലത്തു മുത്തപ്പാ മുത്തുമ്മേ വാർക്കെക്കളൊടി

ഇരുപത്തെട്ടര മുർത്തികളേ.....

ചേറ്റുവായിക്കണ് പൂക്കായിക്കോളം

പൂക്കായിക്കണ് ചേറുവായിക്കോളം ഇരാവിരി വാങ്ങി

പോരുന്ന കല്ലടിക്കോട് കരിനീലി പെങ്ങളേ

ഉദിപ്പനത്തപ്പന്റെ ഇടംകണ്ണിൽ പൊട്ടി

വലം കണ്ണിൽ തേതിരിഞ്ഞ് പോന്ന്

എളക് മലൈ പളക് മലൈ പച്ചമലൈ പവിഴമലൈ

കല്ലടിക്കോട് എഴുപത്തിരണ്ട് മലവാരം ചാടിക്കടന്ന് പോന്ന്

നാട്ടുവാരം വന്ന് പാക്കനാരുമുത്തപ്പന്റെ തിരുമുറ്റത്ത് വന്ന്

അഞ്ചടിക്ക കാണ്മ ഭൂമി വാങ്ങി

അയ്യായിരം കല്ലുവെട്ടി അടിപാറ്റി

മുവ്വായിരം കല്ലുവെട്ടി മോളു മുടിച്ചുകുടിയിരുത്തി

പാക്കനാരും മുത്തപ്പന്റെ തിരുമുറ്റത്ത്

നിരീച്ച കാര്യങ്ങൾക്കും പുറപ്പെട്ട യാത്രകൾക്കും

അടിക്കിട്ട ചിലമ്പിനും മുടിക്കിട്ട ശീലക്കും

എറിഞ്ഞ അരിക്കും പറഞ്ഞ വാക്കിനും

അറ്റകുറ്റം വരാതെ നന്നാക്കി കാത്തു രക്ഷിച്ചുതരണേ

കല്ലടിക്കോട് കരിനീലി പെങ്ങളേ....

മലവായിപ്പാട്ട്

ഊട്ട് അറിയിക്കൽ

വാഴ്ക വാഴ്കമ്മേ വാഴ്ക വരിക ദൈവമേ

നിറവഞ്ചികളും നിറപൊലി വാഴ്കമ്മേ

കിഴക്കു തന്റോരി കിഴക്കുദിവാറം വാഴ്കമ്മേ

വാഴ്ക വരികഞ്ചും നിറപൊലി വാഴ്കമ്മേ

തെക്കുതന്റോരി തെക്കു തിരുപീഠം വാഴ്കമ്മേ

വാഴ്ക വരികഞ്ചും നിറപൊലി വാഴ്കമ്മേ

എട്ടുദിക്കുംവാഴ്ക ഒമ്പറന്ന കോടിയും വാഴ്കമ്മേ

വാഴ്ക വാഴ്കമ്മേ നിറപൊലി വാഴ്കമ്മേ

പത്തുദിക്കും വാഴ്ക പതിനൊരിമൊഴി വാതിലും വാഴ്കമ്മേ

വാഴ്ക വാഴ്കമ്മേ നിറപൊലി വാഴ്കമ്മേ
 അമ്മ പിറന്നൊരു കേരള ഭൂമിയും വാഴ്കമ്മേ
 വാഴ്ക വാഴ്കമ്മേ നിറപൊലി വാഴ്കമ്മേ
 നാലുദിക്കും വാഴ്ക നാല്പത്തിരണ്ട് കോടിയും വാഴ്കമ്മേ
 വാഴ്ക വാഴ്കമ്മേ നിറപൊലി വാഴ്കമ്മേ
 എട്ടു ദിക്കും വാഴ്ക ഒൻപറന്ന കോടിയും വാഴ്കമ്മേ
 വാഴ്ക വാഴ്കമ്മേ നിറപൊലി വാഴ്കമ്മേ
 വാഴ്ക വാഴ്കമ്മേ നിറപൊലി വാഴ്കമ്മേ
 അപ്പൻ പിറന്നൊരു മേലാകാശം വാഴ്കമ്മേ
 വാഴ്ക വാഴ്കമ്മേ നിറപൊലി വാഴ്കമ്മേ
 അമ്മ പിറന്നൊരു കേരള ഭൂമിയും വാഴ്കമ്മേ
 വാഴ്ക വാഴ്കമ്മേ നിറപൊലി വാഴ്കമ്മേ
 നാലു ദിക്കും വാഴ്ക നാല്പ്പത്തിരണ്ടു കോടിയും വാഴ്കമ്മേ
 വാഴ്ക വാഴ്കമ്മേ നിറപൊലി വാഴ്കമ്മേ
 നാലു ദിക്കും പിറന്ന നാല്പ്പത്തി രണ്ടു
 കോടിയും പിറന്നു കണ്ടേ
 പിന്നെയെന്തെല്ലാം പിറന്നു കാണുന്നേ
 നാലുദിക്കും നാല്പത്തി രണ്ടു കോടിയും പിറന്നപ്പിന്നെ
 മണ്ണും ഭൂമിയുമതാ പിറന്നു കാണുന്നു
 മണ്ണും ഭൂമിയുമതാ പിറന്ന പിറവിയിലേ
 പിന്നെയെന്തെല്ലാം പിറന്നു കാണുന്നു
 മണ്ണും ഭൂമിയുമതാ പിറന്ന പിറവിയിലേ
 പുല്ലും പുഷ്പാദികളും പിറന്നു കാണുന്നു
 പുല്ലും പുഷ്പാദികളും പിറന്നാപ്പിന്നെ
 ആരോ ഏവരോ പിറന്നുകാണുന്നു
 പുല്ലും പുഷ്പാദികളും പിറന്നാ പിറവിയിലകത്തേ
 ആരോ ഏവരോ പിറന്നാപ്പിന്നെ
 ശിവനതാ പിറന്നു കാണുന്നു
 ശിവൻ പിറന്നാ പിറവിയിലകത്തേ
 ഗണപതിയതാ പിറന്നു കാണുന്നേ
 ഗണപതി പിറന്നാ പിറവിയിലകത്തേ
 ആരോ ഏവരോ പിറന്നു കാണുന്നു
 ഗണപതി പിറന്നാ പിറവിയിലകത്തേ
 അയ്യപ്പനതാ പിറന്നു കാണുന്നു
 അയ്യപ്പനതാ പിറന്ന പിറവിയിലകത്തേ
 ആരോ ഏവരോ പിറന്നു കാണുന്നു
 അയ്യപ്പനതാ പിറന്നാ പിറവിയിലകത്തേ
 ദേവരുംകൂടി പിറന്നു കാണുന്നു

ദേവരു പിറന്നാ പിറവിയിലകത്തേ
 ആരോ ഏവരാ പിറന്നു കാണുന്നു
 ദേവരുപിറന്നാ പിറവിയിലകത്തേ
 ഭഗവതിയതാ പിറന്നു കാണുന്നു
 ഭഗവതിപിറന്നാ പിറവിയിലകത്തേ
 ആരോ ഏവരാ പിറന്നു കാണുന്നു
 ഭഗവതി പിറന്നാ പിറവിയിലകത്തേ
 ശാസ്തവുമതാ പിറന്നു കാണുന്നു
 ശാസ്തവുമതാ പിറന്നാ പിറവിയിലകത്തേ
 ആരോ ഏവരാ പിറന്നു കാണുന്നു
 ശാസ്തവുമതാ പിറന്നാ പിറവിയിലകത്തേ
 മുത്തപ്പനും കൂടി പിറന്നു കാണുന്നു
 മുത്തപ്പനും കൂടി പിറന്നാ പിറവിയിലകത്തേ
 ആരോ ഏവരാ പിറന്നു കാണുന്നു
 മുത്തപ്പനും കൂടിപിറന്നാ പിറവിയിലകത്തേ
 മലവായിയതാ പിറന്നു കാണുന്നു
 മലവായിയതാ പിറന്നാ പിറവിയിലകത്തേ
 ആരോ ഏവരാ പിറന്നു കാണുന്നു
 മലവായിയതാ പിറന്നാ പിറവിയിലകത്തേ
 മുണ്ടേനും കൂടെയതാ പിറന്നു കാണുന്നു
 മൂന്യു പിറന്ന ശിവനാണേ
 എന്തോ ഏതെല്ലാം ഉറണുവരാണേ
 മൂന്യു പിറന്ന ശിവനാണേടോ
 ധാര കഴിക്കൽ ഉറണുവരാണേ
 എന്തോ ഏതോരു ഉറണുവരാണേ
 നിറച്ചു വെച്ചോരു നെല്ലും നറയുമാണേടോ
 ഓമനുണ്ണി ഗണപതിക്ക് ഉറണുവരാണേ
 പിന്നെ പിറന്നോരു അയ്യപ്പനാണേടോ
 എന്തോ ഏതെല്ലാം ഉറണുവരാണേ
 പിന്നെ പിറന്നോരു അയ്യപ്പനാണേടോ
 അയ്യപ്പൻ വിളക്ക് ഉറണുവരാണേ
 പിന്നെപ്പിറന്നോരു ദേവരുക്കാണേ
 എന്തോ ഏതെല്ലാം ഉറണുവരാണേ
 പിന്നെപ്പിറന്നോരു ദേവരുക്കാണേ
 ദേവരുക്ക് തെണ്ടേറ്റ് ഉറണുവരാണേ
 പിന്നെ പിറന്നുള്ള ഭഗവതിക്കാണേ
 എന്തോ ഏതോരു ഉറണുവരാണേ
 പിന്നെപ്പിറന്നുള്ള ഭഗവതിക്കാണേ

ഐവൻ കൊണ്ടു പന്തിരു നാഴി നെല്ലെടുക്കുന്നു
 പെന്തിരി നാട്ടിലെ പെണ്ണുങ്ങളെ വിളിച്ചതാ
 അവർ കാളനെ കുത്തി തുളനെ ചേറി
 കൂന്ന് പോലെയതാ ചോറ് ഒരുക്കുന്നേ
 കൂളം പോലെയതാ കറിയോരുക്കി
 വടക്കിന്റെയതാ വടക്കെപ്പുറത്തു നിൽക്കുന്ന
 വണ്ണൻ വാഴയിലയതാ വെട്ടികൊണ്ടന്നേ
 പക്കം മുറിച്ചു ഇലവെച്ചതാ
 കുന്നു പോലെ ചോറുവിളമ്പി
 കൂളം പോലെ കറിവിളമ്പിയതാ
 കൂനി കൂനിഞ്ഞിരുന്നൂണ്ടു് ഉള്ളുവാറം തീർന്ന്
 നീണ്ടു നിവർന്നിരുന്ന് ഊണു കഴിച്ചിട്ടെ
 ഓമനുണ്ണി ഗണപതിയതാ ഏമ്പളം തേട്ടുന്നു
 ഗണപതി തിരുമുഖം തെളിഞ്ഞതു പോലെ
 മലവായി തിരുമുഖം തെളിവിനം വരട്ടെ
 ഗണപതിയെക്കൊണ്ടതാ അരയിരുത്തേണകി
 എവിടെക്കൊണ്ടതാ കൂടിയിരുത്തേണ്ട
 കക്കാട്ടു കുന്നത്ത് ശിവമൂലം ചൊല്ലി
 ഓമനുണ്ണി ഗണപതിയെ കൂടിയിരുത്തുന്നേ
 നേരെ കിഴക്കോട്ട് തിരു മുഖവുമായി
 നേരെ പടിഞ്ഞാട്ട് തിരു മുതുവുമായി
 ഓമനുണ്ണി ഗണപതിയെ
 വിധിയാം വണ്ണമതാ കൂടിയിരുത്തി
 പലേവർക്കും പലതല്ല ഗണപതി
 എല്ലാവർക്കും ഒന്നാണ് ഗണപതി
 ചുണ്ടക്കാരുടെ കൂടുംബം നാലാമേടത്തെ
 ആപത്തനർത്ഥങ്ങളും പുറംനീങ്ങളെ
 ഗണപതിയെക്കൊണ്ട് പാടിയവന്റെ
 ചങ്കും സരസ്വതിയും തെളിവരട്ടെ
 ഗണപതിയെക്കൊണ്ടതാ കൂഴൽ വിളിച്ചവന്റെ
 ചുണ്ടും നാവും പേർന്നു വരട്ടെ

