

LIST OF STUDENTS

Name of Student	Designation	Signature
Aishwarya Javalgekar	Content Writer	
Bharat Sathyasheelan	Creativity and Design Team, Photographer	
Dinesh Yadav B.	Finance Team	
Hasnain Rangwala	Finance Team, Public Relations Team	
Kirti Teja Kilaru	Content Writer	
Longce-im Ingti Kathar	Creativity and Design Team	
Naina Purandare	Group Leader, Creativity and Design Team	
Raka Ghosal	Content Writer	
Sakshi Jain	Content Writer, Photographer	
Sarang Sethi	Public Relations, Creativity and Design Team	
Taha Lokhandwala	Public Relations Team	

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the work incorporated in this report entitled ***Padayani – The Art of Veneration*** submitted by the undersigned research team was carried out under my supervision. The material that has been obtained from other sources has been duly acknowledged.

Name of Student	Signature
Aishwarya Javalgekar	
Bharat Sathyasheelan	
Dinesh Yadav B.	
Hasnain Rangwala	
Kirti Teja Kilaru	
Longce-im Ingti Kathar	
Naina Purandare	
Raka Ghosal	
Sakshi Jain	
Sarang Sethi	
Taha Lokhandwala	

Name of the Mentor: Prof. Sushil Bahl

Signature:

Date:

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This research project could not have been successfully culminated without the assistance of several people who have aided us in this endeavour of ours to study the art form of Padayani in Kadammanitta Village.

We, the members of the group Padayani, would like to extend our appreciation and gratitude to all those who made the Discover India Program, 2013-2014 possible. Heartfelt thanks to Dr Indira Parikh, President of Flame without whom this program would not have come into existence and would not have given us the opportunity to discover the beautiful art form of Padayani; Dr Suniti Vadalkar, Chairperson of DIP, who has given us her invaluable time and support from the very beginning of Discover India Program.

We are indebted to our mentor, Prof Sushil Bahl, for his guidance, support and encouragement. His novel insights proved invaluable throughout this project. We are grateful for the guidance and support provided by Dr Viraj Shah and Mr Kunal Ray for shaping our research.

In our quest to gather information about the art form of Padayani, various academicians and experts have