മാലചാർത്തൽ

കല്ലോവാഴോമ്മേ മുല്ലുവാഴോമ്മേ മുല്ല പുത്തൊരി
 പുപൊലി വാഴോമ്മേ
 പുവറുക്കാനായ് പുത്തൊട്ടി നെയ്യാനും
 ആരുക്കേവരുക്കു വിധി മൂലമാണേ
 പുവറുക്കാനായ് പുത്തൊട്ടി നെയ്യാനും
 പാക്കനാരുക്ക് വിധിമൂലാണേ

വിളിക്കേണമേണേ വിളിക്കേണമേണേ
 ദേവത്തമ്പുരാൻ വിളിക്കേണമേണേ
 ഒന്നുവിളിച്ചു ഓർത്തു കേൾക്കുന്നുണ്ടേ
 രണ്ടുവിളിച്ചു പാർത്തു കേൾക്കുന്നുണ്ടേ
 മൂന്നാം വിളിക്ക് മുളി കേൾക്കുന്നുണ്ടേ
 നാലാംവിളിക്ക് ഓടി മണ്ടി ചെല്ലുന്നേ
 ആചാരത്തിനല്ല നിന്നെ വിളിച്ചതെ
 കുറഞ്ഞൊരു ഉപകാര പണിയുണ്ട്
 അയ്യോ എന്റോരു തമ്പുരാനെ
 അടിയനെക്കൊണ്ടുള്ള ഉപകാരപ്പണിയെന്താ
 പുവറുക്കാനും പുത്തൊട്ടി നെയ്യാനെ
 നിന്നെ വിളിച്ചത് പാക്കനാരപ്പോ
 വെള്ളത്തിൽ നിൽക്കുന്ന പൊള്ള മുള
 വെട്ടിയതാ വെട്ടി മുറിച്ചതാ കൊണ്ടുവരുണേ
 പൊള്ളമുള വെട്ടിപ്പൊളിച്ചതാ
 ചീന്തിപ്പൊളിച്ചു പുത്തൊട്ടി നെയ്യണേ
 പുത്തൊട്ടി നെയ്തതാ കൊണ്ടു കൊടുക്കുന്നേ
 തമ്പുരാൻ പടിക്കലൈ പാക്കത്തുരതാ
 സന്തോഷത്തോടു കൂലി കൊടുക്കുന്നുണ്ടേ
 മേടിച്ചു പോരുന്നു പാക്കത്തുരതാ
 ഈയൊരു പുത്തൊട്ടീല് പുവറുക്കാനായ്
 ആരുക്കു ഏവരുക്കു വിധിമൂലമാണേ
 ഈയൊരു പുത്തൊട്ടീല് പുവറുക്കാനായ്
 വാരിയവരുക്കെ വിധിമൂലമാണേ
 ഈയൊരു പുവു കൊണ്ടു മാല കെട്ടാനായ്
 ആരുക്കു ഏവരുക്കു വിധിമൂലമാണേ
 ഈയൊരു പുവു കൊണ്ടു മാല കെട്ടാനായ്
 വെള്ളാട്ടണി മകൾക്ക് വിധി മൂലമാണേ
 ഈയൊരു പുവു കൊണ്ടു മാല കെട്ടിയതാ
 ആരുക്കു ഏവരുക്കു കെട്ടിച്ചാർത്തേണ്ടേ
 ഈയൊരു പുവുമാലയും—കെട്ടിച്ചാർത്തേണ്ടേ
 ശിവൻ ബിംബത്തിലതാ മാല ചാർത്തേണ്ടേ
 ശിവൻ ബിംബത്തില് മാല ചാർത്തി പോന്നിട്ട്
 ഇനിയേതു ബിംബത്തിലാണേ മാല ചാർത്തേണ്ടേ
 ഈയൊരു പുവുമാലയും കെട്ടിച്ചാർത്തേണ്ടേ
 ഗണപതി ബിംബത്തിലും മാല ചാർത്തേണ്ടേ
 ഗണപതി ബിംബത്തിലും മാല ചാർത്തി പോന്നിട്ട്
 ഇനിയേതു ബിംബത്തിലാ മാല ചാർത്തേണ്ടേ

കല്ലത്തു മുത്തപ്പൻ ആയോരു കാലത്തേ
 ദേവരു ബിംബങ്ങളും വിറ്റുണ്ടു പോയി
 കല്ലത്തു മുത്തുമ്മ ആയോരു കാലത്തേ
 ദേവരു ബിംബങ്ങളും വാങ്ങിപ്പോരുന്നേ
 കല്ലത്തു മുത്തപ്പൻ ആയോരു കാലത്തേ
 ഭഗവതി ബിംബങ്ങളും വിറ്റുണ്ടുപോയി
 കല്ലത്തു മുത്തുമ്മ ആയോരു കാലത്തേ
 ഭഗവതി ബിംബങ്ങളും വാങ്ങിപ്പോരുന്നേ
 കല്ലത്തു മുത്തപ്പൻ ആയോരു കാലത്തേ
 ശാസ്താവു ബിംബങ്ങളും വിറ്റുണ്ടുപോയി
 കല്ലത്തു മുത്തപ്പൻ ആയോരു കാലത്തേ
 ഭഗവതി ബിംബങ്ങളും വിറ്റുണ്ടുപോയി
 കല്ലത്തു മുത്തുമ്മ ആയോരു കാലത്തേ
 ഭഗവതി ബിംബങ്ങളും വാങ്ങിപ്പോരുന്നേ
 കല്ലത്തു മുത്തപ്പൻ ആയോരു കാലത്തേ
 ഭഗവതി ബിംബങ്ങളും വിറ്റുണ്ടുപോയി
 കല്ലത്തു മുത്തപ്പൻ ആയോരു കാലത്തേ
 മുത്തപ്പൻ ബിംബങ്ങളും വിറ്റുണ്ടു പോയി
 കല്ലത്തു മുത്തുമ്മ ആയോരു കാലത്തേ
 മുത്തപ്പൻ ബിംബങ്ങളും വാങ്ങിപ്പോരുന്നേ
 കല്ലത്തു മുത്തപ്പൻ ആയോരു കാലത്തേ
 മലവായി ബിംബങ്ങളും വിറ്റുണ്ടുപോയി
 കല്ലത്തു മുത്തുമ്മ ആയോരു കാലത്തേ
 മലവായി ബിംബങ്ങളും വാങ്ങിപ്പോരുന്നേ
 കല്ലത്തു മുത്തപ്പൻ ആയോരു കാലത്തേ
 വട്ടി വിരുന്നു ഇരാവിരി വിറ്റുണ്ടു പോയി
 കല്ലത്തു മുത്തുമ്മ ആയോരു കാലത്തേ
 വട്ടി വിരുന്നു ഇരാവിരി വാങ്ങിപ്പോരുന്നേ

ബലിപുജ

ബ്രാഹ്മണാരു മകന്റെ ബലിപുജയാണെങ്കിൽ
 എന്തു ഏതെല്ലാം കണ്ടാലറിയാം
 ബ്രാഹ്മണാരു മകന്റെ ബലിപുജയാണെങ്കിൽ
 ഓത്തു കർമ്മങ്ങളും കേട്ടാലറിയാം
 പട്ടരുമകന്റെ ബലിപുജയാണെങ്കിൽ
 എന്തു ഏതെല്ലാം കണ്ടാലറിയാം
 പട്ടരുമകന്റെ ബലിപുജയാണെങ്കിൽ
 ചാന്തു കുറികളും കണ്ടാലറിയാം
 ശൂദ്രൻ മകന്റെ ബലിപുജയാണെങ്കിൽ

എന്തു ഏതെല്ലാം കണ്ടാലറിയാം
 ശുഭ്രൻമകന്റെ ബലിപൂജയാണെങ്കിൽ
 കൂടകുത്തി കർമ്മങ്ങളും കണ്ടാലറിയാം
 നായരുമകന്റെ ബലിപൂജയാണെങ്കിൽ
 എന്തു ഏതെല്ലാം കണ്ടാലറിയാം
 നായരു മകന്റെ ബലിപൂജയാണെങ്കിൽ
 നായരുനെടുംകച്ച കണ്ടാലറിയാം
 തണ്ടാൻ മകന്റെ ബലിപൂജയാണെങ്കിൽ
 എന്തു ഏതെല്ലാം കേട്ടാലറിയാം
 തണ്ടാൻ മകന്റെ ബലിപൂജയാണെങ്കിൽ
 മണിമണി ഓശ കേട്ടാലറിയാം
 പുളളാൻ മകന്റെ ബലിപൂജയാണെങ്കിൽ
 എന്തു ഏതെല്ലാം കേട്ടാലറിയാം
 പുളളാൻ മകന്റെ ബലിപൂജയാണെങ്കിൽ
 വീണ പാട്ടിന്റെ ഓശ കേട്ടാലറിയാം
 തച്ചൻ മകന്റെ ബലിപൂജയാണെങ്കിൽ
 എന്തു ഏതെല്ലാം കണ്ടാലറിയാം
 തച്ചൻ മകന്റെ ബലിപൂജയാണെങ്കിൽ
 തച്ചൻ തൈപ്പലകകളും കണ്ടാലറിയാം
 കരുവാൻ മകന്റെ ബലിപൂജയാണെങ്കിൽ
 എന്തു ഏതെല്ലാം കണ്ടാലറിയാം
 കരുവാൻ മകന്റെ ബലിപൂജയാണെങ്കിൽ
 നങ്കൂര പള്ളിവാളി കണ്ടാലറിയാം
 മണ്ണാൻ മകന്റെ ബലിപൂജയാണെങ്കിൽ
 എന്തു ഏതെല്ലാം കണ്ടാലറിയാം
 മണ്ണാൻ മകന്റെ ബലിപൂജയാണെങ്കിൽ
 നന്നുണി കൊട്ടിന്റെ ഓശ കേട്ടാലറിയാം
 പാക്കനാരൂ മകന്റെ ബലിപൂജയാണെങ്കിൽ
 എന്തു ഏതെല്ലാം കണ്ടാലറിയാം
 പാക്കനാരൂ മകന്റെ ബലിപൂജയാണെങ്കിൽ
 തോൽപ്പുറത്തു കൊട്ടും തോറ്റം കേട്ടാലറിയാം
 പുലയൻ മകന്റെ ബലിപൂജയാണെങ്കിൽ
 എന്തു ഏതെല്ലാം കേട്ടാലറിയാം
 പുലയൻ മകന്റെ ബലിപൂജയാണെങ്കിൽ
 കുഴിത്താളം കൊട്ടിന്റെ ഓശ കേട്ടാലറിയാം
തിരുനണ്ടങ്ങൾ വാങ്ങിപ്പോരുന്നു
 കല്ലോ വാഴാമ്മേ മുല്ലത്തെ വാഴോമ്മേ
 മുല്ല പുത്തൊരു പുപൊലി വാഴോമ്മേ

ഉദിപ്പനത്തപ്പന്റെ ഇടകണ്ണിൽ പൊട്ടി
 വലകണ്ണിൽ തേതിരിഞ്ഞു ഇണപോലെ
 രണ്ടാളവർ ആങ്ങളയും പെങ്ങളും
 അയ്യോ എന്റോരു ഉദിപ്പനത്തപ്പാ ഞങ്ങൾക്ക്
 ഇരിക്കാൻ ഭൂമി തിരുനണ്ടം തരണേ
 അയ്യോ എന്റോരു ഉദിപ്പനത്തപ്പാ ഞങ്ങൾക്ക്
 നടക്കാൻ ഭൂമി തിരുനണ്ടം തരണേ
 അയ്യോ എന്റോരു മടിപിറന്ന മക്കളേ
 ഇരിക്കാൻ ഭൂമി തിരുനണ്ടം തരില്ല
 അയ്യോ എന്റോരു ഉദിപ്പനത്തപ്പാ ഞങ്ങള്
 ഇരിക്കാൻ ഭൂമി തിരുനണ്ടം വാങ്ങിയേ പോവാള്ളോ
 അയ്യോ എന്റോരു മടിപിറന്ന മക്കളേ
 നടക്കാൻ നാടും തിരുനണ്ടം തരില്ല
 അയ്യോ എന്റോരു മടിപിറന്ന മക്കളേ
 നിങ്ങളുടെ സത്യം ഞാനൊന്നു കണ്ടറിയട്ടെ
 അതിക്കും തലേന്നെ മൂന്നാം ദിവസാണെ
 ഏന്തിക്കേറേണ്ടത് ഏന്തിക്കേറണില്ല
 ഇത് എന്തൊരു കഷ്ടകാലാനറിയില്ല
 ഇത് എന്തൊരു ശൂന്യപ്പിഴയാണേ
 ആ നാടുവാഴുന്ന കണിയാരുപണിക്കരെ
 കൂട്ടിക്കുറിക്കുന്നു ഉദിപ്പനത്തപ്പനും
 പണിക്കരുവന്നതാ ഒന്നാംകളം വരക്കുന്നേ
 പുറംകളത്തിലതാ കവിടിനിരത്തണേ
 പണിക്കരുവന്നതാ നാളും പേരും നോക്കൂപ്പൊ
 മടിപിറന്ന മക്കളുടെ ഉപദ്രവം കാണുന്നേ
 ഇരിക്കാൻ ഭൂമി തിരുനണ്ടം കൊടുക്കാത്തതുകൊണ്ട്
 ഉദിക്കേണ്ടത് ഉദിക്കാത്തത്
 അത്രെക്ക് സത്യമുള്ള മടിപിറന്ന മക്കളാണെങ്കിൽ
 ഏന്തിക്കേറേണ്ടത് ഏന്തിക്കേറട്ടെ
 അതിക്കും തലേന്നെ മൂന്നാം ദിവസത്തേക്ക്
 ഏന്തിക്കേറേണ്ടത് ഏന്തിക്കേറുന്നേ
 പടിക്കപ്പറമ്പേ പന്തിരുകാതം
 ഇരിക്കാൻ ഭൂമിയതാ തിരുനണ്ടം കൊടുത്തേ
 അയ്യോ എന്റോരു ഉദിപ്പനത്തപ്പാ ഞങ്ങള്
 ഏതു വഴിക്കാണ് തേതിരിഞ്ഞു പോകേണ്ട
 അയ്യോ എന്റോരു മടിപിറന്ന മക്കളേ
 നേരമാം പടിഞ്ഞാട്ട് തേതിരിഞ്ഞു പൊക്കോളെ
 അയ്യോ എന്റോരു നേരാങ്ങളേ നമ്മള്

ഏതുവഴിക്കാണ് തേതിരയണ്ട
 അങ്ങനെ അവർ തേതിരിഞ്ഞു ചെല്ലുമ്പോൾ
 വയനാട്ട് ഇളം പ്ലാവിനെ ശകുനംകണ്ടു
 അങ്ങനെയവർ നേരാങ്ങളെയും പെങ്ങളും
 വയനാട്ട് ഇളം പ്ലാവിന്റെ കടക്കലുംചെന്നേ
 അയ്യോ എന്റോരു നേരാങ്ങളെ നമ്മള്
 വയനാട്ട് ഇളം പ്ലാവിനെ ഉണക്കി കാണണം
 വയനാട്ട് ഇളം പ്ലാവിനെ നേരാങ്ങളയപ്പോഴെ
 നാലും മൂന്ന് ഏഴുവലം വക്കുന്നേ
 നാലും മൂന്ന് ഏഴുവലം വച്ചപ്പോ
 വയനാട്ട് ഇളം പ്ലാവതാ ഉണങ്ങിക്കാണുന്നേ
 അയ്യോ എന്റോരു നേരാങ്ങളെ നമ്മള്
 വയനാട്ട് ഇളം പ്ലാവിനെ ഉണക്കിപ്പോകരുത്
 അയ്യോ എന്റോരു നേരാങ്ങളെ നമ്മള്
 വയനാട്ട് ഇളം പ്ലാവിനെ തേറിത്തെളിയിക്കണം
 നാലും മൂന്നുമതാ ഏഴുവലം വെച്ചപ്പോ
 വയനാട്ട് ഇളം പ്ലാവതാ തേറിത്തെളിഞ്ഞു
 അയ്യോ എന്റോരു നേരാങ്ങളെ നമ്മള്
 ഏതു വഴിക്കാണ് തേതിരിഞ്ഞു പോകേണ്ട
 അവിടന്നതാ നേരെ പടിഞ്ഞാട്ട്
 തേതിരിഞ്ഞു പോകുന്നവർ
 ആങ്ങളെയും പെങ്ങളും
 അവിടന്നതാ തേതിരിഞ്ഞു ചെല്ലുന്നു
 ഓടനാട്ടു രാജ്യത്ത് ആങ്ങളെയും പെങ്ങളും
 ഓടനാട്ടു രാജ്യത്ത് തേതിരിഞ്ഞു നിൽക്കുമ്പോൾ
 പൊന്നാരടിച്ചിലമ്പിന്റെ ഓശകേട്ടത്
 അവിടന്നങ്ങനെ തേതിരിഞ്ഞതാ
 മുശാലി മകന്റെ പടിപ്പുറം ചെല്ലുന്നു
 അയ്യോ എന്റോരു മുശാലി മകനെ നീ
 പൊന്നാരടിച്ചിലമ്പ് രണ്ടും തിരുന്നണ്ടം തരണം
 പണ്ടേക്ക് പണ്ട് കാരണവന്മാർ കാലത്തും
 പൊന്നാരടിച്ചിലമ്പ് തിരുന്നണ്ടം കൊടുത്തിട്ടില്ല
 ഇന്ന് ഞങ്ങള് അനന്തിരവന്മാർ കാലത്ത്
 പൊന്നാരടിച്ചിലമ്പ് തിരുന്നണ്ടം കൊടുക്കില്ല
 അതിലും തലേന്ന് മൂന്നാം ദിവസേക്ക്
 മുശാലി മക്കൾക്ക് മാണ്ടു മയക്കായി
 ഇത് എന്തൊരു കഷ്ട കാലാനറിയില്ല
 ഇത് എന്തൊരു ശൂന്യപ്പിഴയാണേ

ആ നാടു വാഴുന്ന കണിയാരു പണിക്കരെ
 കൂട്ടിക്കുറിക്കുന്നുണ്ട് മുശാലി മകനും
 പണിക്കരു വന്നതാ ഒന്നാം കളം വരക്കുന്നേ
 പുറംകളത്തിലതാ കവിടി നിരത്തണേ
 പണിക്കരു വന്നതാ നാളും പേരും നോക്കൂപ്പൊ
 മലേപ്പിറന്ന ദൈവത്തിന്റെ ഉപദ്രവം കാണുന്നേ
 അത്രക്ക് സത്യമുള്ള മലേപ്പിറന്ന ദൈവങ്ങളാണെങ്കിൽ
 എന്റെ മക്കളും തേറിത്തളിയട്ടെ
 എന്റെ അത്രക്ക് സത്യമുള്ള മലേപ്പിറന്ന
 ദൈവങ്ങളാണെങ്കിൽ
 എന്റെ മുശയിപ്പോ പിടിച്ചു കാണട്ടെ
 അതിക്കും തലേന്ന് മൂന്നാം ദിവസേക്ക്
 മുശാലി മക്കളും ആടിയോടി തെളിഞ്ഞു
 അതിക്കും തലേന്ന് മൂന്നാം ദിവസേക്ക്
 മുശാലി മകന്റെ മുശപിടിച്ചു കണ്ടു
 അതിന്റെയൊരു മൂന്നാം ദിവസാണെ
 പൊന്നാരടിച്ചിലമ്പ് തിരുനണ്ടം കൊടുക്കുന്നേ
 പൊന്നാരടിച്ചിലമ്പ് തിരുനണ്ടം തന്നാൽപോര
 മുലച്ചിരട്ട രണ്ടും തിരുനണ്ടം തരേണം
 കഴുത്തുട്ടും മാർത്താലികളും തിരുനണ്ടം തന്നാൽ പോര
 ജെകറും ചെട്ട്യാനും കൂടി തിരുനണ്ടം തരേണം
 പകൽ വിളിച്ചതേ കളേളരും പിളേളരും അല്ല
 രാവു വിളിച്ചതേ മലേപ്പിറന്ന ദൈവാണേ
 ഈവക പലവതിനാലേ തിരുനണ്ടം വാങ്ങിപ്പോരേണ്ട
 ഇണപോലെ രണ്ടാങ്ങളയും പെങ്ങളും
 ഇവിടന്നങ്ങോട്ട് നേരാങ്ങളെ നമ്മള്
 ഏതുവഴിക്കാണ് തേതിരിയേണ്ട
 അവിടന്നങ്ങനെ തേതിരിഞ്ഞു ചെല്ലുന്നേ
 വഞ്ചിക്കുന്നത്തെ പടനായമ്മാരോടെക്ക്
 വഞ്ചിക്കുന്നത്തെ പടനായമ്മാരേ നിങ്ങള്
 നാലു വഞ്ചിക്ക് വഞ്ചിമരം തരോ
 പണ്ടേക്ക് പണ്ട് കാരണവന്മാർ കാലത്തും
 വഞ്ചിക്ക് വഞ്ചിമരം കൊടുത്തിട്ടില്ല
 പണ്ടേക്ക് പണ്ട് കാരണവന്മാർ കാലത്ത്
 വഞ്ചിക്ക് വഞ്ചിമരം കൊടുക്കില്ലെന്ന്
 അതിലും തലേന്ന് മൂന്നാം ദിവസേക്ക്
 പത്തായിരം വഞ്ചി മരങ്ങളും പഴുത്തുണങ്ങി
 ഇത് എന്തൊരു കഷ്ടകാലാനറിയില്ല

ഇത് എന്തൊരു ശൂന്യപ്പിഴയാണേ
 ആനാടു വാഴുന്ന കണിയാരുപണിക്കരെ
 കൂട്ടിക്കുറിക്കുന്നുണ്ട് പടനായമ്മാർ
 പണിക്കരുവന്നതാ ഒന്നാംകളം വരക്കുന്നേ
 പുറം കളത്തിലതാ കവിടി നിരത്തണേ
 പണിക്കരു വന്നതാ നാളും പേരും നോക്കൂപ്പൊ
 മലേപ്പിറന്ന ദൈവത്തിന്റെ ഉപദ്രവം കാണുന്നേ
 അത്രേക്ക് സത്യമുള്ള മലേപ്പിറന്ന ദൈവങ്ങളാണെങ്കിൽ
 പത്തായിരം വഞ്ചി മരങ്ങളും തേറിത്തെളിയട്ടെ
 അതിലും തലേന്ന് മൂന്നാം ദിവസേക്ക്
 പത്തായിരം വഞ്ചി മരങ്ങളും തേറിത്തെളിയണെ
 നാലുവഞ്ചിക്ക് വഞ്ചിമരം കൊടുക്കുന്നു
 വഞ്ചിക്കുന്നത്തെ പടനായമ്മാർ
 പകൽ വിളിച്ചതേ കളേളരും പിളേളരും അല്ല
 രാവു വിളിച്ചതേ മലേപ്പിറന്ന ദൈവാണേ
 നാലു വഞ്ചിക്ക് വഞ്ചിമരം തിരുനണ്ടം വാങ്ങിയതാ
 തേതിരിഞ്ഞു പോരുന്നു മലേപ്പിറന്ന മക്കള്
 അവിടന്നങ്ങനെ തേതിരിഞ്ഞു പോരേണെ
 മലേപ്പിറന്ന ദൈവങ്ങളേ
 അയ്യോ എന്റെ നേരാങ്ങളെ നമ്മള്
 ഏതു വഴിക്കാണ് തേതിരിഞ്ഞ് പോരേണ്ട
 അവിടന്നങ്ങനെ തേതിരിഞ്ഞു പോയവര്
 പാക്കനാരുടെ പടിപ്പുറം ചെല്ലുന്നേ
 അയ്യോ എന്തൊരു പാക്കനാരെ നിങ്ങളേ
 ഇണ പോലെ നാലു വഞ്ചി കുത്തിത്തരേണം
 പണ്ടേക്ക് പണ്ട് കാരണവന്മാരായ കാലത്തും
 വഞ്ചി ഞങ്ങളേ കുത്തിക്കൊടുത്തിട്ടില്ല
 ഇപ്പോൾ ഞങ്ങളേ അനന്തിരവന്മാരായ
 കാലത്ത് വഞ്ചി ഞങ്ങളേ കുത്തി കൊടുക്കില്ല
 അതിലും തലേന്ന് മൂന്നാം ദിവസേക്ക്
 പാക്കനാരു മക്കൾക്ക് മാണ്ടു മയക്കായി
 ഇത് എന്തൊരു കഷ്ട കാലാനറിയില്ല
 ഇത് എന്തൊരു ശൂന്യപ്പിഴയാണേ
 ആനാടു വാഴുന്ന കണിയാരു പണിക്കരെ
 കൂട്ടിക്കുറിക്കുന്നുണ്ട് പാക്കനാരാണെ
 പണിക്കരു വന്നതാ ഒന്നാംകളം വരക്കുന്നേ
 പുറം കളത്തിലതാ കവിടി നിരത്തണേ
 പണിക്കരുവന്നതാ നാളും പേരും നോക്കൂപ്പൊ

മലേപ്പിറന്ന ദൈവത്തിന്റെ ഉപദ്രവം കാണുന്നേ
 അത്രെക്ക് സത്യമുള്ള മലേപ്പിറന്ന ദൈവങ്ങളാണെങ്കിൽ
 പത്തായിരം വഞ്ചി മരങ്ങളും തേറിഞ്ഞളിയട്ടെ
 അതിലും തലേന്ന് മൂന്നാം ദിവസേക്ക്
 പണിക്കരുവന്നതാ നാളും പേരും നോക്കൂപ്പൊ
 മലേപ്പിറന്ന ദൈവത്തിന്റെ ഉപദ്രവം കാണുന്നേ
 അത്രെക്ക് സത്യമുള്ള മലേപ്പിറന്ന ദൈവങ്ങളാണെങ്കിൽ
 എന്റെ കുട്ടികളുടെ മാണ്ടുമയക്കം തീരട്ടെ
 അതിലും തലേന്ന് മൂന്നാം ദിവസേക്ക്
 പാക്കനാരുടെ മാണ്ടുമയക്കം തീരുണേ
 വേഗകത്തിനാലെ നാലു വഞ്ചി മരങ്ങള്
 വെള്ളത്തിലും ചളിയിലുമതാ ചവുട്ടി പൂഴ്ത്തുന്നേ
 കൊണ്ടിട്ടതിന്റെ എട്ടാം ദിവസാണെ
 തൊലി ചീയ്ചതാ അലക്കി വെളുപ്പിച്ചു
 ഈയൊരുവഞ്ചി കൊണ്ടതാ ഇണപോലെ നാലു വഞ്ചികളും
 കുത്തിത്തീർക്കുന്നുണ്ട് പാക്കനാരാണെ
 ഇണപോലെ നാലുവഞ്ചി പണിതീർത്തിട്ടതാ
 തിരുനണ്ടായി കൊടുക്കുന്നിതാ പാക്കനാരാണേ
 നാലുവഞ്ചിയതാ തിരുനണ്ടം വാങ്ങിപ്പോരുന്നു
 മലേപ്പിറന്നൊരു മലദൈവമാണേ
 പകല് വിളിച്ചതേ കള്ളേരും പിള്ളേരും അല്ല
 രാവു വിളിച്ചതേ മലേപ്പിറന്ന ദൈവമാണേ
 അവിടന്നങ്ങനെ തേതിരിഞ്ഞു ചെല്ലുന്നേ
 മലേപ്പിറന്നൊരു മലദൈവങ്ങളും
 അവിടന്നങ്ങനെ തേതിരിഞ്ഞു പോരുന്നവര്
 മുളംകുന്നത്തെ പടനായന്മാരോടേക്ക്
 മുളംകുന്നത്തെ പടനായന്മാരേ നിങ്ങള്
 വെള്ളാട്ടണി മുടിക്ക് മുള തിരുനണ്ടം തരേണം
 പണ്ടേക്ക് പണ്ട് കാരണവന്മാർ കാലത്തും
 വെള്ളാട്ടണി മുടിക്ക് മുള തിരുനണ്ടം കൊടുത്തിട്ടില്ല
 ഇപ്പോൾ ഞങ്ങള് അനന്തിരവന്മാരായ കാലത്ത്
 വെള്ളാട്ടണിമുടിക്ക് മുളതിരുനണ്ടം തരില്ല
 അതിലും തലേന്ന് മൂന്നാം ദിവസേക്ക്
 പത്തായിരം മുളംകൂട്ടം പഴുത്തുണങ്ങി
 ഇത് എന്തൊരു കഷ്ടകാലാനറിയില്ല
 ഇത് എന്തൊരു ശൂന്യപ്പിഴയാണേ
 ആ നാടു വാഴുന്ന കണിയാരു പണിക്കരെ
 കുട്ടിക്കുറിക്കുന്നുണ്ട് പാക്കനാരാണെ

പണിക്കരു വന്നതാ ഒന്നാം കളം വരക്കുന്നേ
 പുറം കളത്തിലതാ കവിടി നിരത്തണേ
 പണിക്കരു വന്നതാ നാളും പേരും നോക്കൂപ്പൊ
 മലേപ്പിറന്ന ദൈവത്തിന്റെ ഉപദ്രവം കാണുന്നേ
 അത്രേക്ക് സത്യമുള്ള മലേപ്പിറന്ന ദൈവങ്ങളാണെങ്കിൽ
 പത്തായിരം മുളംകുട്ടം തേറിത്തെളിയട്ടെ
 അതിലും തലേന്ന് മൂന്നാം ദിവസേക്ക്
 പത്തായിരം മുളംകുട്ടം തേറിത്തെളിഞ്ഞു
 വെള്ളാട്ടണിമുടിക്ക് മുള തിരുനണ്ടം കൊടുക്കുന്നേ
 മുളംകുന്നത്തെ പടനായന്മാർ
 പകല് വിളിച്ചതേ കളേളരും പിളേളരുംഅല്ല
 രാവു വിളിച്ചതേ മലേപ്പിറന്ന ദൈവാനേ
 മുള തിരുനണ്ടം വാങ്ങിപ്പോന്നിട്ട്
 ഏതുവഴിക്കാണ് തേതിരിഞ്ഞ് പോരേണ്ട
 അവിടന്നങ്ങനെ തേതിരിഞ്ഞു പോയവർ
 പാക്കത്തുരുടെ പടിപ്പുറം ചെല്ലുന്നേ
 അയ്യോ എന്റോരു പാക്കത്തുരേ നിങ്ങള്
 വെള്ളാട്ടണി മുടി പണിതു തരേണം
 പണ്ടേക്ക് പണ്ട് കാരണവന്മാർ കാലത്തും
 വെള്ളാട്ടണി മുടി ഞങ്ങൾ പണിതു കൊടുത്തിട്ടില്ല
 ഇപ്പോൾ ഞങ്ങള് അനന്തിരവന്മാരായ കാലത്ത്
 വെള്ളാട്ടണിമുടി ഞങ്ങൾ പണിതു കൊടുക്കില്ല
 അതിലും തലേന്ന് മൂന്നാം ദിവസേക്ക്
 പാക്കത്തുരും കുട്ടികൾക്കും മാണ്ടു മയക്കായി
 ഇത് എന്തൊരു കഷ്ടകാലാനറിയില്ല
 ഇത് എന്തൊരു ശൂന്യപ്പിഴയാണേ
 ആനാടു വാഴുന്ന കണിയാരു പണിക്കരെ
 കുട്ടിക്കുറിക്കുന്നുണ്ട് പാക്കത്തുരാണെ
 പണിക്കരു വന്നതാ ഒന്നാംകളം വരക്കുന്നേ
 പുറം കളത്തിലതാ കവിടി നിരത്തണേ
 പണിക്കരുവന്നതാ നാളും പേരും നോക്കൂപ്പൊ
 മലേപ്പിറന്ന ദൈവത്തിന്റെ ഉപദ്രവം കാണുന്നേ
 അത്രേക്ക് സത്യമുള്ള മലേപ്പിറന്ന ദൈവങ്ങളാണെങ്കിൽ
 എന്റെ കുട്ടികളും ആടിയോടി തെളിയട്ടെ
 അതിലും തലേന്ന് മൂന്നാം ദിവസേക്ക്
 പാക്കത്തുരും കുട്ടികളും ആടിയോടി തെളിഞ്ഞു
 ഇറയൊരു മുള കൊണ്ട് ചീന്തി പൊളിച്ചവള്
 വെള്ളാട്ടണിമുടി പണിതു തീർക്കണെ

വെള്ളാട്ടണിമുടി പണിതു കൊടുക്കുന്നേ
 തിരുനണ്ടമായി മലേപ്പിറന്നദൈവത്തിന്
 വെള്ളാട്ടണിമുടി പണിതു കൊടുത്തപ്പോഴേ
 തിരുവരം കൊടുക്കുന്നുണ്ടെ പാക്കത്തുവർ
 നാഴിക്കു പണിചെയ്താൽ നാലുനാഴിക്കുള്ളൊരു
 തിരുവരം കൊടുക്കുന്നുണ്ടെ മലേപ്പിറന്ന ദൈവാണെ
 പകല് വിളിച്ചതേ കളേളരും പിളേളരും അല്ല
 രാവു വിളിച്ചതേമലേപ്പിറന്ന ദൈവാണേ
 അയ്യോ എന്റെ നേരാങ്ങളെ നമ്മള്
 ഏതു വഴിക്കാണ് തേതിരിഞ്ഞ് പോകേണ്ട
 അവിടന്നങ്ങനെ തേതിരിഞ്ഞു ചെല്ലുന്നേ
 പീലിക്കുന്നത്തെ പടനായന്മാരോടേക്ക്
 പീലിക്കുന്നത്തെ പടനായന്മാരേ നിങ്ങള്
 വെള്ളാട്ടണി മുടിക പീലി തിരുനണ്ടം തരണം
 പണ്ടേക്ക് പണ്ട് കാരണവന്മാർ കാലത്തും
 വെള്ളാട്ടണി മുടിക പീലിതിരുനണ്ടം കൊടുത്തിട്ടില്ല
 ഇപ്പോൾ ഞങ്ങള് അനന്തിരവന്മാരായ കാലത്ത്
 വെള്ളാട്ടണി മുടിക പീലി തിരുനണ്ടം കൊടുക്കില്ല
 അതിലും തലേന്ന് മൂന്നാം ദിവസേക്ക്
 പത്തായിരം മയിലുംകുട്ടികൾക്കു മാണ്ടു മയക്കായി
 ഇത് എന്തൊരു കഷ്ടകാലാനറിയില്ല
 ഇത് എന്തൊരു ശൂന്യപ്പിഴയാണേ
 ആനാടുവാഴുന്ന കണിയാരു പണിക്കരെ
 കുട്ടിക്കുറിക്കുന്നുണ്ട് പടനായന്മാർ
 പണിക്കരുവന്നതാ ഒന്നാംകളം വരക്കുന്നേ
 പുറംകളത്തിലതാ കവിടി നിരത്തണേ
 പണിക്കരുവന്നതാ നാളുംപേരും നോക്കുപ്പൊ
 മലേപ്പിറന്ന ദൈവത്തിന്റെ ഉപദ്രവം കാണുന്നേ
 അത്രക്ക സത്യമുള്ള മലേപ്പിറന്ന ദൈവങ്ങളാണെങ്കിൽ
 പത്തായിരം മയിലും കുട്ടികളും
 ആടിയോടി തെളിയട്ടെ
 അതിലും തലേന്ന് മൂന്നാം ദിവസേക്ക്
 പത്തായിരം മയിലും കുട്ടികളും ആടിയോടി തെളിഞ്ഞു
 അതിലും തലേന്ന് മൂന്നാം ദിവസേക്ക്
 വെള്ളാട്ടണി മുടിക പീലിതിരുനണ്ടം കൊടുക്കുന്നേ
 പകല് വിളിച്ചതേ കളേളരും പിളേളരും അല്ല
 രാവു വിളിച്ചതേ മലേപ്പിറന്ന ദൈവാണേ
 പീലി തിരുനണ്ടം വാങ്ങിയിട്ടില്ലോഴേ

ഏതു വഴിക്കാണ് തേതിരിഞ്ഞ് പോകേണ്ട
 അവിടന്നങ്ങനെ തേതിരിഞ്ഞതാ
 കരുവാൻ മകന്റെ പടിപ്പുറം ചെല്ലുന്നേ
 അയ്യോ എന്റെരു കരുവാൻ മകനേ
 എനിക്കൊരു അരിവാള് തിരുനണ്ടമായി തരണം
 പണ്ടേക്ക് പണ്ട് കാരണവന്മാർ കാലത്തും
 അരിവാള് തിരുനണ്ടം കൊടുത്തിട്ടില്ല
 ഇപ്പോൾ ഞങ്ങള് അനന്തിരവന്മാരായ കാലത്ത്
 അരിവാള് തിരുനണ്ടം കൊടുക്കില്ല
 അതിലും തലേന്ന് മൂന്നാംദിവസേക്ക്
 കരുവാന്റെ ഓലോക്കില തീ പടിച്ചില്ല
 അതിലും തലേന്ന് മൂന്നാം ദിവസേക്ക്
 കരുവാനും മക്കൾക്കും മാണ്ടുമയക്കായി
 ഇത് എന്തൊരു കഷ്ടകാലാനറിയില്ല
 ഇത് എന്തൊരു ശൂന്യപ്പിഴയാണേ
 ആനാടുവാഴുന്ന കണിയാരു പണിക്കരെ
 കുട്ടിക്കുറിക്കുന്നുണ്ട് കരുവാൻ മകനും
 പണിക്കരു വന്നതാ ഒന്നാംകളം വരക്കുന്നേ
 പുറംകളത്തിലതാ കവിടി നിരത്തണേ
 പണിക്കരു വന്നതാ നാളും പേരും നോക്കുപ്പൊ
 മലേപ്പിറന്ന ദൈവത്തിന്റെ ഉപദ്രവം കാണുന്നേ
 അത്രേക്ക് സത്യമുള്ള മലേപ്പിറന്ന ദൈവങ്ങളാണെങ്കിൽ
 എന്റെ ഓലോക്കിലിപ്പോൾ തീപിടിക്കട്ടെ
 അതിലും തലേന്ന് മൂന്നാം ദിവസേക്ക്
 കരുവാന്റെ ഓലോക്കിലതാ തീപിടിക്കുന്നേ
 അത്രേക്ക് സത്യമുള്ള മലേപ്പിറന്ന ദൈവങ്ങളാണെങ്കിൽ
 എന്റെ കുട്ടികളും ആടിയോടി തെളിയട്ടെ
 അതിലും തലേന്ന് മൂന്നാം ദിവസേക്ക്
 കരുവാന്റെ കുട്ടികളും ആടിയോടി തെളിഞ്ഞു
 കരുവാൻ മകനതാ അരിവാളുപണിതു
 തിരുനണ്ടായി കൊടുക്കുന്നേ മലേപ്പിറന്ന ദൈവത്തിന്
 പകല് വിളിച്ചതേ കള്ളേരും പിള്ളേരും അല്ല
 രാവു വിളിച്ചതേ മലേപ്പിറന്ന ദൈവവാനേ
 അയ്യോ എന്റെ നേരാങ്ങളെ നമ്മള്
 ഏതു വഴിക്കാണ് തേതിരിഞ്ഞ് പോകേണ്ട
 അവിടന്നങ്ങനെ തേതിരിഞ്ഞു ചെല്ലുന്നേ
 കുട്ടനാട് തൊടുപാടത്ത്
 കുട്ടനാട് തൊടുപാടത്ത് തേതിരിഞ്ഞ് നില്ക്കുമ്പോ

കണ്ണപ്പുലച്ചെറുമി അതാ അടിച്ചു പെറുക്കണെ
 അയ്യോ എന്റോരു കണ്ണപ്പുലച്ചെറുമി
 എനിക്കൊരു വട്ടി നീ തിരുനണ്ടമായി തരണം
 പണ്ടേക്ക് പണ്ട് കാരണവന്മാർ കാലത്തും
 വട്ടി തിരുനണ്ടം കൊടുത്തിട്ടില്ല
 ഇപ്പോൾ ഞങ്ങള് അനന്തിരവന്മാരായ കാലത്ത്
 വട്ടി തിരുനണ്ടം കൊടുക്കില്ല
 അതിലും തലേന്ന് മൂന്നാം ദിവസേക്ക്
 കണ്ണപ്പുലച്ചെറുമിക്ക് മാണ്ടു മയക്കായി
 ഇത് എന്തൊരു കഷ്ടകാലാനറിയില്ല
 ഇത് എന്തൊരു ശൂന്യപ്പിഴയാണേ
 ആനാടു വാഴുന്ന കണിയാരു പണിക്കരെ
 കുട്ടിക്കുറിക്കുന്നുണ്ട് കണ്ണപ്പുലച്ചെറുമി
 പണിക്കരു വന്നതാ ഒന്നാംകളം വരക്കുന്നേ
 പുറം കളത്തിലതാ കവിടി നിരത്തണേ
 പണിക്കരുവന്നതാ നാളുംപേരും നോക്കൂപ്പൊ
 മലേപ്പിറന്ന ദൈവത്തിന്റെ ഉപദ്രവം കാണുന്നേ
 അത്രേക്ക് സത്യമുള്ള മലേപ്പിറന്ന ദൈവങ്ങളാണെങ്കിൽ
 എന്റോരു മാണ്ടുമയക്കങ്ങള് തീർന്നുവരട്ടെ
 അതിലും തലേന്ന് മൂന്നാം ദിവസേക്ക്
 കണ്ണപ്പുലച്ചെറുമിയുടെ മാണ്ടുമയക്കം തീർന്നു
 കണ്ണപ്പുലച്ചെറുമി വട്ടി നെയ്തിട്ടതാ
 തിരുനണ്ടായി കൊടുക്കുന്നേ മലേപ്പിറന്ന ദൈവത്തിന്
 വട്ടി തിരുനണ്ടായി കൊടുത്തപ്പോളെ
 തിരുവരം കൊടുക്കുന്നു കണ്ണപ്പുലച്ചെറുമിക്ക്
 തമ്പുരാൻ പടിക്കല് കൊയ്ത്ത് മെതിക്കുമ്പോളെ
 അരപ്പിടി നെല്ല് നിന്റെ കീഴ്മടിയിലിട്ടോളൂ
 പകല് വിളിച്ചതേ കളേളരും പിളേളരും അല്ല
 രാവു വിളിച്ചതേ മലേപ്പിറന്ന ദൈവവാനേ
പുളളിക്കരികച്ച തിരുനണ്ടംവാങ്ങി
 അയ്യോ എന്റെ നേരാങ്ങളെ നമ്മള്
 ഏതു വഴിക്കാണ് തേതിരിഞ്ഞ് പോരേണ്ടെ
 അവിടന്നങ്ങനെ തേതിരിഞ്ഞു ചെല്ലുന്നേ
 പാലക്കാട്ടതാ ചെട്ടിയങ്ങാടിയില്
 പാലക്കാട്ടങ്ങാടിയില് തേതിരിഞ്ഞു നിൽക്കുമ്പോ
 പുളളിക്കച്ച കണ്ടു മനവതിപ്പെട്ടു
 പാലക്കാട്ടങ്ങാടിയില് ചെട്ട്യാരു മകനേ നീ
 പുളളിക്കരികച്ച തിരുനണ്ടമായി തരണം

പണ്ടേക്ക് പണ്ട് കാരണവന്മാർ കാലത്തും
 പുള്ളിക്കരികച്ച തിരുനണ്ടം കൊടുത്തിട്ടില്ല
 ഇപ്പോൾ ഞങ്ങള് അനന്തിരവന്മാരായ കാലത്തും
 പുള്ളിക്കരികച്ച തിരുനണ്ടം കൊടുക്കില്ല
 പുള്ളിക്കരികച്ച തിരുനണ്ടം തന്നില്ലെങ്കിൽ
 പുള്ളിക്കരികച്ച തുരുമ്പാക്കിക്കളയും
 അതിക്കും തലേന്നെ മൂന്നാം ദിവസം നോക്കുമ്പോ
 പുള്ളിക്കരികച്ച തുരുമ്പായി കാണുന്നു
 ഇത് എന്തൊരു കഷ്ടകാലാനറിയില്ല
 ഇത് എന്തൊരു ശൂന്യപ്പിഴയാണേ
 ആ നാടു വാഴുന്ന കണിയാരുപണിക്കരെ
 കൂട്ടിക്കുറിക്കുന്നുണ്ട് ചെട്ട്യാരു മകനും
 പണിക്കരുവന്നതാ ഒന്നാംകളം വരക്കുന്നേ
 പുറംകളത്തിലതാ കവിടി നിരത്തണേ
 പണിക്കരുവന്നതാ നാളും പേരും നോക്കുപ്പൊ
 മലേപ്പിറന്ന ദൈവത്തിന്റെ ഉപദ്രവം കാണുന്നേ
 അത്രേക്ക് സത്യമുള്ള മലേപ്പിറന്ന ദൈവങ്ങളാണെങ്കിൽ
 കച്ചതുരുമ്പൊക്കെ മാറിക്കാണട്ടെ
 അതിലും തലേന്ന് മൂന്നാം ദിവസേക്ക്
 കച്ചതുരുമ്പതാ മാറിക്കാണുന്നു
 പാലക്കാട്ടങ്ങാടിയില് ചെട്ട്യാരു മകനാണേ
 പുള്ളിക്കരികച്ച തിരുനണ്ടമായി കൊടുത്തു
 പകല് വിളിച്ചതേ കളേളരും പിളേളരും അല്ല
 രാവു വിളിച്ചതേ മലേപ്പിറന്ന ദൈവാനേ
 അയ്യോ എന്റെ നേരാങ്ങളെ നമ്മള്
 ഏതു വഴിക്കാണ് തേതിരിഞ്ഞ് പോരേണ്ട
 അയ്യോ എന്റെ നേരാങ്ങളെ നമുക്ക്
 കലശാട്ടത്തിനുള്ള സമയമായല്ലോ
 നല്ലൊരാഴ്ച നൻ ബുധനാഴ്ച
 വെള്ളിയാഴ്ച നമ്മുടെ കലശാട്ടമാണേ
 പൊന്നാരടിച്ചിലമ്പും വഞ്ചിയും മുടിയും
 പീലിയും കെട്ടി അണിഞ്ഞൊരുങ്ങുന്നുണ്ടോ
 മലേപ്പിറന്ന ദൈവാനേ
 കാളികരികച്ചയും വട്ടിയുമരിവാളും
 എടുത്തണിഞ്ഞൊടുന്നു കരിനീലി പെങ്ങളും

കാളതിരുനണ്ടം

കൊങ്ങമം നാട്ടിലെ ചെട്ടയാന്മാരവർക്ക്
കാളെ കൊള്ളാൻ പോകേണ്ട കാലമായി
നല്ലൊരാഴ്ച നൻ ബുധനാഴ്ച
കാളെ കൊള്ളാനായതാ യാത്രയായവർ
കൊങ്ങമം നാട്ടിലെ ചെട്ടുമാരവർ
നല്ലപണമതാ പതിനാറെടുത്തേ
കള്ളപണമതാ പതിനാറെടുത്തേ
വെള്ളപ്പം നാട്ടിലേക്ക് കാളെ കൊള്ളാൻ പോണവർ
വെള്ളപ്പം നാട്ടിൽ ചെന്ന് ഒരായിരം കാളകളെ
വില പറഞ്ഞതാ മേടിക്കുന്നുണ്ടേ
ഒരായിരം കാളകളെ മേടിച്ചതാ
നടകൂടിയതാ പോരുന്നവരും
ഒരായിരം കാളകളെ നടകൂടി പോരുമ്പോ
തലയണി കാളേനെ തിരുനണ്ടം ചോദിച്ചു
പണ്ടേക്കു പണ്ടുള്ള കാരണവന്മാർ കാലത്ത്
തലയണി കളേനെ തിരുനണ്ടം കൊടുത്തിട്ടില്ല
ഇപ്പോൾ ഞങ്ങള് അനന്തിരവന്മാരായ കാലത്തും
തലയണി കളേനെ തിരുനണ്ടം കൊടുക്കില്ല
ഒരായിരം കാളകളും നടകൂടി പോരുമ്പോ
കാളകളെല്ലാമതാ പേരാറ്റിൽ ചാടേണേ
ഇത് എന്തൊരു കഷ്ട കാലാനറിയില്ല
ഇത് എന്തൊരു ശൂന്യപ്പിഴയാണേ
ആനാടു വാഴുന്ന കണിയാരു പണിക്കരെ
കൂട്ടിക്കുറിക്കുന്നുണ്ട് ചെട്ടുമാരവർ
പണിക്കരുവന്നതാ ഒന്നാംകളം വരക്കുന്നേ
പുറം കളത്തിലതാ കവിടി നിരത്തണേ
പണിക്കരു വന്നതാ നാളും പേരും നോക്കൂപ്പൊ
മലേപ്പിറന്ന ദൈവത്തിന്റെ ഉപദ്രവം കാണുന്നേ
അത്രക്ക് സത്യമുള്ള മലേപ്പിറന്ന ദൈവങ്ങളാണെങ്കിൽ
ഒരായിരം കാളകളും പേരാറ്റിന്നു കേറട്ടെ
അതിലും തലേന്ന് മൂന്നാം ദിവസേക്ക്
ഒരായിരം കാളകളുമതാ പേരാറ്റിന്നു കേറണേ
തലയണികാളേനെ തിരുനണ്ടമായി കൊടുക്കുന്നേ
കല്ലരിക്കോട് നല്ല കരിനീലി ദൈവത്തിന്
കാള തിരുനണ്ടം വാങ്ങി പോരുന്നുണ്ട്
കല്ലരിക്കോട് നല്ല കരിനീലി ദൈവാണേ

നഞ്ഞുംനായാട്ടും

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കിഴക്കൊരു ഉദിവാറം വാഴ്ക
പടിഞ്ഞാറുകൊരു അസ്തുതിവാറം വാഴ്ക
തെക്കൊരു തെക്കു തിരുപീഠം വാഴ്ക
വടക്കൊരു വാവുണ്ട ബലിപീഠം വാഴ്കങ്ങനെ

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മേലേക്കൊരു മേലാകാശം വാഴ്ക
കീഴേക്കൊരു കേരള ഭൂമിയും വാഴ്ക
എട്ടു ദിക്കും വാഴ്ക ഒമ്പരന്ന കോടിയും വാഴ്ക

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മേലക്കൊരു മേലാകാശം വാഴ്ക
കീഴേക്കൊരു കേരള ഭൂമിയും വാഴ്ക
എട്ടു ദിക്കും വാഴ്ക ഒമ്പരന്ന കോടിയും വാഴ്ക
പത്തു ദിക്കും വാഴ്ക പതിനോരി മൊഴിവാതിലും വാഴ്ക
അപ്പൻ പിറന്നോരു മേലാകാശം വാഴ്ക
അമ്മ പിറന്നോരു കേരള ഭൂമിയും വാഴ്ക
നാലു ദിക്കും വാഴ്ക നാല്പ്പത്തിരണ്ടു കോടിയും വാഴ്ക

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നാലു പേരു നേരു ചങ്ങാതിമാരും
പഠിമാനം പഠിക്കാൻ നേരമായല്ലോ
എന്നു പറഞ്ഞൊരു നേരത്ത്
എന്താണിനി വേണ്ടത് എന്ന് പറഞ്ഞൊരു നേരത്തങ്ങനെ
പടിഞ്ഞാറ്റി പാണ്ടികശാല കില്ലതട്ടി കിലുക്ക തുറന്ന്
നെടുവട്ടിയെടുത്ത് നെടിയരിയെടുത്ത്
കെട്ടും തിരു ചുമടാക്കി കുറു വട്ടിയെടുത്ത്
കുറിയ അരിയെടുത്ത് കെട്ടും തിരുചുമടാക്കി
കൊല്ലൻ നീറ്റിയ കുഴന്നുറെടുത്ത് കെട്ടും തിരുച്ചുമടാക്കി
കതർപ്പോടടക്കയെടുത്ത് കെട്ടും തിരുച്ചുമടാക്കി
കൊല്ലൻ നീറ്റിയ കുഴന്നുറെടുത്ത് കെട്ടും തിരുച്ചുമടാക്കി
ചാപ്പാൻ പുകയിലയെടുത്ത് കെട്ടും തിരുച്ചുമടാക്കിക്കണ്ടു

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നല്ലപണമതാ പതിനാറെടുത്ത്
കള്ളപണമതാ പതിനാറെടുത്ത്
മുപ്പത്തിരണ്ടു പണത്താലെ വേഗത്തിനാലെ
നാലുപേര് നേരു ചങ്ങാതിമാര്
നാലില്ലം നടുമിറ്റത്തിരണ്ടി പെറ്റമ്മയെ വിളിച്ചു
കാൽക്കൽ കുമ്പിട്ടു മുറ്റത്ത് മുല്ലക്കൽ മുവേറു കല്ലിങ്ങലും

നാലും മൂന്നും ഏഴുവലം വക്കാൻ തുടങ്ങുന്നു
നേരു ചങ്ങാതിമാരും

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വേഗത്തിനാലെ അവിടുന്ന് യാത്ര പുറപ്പെടാൻ തുടങ്ങുന്നു
നല്ലൊരാഴ്ച നൻ ബുധനാഴ്ച വെള്ളിയാഴ്ച വെളുക്കുന്നേരം
നാലു പേര് നേരു ചങ്ങാതിമാർ യാത്ര പുറപ്പെട്ടു
അവിടന്നങ്ങനെ താഴ്ന്നൊരു നടവഴിയെ
ഇറങ്ങിക്കൊണ്ടാൻ തുടങ്ങുന്നു
ഉയർന്നൊരു ചെരപ്പറമ്പ് കേറിക്കൊണ്ടാൻ തുടങ്ങുന്നു

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വേഗത്തിനാലെ ഇറങ്ങിച്ചെന്ന് കൂട്ടനാട്
കൊടുപാടത്ത് ചെന്ന് ഇറങ്ങിക്കൊണ്ടാൻ തുടങ്ങുന്നു
കൂട്ടനാട് കൊടുപാടത്ത് ചെന്ന്
ഇറങ്ങിക്കണ്ടൊരു നേരത്തങ്ങനെ
അടിച്ചു പെറുക്കി നിൽക്കുന്ന കണ്ണപ്പുലച്ചെറുമി അവളെ
കൈകൊണ്ട് മാടി വിളിക്കാൻ തുടങ്ങുന്നു

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അയ്യോ എന്റെറു കണ്ണപ്പുലച്ചെറുമിയെ
കല്ലത്തു മുത്തപ്പന്റെ അവിടേക്ക് ഏതിലെയാണ്
പോവുകയെന്ന് പറയാൻ തുടങ്ങുന്നു
അയ്യോ എന്റെ നാലുപേര് തമ്പുരാന്മാരെ
കല്ലത്തു മുത്തപ്പന്റെ അവിടേക്ക്
അങ്ങിനെ ഇങ്ങിനെയൊന്നും ചെല്ലാൻ
പററിയതല്ലയെന്ന് പറഞ്ഞൊരു നേരത്തങ്ങനെ
കല്ലത്തു മുത്തപ്പന്റെ മാനന്തം പടിപ്പുരക്കൽ
ആനയെക്കൊണ്ട് പൂട്ട് കുതിരയെക്കൊണ്ട് തണ്ടും തഴുതും
എന്ന് പറഞ്ഞൊരു നേരത്തങ്ങനെ
ആറുമായം കൊണ്ട് നിങ്ങൾ ചെന്നാൽ
നൂറുമായം കൊണ്ട് കണ്ടറിയും കല്ലത്തു മുത്തപ്പൻ
എന്നു പറഞ്ഞൊരു നേരത്തങ്ങനെ
നൂറുമായം കൊണ്ട് നിങ്ങൾ ചെന്നാൽ
ആറുമായംകൊണ്ട് കൊണ്ട് കണ്ടറിയും
കല്ലത്തുമുത്തപ്പൻ എന്നുപറഞ്ഞൊരു നേരത്തങ്ങനെ

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അയ്യോ എന്റെ നാലുപേരു തമ്പുരാന്മാരെ
പരന്നൊരുപാടം കേറിക്കൊള്ള
കൊറ്റിയിരിക്കുന്നകൊളം കടന്നൊള്ള

കുമ്പിയാറിരിക്കുന്ന കായലും
 കടനോളെയെന്ന് പറഞ്ഞൊരു നേരത്തങ്ങനെ
 കേറിയിറങ്ങി ചെല്ലുമ്പോൾ
 കല്ലത്തു മുത്തപ്പന്റെ മാനന്തം പടിപ്പുര
 കാണാമെന്നു പറഞ്ഞൊരു നേരത്തങ്ങനെ
 വേഗത്തിനാലെ നാലു പേരു തമ്പുരാന്മാർ
 കല്ലത്തു മുത്തപ്പന്റെ മാനന്തം
 പടിപ്പുരക്കൽ ചെല്ലാൻ തുടങ്ങണെ
 ആ.....ആ.....ഏ.....ഏ.....
 വേഗത്തിനാലെ നാലു പേരും കല്ലത്തു മുത്തപ്പന്റെ
 മാനന്തം പടിപ്പുരക്കൽ ചെന്ന്വിളിയാലെ വിളിക്കാൻ തുടങ്ങണെ
 അപ്പോൾ കല്ലത്തു മുത്തപ്പൻ വന്നു വിളി കേൾക്കാൻ തുടങ്ങണെ
 അങ്ങനെയിങ്ങനെ തുറക്കണ പടിയല്ല
 ആനയെക്കൊണ്ട് പൂട്ട് കുതിരയെക്കൊണ്ട് തണ്ടും തഴുതും
 ഇനി തുറക്കണമെങ്കിൽ ഏഴും പതിനാലും നോറ്റു
 കുളിക്കണമെന്ന് പറഞ്ഞൊരു നേരത്തങ്ങനെ
 ഏഴും പതിനാലും നോറ്റു കുളിച്ചങ്ങനെ
 കല്ലത്തു മുത്തപ്പനെ വിളിക്കാൻ തുടങ്ങണെ
 കല്ലത്തു മുത്തപ്പൻ വിളികേട്ടോരു നേരത്തങ്ങനെ
 വേഗത്തിനാലെ മാനന്തം പടിപ്പുര തുറന്നു കൊടുക്കുന്നു
 നാലുപേർ നേരു ചങ്ങാതിമാർ കെട്ടും തിരുച്ചുമടും
 മുല്ലത്തറക്കൽ കാഴ്ചവെക്കാൻ തുടങ്ങുന്നു
 ആ.....ആ.....ഏ.....ഏ.....
 അയ്യോ എന്റെ കല്ലത്തു മുത്തപ്പ ഞങ്ങൾ
 നാലു പേരും പഠിമാനം പഠിക്കാൻ വന്നതാണെ
 വേഗത്തിനാലങ്ങനെ
 ആറുമായത്തിനു ആറുമായം പഠിച്ചു
 നൂറുമായത്തിനു നൂറുമായം പഠിച്ചു
 കമ്മായം പഠിച്ചു മറിമായം പഠിച്ചു
 നാലു പേർ നേരു ചങ്ങാതിമാരങ്ങനെ
 പഠിമാനങ്ങളെല്ലാം പഠിച്ചു
 അവിടന്നങ്ങനെ തിരുവരങ്ങളും വാങ്ങി പോരുന്നുണ്ടെ.....
 ആ.....ആ.....ഏ.....ഏ.....
 വേഗത്തിനാലങ്ങനെ കാറ്റുപോലെ വരാൻ തുടങ്ങുന്നു
 ഇല പോലെ വീഴാൻ തുടങ്ങുന്നു
 വയുന്നാട്ടിലും പ്ലാവിനെ ശകുനം കണ്ടു
 ഇളംപ്ലാവിന്റെ കടക്കലങ്ങനെ നിഴലണച്ചിരിക്കുന്നുണ്ട്

അപ്പോൾ പറയാൻ തുടങ്ങുന്നു
 അയ്യോ എന്റെ നേരു ചങ്ങാതിമാരെ
 നമ്മുടെ പഠിപ്പിന്റെ ഫലിതമൊന്നു അറിഞ്ഞു
 പോകണമെന്ന് പറയാൻ തുടങ്ങുന്നു
 വയ്യാട്ടിളം പ്ലാവിനെയൊന്ന് ഉണക്കിക്കൊണ്ടിരിക്കുന്നത്
 പറഞ്ഞ് ഉണക്കിക്കൊണ്ടുന്നു

ആ.....ആ.....ഏ.....ഏ.....

വേഗത്തിനാലെ നാലു പേര്
 നേരു ചങ്ങാതിമാർ പറയാൻ തുടങ്ങുന്നു
 അയ്യോ എന്റെ നാലുപേരു ചങ്ങാതിമാരെ
 വയ്യാട്ടിളം പ്ലാവിനെ ഉണക്കിപ്പോകാൻ പാടില്ലെന്ന്
 പറഞ്ഞൊരു നേരത്തങ്ങനെ

വയ്യാട്ടിളം പ്ലാവിനെ കുളിർപ്പിച്ചു കാണണമെന്ന്
 പറഞ്ഞൊരു നേരത്തങ്ങനെ

നാലു പേരുമങ്ങനെ കാറ്റു പോലെ പോന്നു
 ഇല പോലെ ചെന്ന് നാലില്ലം നടു മുറ്റത്ത്
 മുല്ലത്തറക്കൽ ചെല്ലുന്നങ്ങിനെ

ആ.....ആ.....ഏ.....ഏ.....

മുല്ലത്തറക്കൽ വന്നുപെറ്റമ്മയെ വിളിക്കാൻ തുടങ്ങുന്നു
 പെറ്റമ്മവന്ന് അയ്യോനാലു പേരു ചങ്ങാതിമാരെ
 നമുക്ക് പെറ്റമ്മയെ ഒന്ന് പരീക്ഷിക്കണമെന്ന്
 പറഞ്ഞൊരുനേരത്തങ്ങനെ

പെറ്റമ്മയുടെ വലംമൂല ഉണക്കിക്കൊണ്ടിരിക്കുന്നത്
 പറഞ്ഞൊരു നേരത്തങ്ങനെ

പെറ്റമ്മയുടെ -വലംമൂല ഉണക്കിക്കണ്ടൊരു നേരത്തങ്ങനെ

അതുകൊണ്ടുപോരല്ലോ
 ഇന്നിനമുക്ക് പെറ്റമ്മയുടെ വലംമൂല
 കുളിർപ്പിച്ചു കാണണമെന്ന്
 പറഞ്ഞൊരു നേരത്തങ്ങിനെ കുളിർപ്പിച്ചു കണ്ടു

ആ.....ആ.....ഏ.....ഏ.....

അയ്യോ എന്റെ നേരുചങ്ങാതിമാരെ
 നമുക്ക് നായാട്ടിനു പോകേണ്ട കാലമായല്ലോ
 എന്ന് പറഞ്ഞൊരു നേരത്തങ്ങനെ
 നായാട്ടിനു പോകാൻ തുടങ്ങുന്നു
 കിഴക്കു മലവാരം കാടിലക്കിക്കൊണ്ടാൻ തുടങ്ങുന്നു
 പന്നി തെക്കെ മലയിലേക്ക് കേറാൻ തുടങ്ങുന്നു
 തെക്കെ മലവാരം കാടിലക്കി തുടങ്ങിയപ്പോൾ പന്നിയങ്ങനെ

പടിഞ്ഞാറെ മലയിലേക്ക് കേറാൻ തുടങ്ങുന്നു

ആ.....ആ.....ഏ.....ഏ.....

വേഗത്തിനാലങ്ങനെ പടിഞ്ഞാറെ മലവാരം
കാടിലക്കിത്തുടങ്ങിയപ്പോൾ പന്നി വടക്കേ
മലയിലേക്ക് കേറാൻ തുടങ്ങുന്നു
വടക്കിന്റെ വടക്കെപ്പുറത്ത് നായാടി നങ്കുലവർ
വിളിക്കാൻ തുടങ്ങുന്നു അമ്പെയ്യാൻ തുടങ്ങുന്നു
പന്നി മറയാൻ തുടങ്ങുന്നു.....

ആ.....ആ.....ഏ.....ഏ.....

അരിമ്പുഞ്ച

നല്ലോരഴ്ച നൻ ബുധനാഴ്ച അരിമ്പുഞ്ചപാടം
പണിയാൻ കാലമായി വിളിക്കുന്നുണ്ടേ വിളിക്കുന്നുണ്ടേ
പത്തും പന്തിരുപേരു ചെറുമക്കളെ ഒന്നുവിളിച്ചു
വിളിച്ചപ്പോളോർത്തു കേൾക്കുന്നേ
രണ്ടാം വിളിക്കതാപാർത്തു കേൾക്കുന്നേ
മൂന്നാം വിളിക്ക് ഓടിചെല്ലുന്നവർ
തമ്പുരാൻ തിരുപ്പടിക്കൽ ചെല്ലുന്നുണ്ടല്ലോ
അയ്യോ എന്റോരു ചെറുമക്കളെ
നമുക്ക് അരിമ്പുഞ്ച പാടം പണിയാൻ കാലമായി
ഒരായിരം കാളകളെ അരിമ്പുഞ്ച പാടത്തേക്ക്
കൂട്ടിത്തെളിച്ചോളു പന്തിരു ചെറുമക്കളെ
കരിയും നുകവും കൈക്കോട്ടും കാളകളേയും കൂട്ടി
അരിമ്പുഞ്ച പാടത്തേക്ക്
കൂട്ടിത്തെളിച്ചോളു
പന്തിരു ചെറുമക്കളെ കരിയും നുകവും
കൈക്കോട്ടും കാളകളേയും കൂട്ടി
അരിമ്പുഞ്ച പാടത്തേക്കവർ കൊണ്ടു ചെല്ലുന്നേ
അരിമ്പുഞ്ച പാടത്തെ ഒരായിരം കാളകളെ
പൂട്ടി തെളിക്കുന്നുണ്ട് ചെറുമക്കളേ
ഒരു തലക്കൽ നിന്ന് കന്നു പൂട്ടുമ്പോഴേ
ഒരു തലക്കൽ നിന്നതാ വരമ്പു കിളക്കുന്നേ
ഒരു തലക്കൽ നിന്നതാ വരമ്പു കിളക്കുമ്പോഴേ
ഒരു തലക്കൽ നിന്നതാ നിരത്തിപ്പോരുന്നു
ഒരു തലക്കൽ നിന്നതാ നിരത്തിപ്പോരുമ്പോഴേ
ഒരു തലക്കൽ നിന്നതാ ഞാറു പാവുന്നു
ഞാറു പാവിയതിന്റെ ഇരുപത്തിരണ്ടാം നാൾ
ഞാറു പഠിക്കുന്നേ

വാഴ്ക വരിക വാഴ്ക ദൈവമേ
 തെക്കു തന്റെ തെക്കുതിരുപീഠങ്ങളും
 വാഴ്ക വരിക നിറപൊലി വാഴ്കമ്മേ
 വടക്കു തന്റെ വാവുണ്ട ബലി പീഠങ്ങളും
 വാഴ്ക വരിക വാഴ്ക ദൈവമേ
 മേലേക്കൊരു മേലാകാശങ്ങളും
 വാഴ്ക വരികവാഴ്ക ദൈവമേ
 കീഴെ നല്ലൊരു കേരള ഭൂമിയും
 വാഴ്ക വാഴ്ക വാഴ്ക വരികമ്മേ
 എട്ടു ദിക്കും ഒമ്പറന്ന കോടികളും
 വാഴ്ക വാഴ്ക വാഴ്ക വരികമ്മേ
 അപ്പൻ പിറന്നൊരു മേലാകാശങ്ങളും
 വാഴ്ക വരിക വാഴ്ക ദൈവമേ
 അമ്മ പിറന്നൊരു കേരള ഭൂമിയും
 വാഴ്ക വരിക വാഴ്ക ദൈവമേ
 നാലു ദിക്കും നാല്പത്തി രണ്ടു കോടികളും
 വാഴ്ക വരിക വാഴ്ക ദൈവമേ
 വിളിക്കുന്നു വിളിക്കുന്നുണ്ട്
 ദേവാശ്ശേരി ദേവതമ്പുരാൻ
 അരിതിരി തിരുവള്ളൊനെ
 വിളിക്കുന്നുണ്ട് ദേവാതമ്പുരാൻ
 ഒന്നു വിളിച്ചു ഓർത്തു കേൾക്കുന്നുണ്ടേ
 അരിതിരി തിരുവള്ളൊനും
 രണ്ടു വിളിച്ചു പാർത്തു കേൾക്കുന്നുണ്ടേ
 അരിതിരി തിരു വള്ളൊനും
 മൂന്നാം വിളിക്ക് മൂളി കേട്ടവൻ
 അരിതിരി തിരു വള്ളൊനും
 വെള്ളിയും പൊന്നും തന്റെ
 തിരുപ്പടിക്കെ ചെന്നു വാക്കു പൊത്തി
 ആചാരം ചെയ്യുന്നേ
 ആചാരത്തിനല്ല നിന്നെ വിളിച്ചത്
 കുറഞ്ഞൊരു ഉപകാരപ്പണിക്കാണ്
 അയ്യോ എന്റെൊരു ദേവ തമ്പുരാനെ
 അടിയനെക്കൊണ്ടുള്ള പണി വേലയെന്താണ്
 ഗണപതി വെട്ടോത്തിയും ഭഗവതി കൈക്കോട്ടും
 എടുത്തു കൊടുക്കുന്നു ദേവത്തമ്പുരാൻ
 കുറ്റിക്കാടും കുറുംകാടും വെട്ടെടാ
 അരിതിരി തിരു വള്ളൊനെ

കുറ്റിക്കാടും കുറും കാടും വെട്ടുന്നു
 അരിതിരി തിരു വള്ളോനും
 പത്തായിരം ചേമ്പും കുണ്ട്
 കുത്തി തീർക്കടാ അരിതിരിതിരുവള്ളോനെ
 വിളിക്കുന്നു വിളിക്കുന്നുണ്ട്
 അരിതിരി തിരുവള്ളോത്തിയെ
 പത്തായിരം ചേമ്പും കുണ്ട്
 അടിച്ചു കാച്ചെടി അരിതിരി തിരു വള്ളോത്തിയെ
 പത്തായിരം ചേമ്പും കുണ്ടതാ അടിച്ചു കാച്ചുന്നു
 അരിതിരി തിരു വള്ളോത്തി
 പത്തായിരം ചേമ്പും വിത്തതാ
 എടുത്തു കൊടുക്കുന്നു ദേവതമ്പുരാൻ
 പത്തായിരം ചേമ്പും വിത്തതാ നട്ടു നനക്കുന്നു
 അരിതിരി തിരു വള്ളോനും
 ചേമ്പു നട്ടതിന്റെ മൂന്നാം ദിവസം
 സൂചി പോലൊരു മുളമുളച്ചു
 സൂചി പോലെ മുളമുളച്ചെടോ
 താലം പോലെ ഇല വിരിയണെ
 ഒന്നാംമാസം തികള് തികയുമ്പോൾ
 ഒരുപട്ടയും ഒരുകുമ്പും
 രണ്ടാംമാസം തികള് തികയുമ്പോൾ
 ഒരു പട്ടയും ഒരുകുമ്പും
 മൂന്നാംമാസം തികള് തികയുമ്പോൾ
 ഒരു പട്ടയും ഒരു കുമ്പും
 നാലാം മാസം തികള് തികയുമ്പോൾ
 ഒരു പട്ടയും ഒരുകുമ്പും
 അഞ്ചാംമാസം തികള് തികയുമ്പോൾ
 ഒരു പട്ടയും ഒരുകുമ്പും
 ആറാം മാസം തികള് തികയുമ്പോൾ
 ഒരു പട്ടയും ഒരുകുമ്പും
 ഏഴാം മാസം തികള് തികയുമ്പോൾ
 ഒരു പട്ടയും ഒരുകുമ്പും
 എട്ടാം മാസം തികള് തികയുമ്പോൾ
 ഒരു പട്ടയും ഒരുകുമ്പും
 ഒമ്പതാം മാസം തികള് തികയുമ്പോൾ
 ഒരു പട്ടയും ഒരുകുമ്പും
 പത്താം മാസം തികള് പിറക്കുമ്പോൾ
 കുമ്പും കുലയുമതാ ഒന്നിച്ചുപിറക്കണെ

കരിനീലിക്കും കരിനീലിക്കും കരിനീലിക്കും ചേമ്പേ
 കരിനീലിക്കും ചേമ്പിന്റെ പട്ടയുടെ ഒരുമ
 കരിനീലിക്കും കരിനീലിക്കും ചേമ്പെ
 കരിനീലിക്കും ചേമ്പിന്റെ വിത്തിന്റെ ഒരുമ
 വിളിക്കുന്നുണ്ടേ വിളിക്കുന്നുണ്ടേടോ അരിതിരി തിരുവള്ളോനെ
 ചേമ്പു നട്ടതിന്റെ പത്താം മാസം
 ചേമ്പു പഠിക്കേണ്ട കാലമായെടാ
 ചേമ്പതാ പഠിച്ചു കൂട്ടുന്നുണ്ടേ
 അരിതിരി വള്ളോനും

മലയൻപാട്ട്(2)അമ്പുംവില്ലും

വടക്കു മലയിൽ ചെന്നൊരു മലയൻ
 പച്ചമുള കട മുറിച്ചേ പച്ചമുള കടമുറിച്ചു
 വില്ലുമമ്പും പണിതീർക്കണെ
 വില്ലുമമ്പുമെടുത്തൊരു മലയൻ
 ഓടുന്നു ചാടുന്നു മലയൻ
 വില്ലുമമ്പുമെടുക്കുന്നൊരു കാര്യം
 മലയരികെ പോകുന്നൊരു കാര്യം
 എന്റൊരു മാൻ കിടാവിനെ
 എന്റൊരു മലയാ
 നിങ്ങളുടെയൊരു മാൻ കിടാവിന്
 എന്താണ് നേരടയാളം
 നെറ്റുത്തൊരു ചൂട്ടുണ്ടേടോ
 വാലിന്മേൽ പുവാലുണ്ടേ
 ഓടുന്നു ചാടുന്നു മലയൻ
 മലയിൽ പിറന്നൊരു മലങ്കുടാർ
 കിഴക്കുദിക്കും ഈശ്വര ഭഗവാനെ
 ചുണ്ടെയ്യാൻ നിൽക്കുന്നു മലങ്കുടാർ
 തെക്കിന്റെ തെക്കെ പുറത്ത്
 ചെന്നതാ മലങ്കുടാർ
 തെക്കു തിരുവുണ്ടാരപ്പനെ
 ചുണ്ടെയ്യാൻ നിൽക്കുന്നു മലങ്കുടാർ
 പടിഞ്ഞാറ് അസ്തുതിവാർത്തിനെ
 എന്താൻ നിൽക്കുന്നു മലങ്കുടാർ
 അവിടന്നു ചാടിമറഞ്ഞു
 വടക്കുമലവാരം വന്നേ
 അഞ്ചപ്പം ഒരുമുറി തേങ്ങ
 ചാടിക്കുത്തട മലങ്കുടാരെ
 ഓടുന്നു ചാടുന്നു മലയൻ

മലയിൽ പിറന്നൊരു മലങ്കുടാർ
അഞ്ചപ്പം ഒരു മുറി തേങ്ങ
ചാടിക്കുത്തുന്നു മലങ്കുടാർ

അടിതളിപുജ

ആരാരൂ കയ്യാലെ തൊയ്ത അടിതളി പുജയാണെ
കല്ലത്തു മുത്തപ്പൻ കയ്യാലെ- തൊയ്ത
അടിതളി പുജയാണെ

കിഴക്കിനി കിഴക്കെപ്പുറം-മുത്തുമ്മ അടിതളി പുജ കഴിച്ചു
തെക്കിനി തെക്കെപ്പുറം-മുത്തുമ്മ അടിതളി പുജ കഴിച്ചു
പടിഞ്ഞാറ്റി പടിഞ്ഞാപ്പുറം-മുത്തുമ്മ അടിതളി പുജ കഴിച്ചു
വടക്കിനി വടക്കെപ്പുറം-മുത്തുമ്മ അടിതളി പുജ കഴിച്ചു
നീലിയാണെ നീലിയാണെ നീലി കല്ലടിക്കോട് കരിനീലി
എളവിനും കളവിനും നീലി

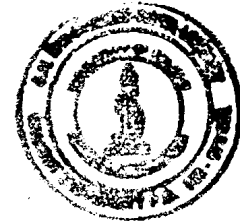
മതിപോന്നോളൊരുത്തിയാണെ
ഈറ്റിനും പേറ്റിനും നീലി അവിടെയൊക്കെ എത്തുന്നോളാണെ
മുട്ടുമ്പോൾ വിളിച്ചാലെ നീലി അവിടെയൊക്കെ എത്തിക്കൊള്ളാൻ

മംഗളം

ചുണ്ടക്കാരുടെ നാലാമേടത്ത്-തൊയ്ത
വരുന്നോരു ആപത്ത്
പത്താം പടിപ്പുറത്ത്- തൊയ്ത
അകലവട്ടം നീക്കിത്തരണേ

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ചുണ്ടക്കാരുടെ നാലാമേടം-തൊയ്ത
ആടിയോടിത്തളിയട്ടെ
ചുണ്ടക്കാരുടെ നാലാമേടത്തെ- തൊയ്ത
കുഞ്ഞനുംകുട്ടികളും-തൊയ്ത
ആടിയോടിത്തളിയട്ടെ



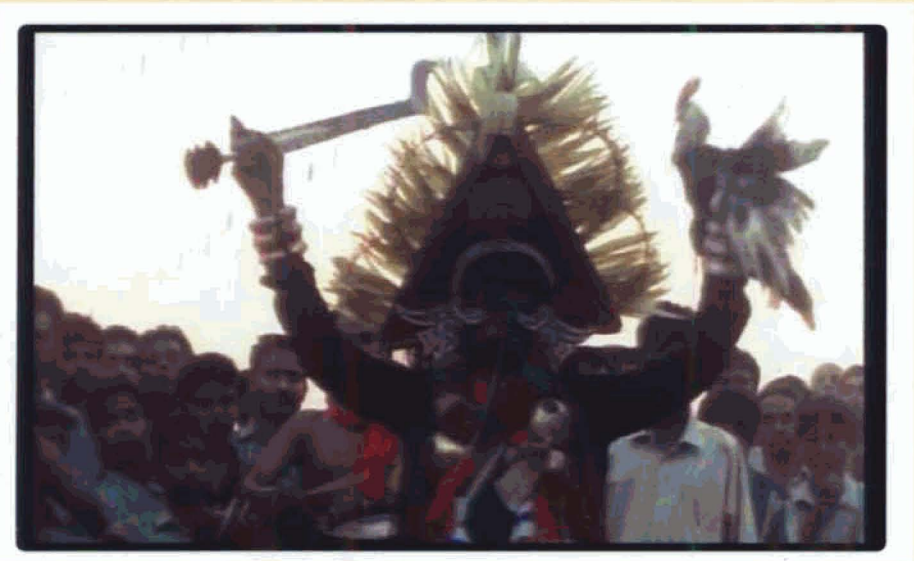
ശുഭം



1.Wicker work-Paraya women



2.Kaalikettu of the Paraya community



3.Karimkaali



4.Kuzhal



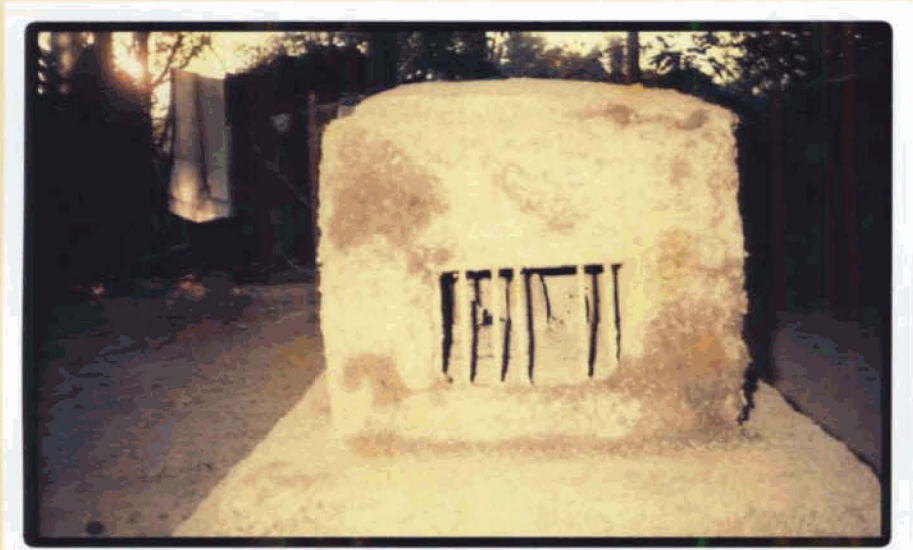
5. Space of Malavaayiaatom with Malavaayithara in the background



6.Malavaayithara



7. Pounding of paddy



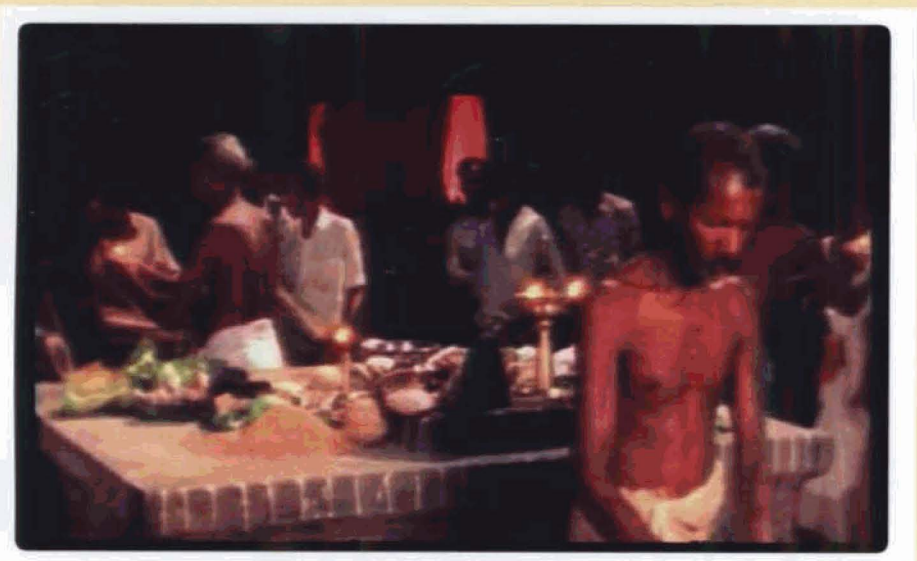
8. Muthappanthara



9. Kaalchilampu and Aramani



10.Malavaayi Pooja



11.Kalasamaadal



12.Fight between Malavaayi and Mookkaan Chathan



13.Malavaayi singers



14.Mudiyaattom



15.Mookkaan Chaathan,his sticks on Malavaayithara



16.Mookkaan Chaathan close up-1



17.Mookkaan Chaathan close up-2



18.Mookkaan Chaathan close up-3



19. Malavaayi close up-1



20. Malavaayi close up-2



21. Wearing Thalasseela



22. Wearing of Kaalchilampu



23. Wearing of Mularu



24. Cleaning of paddy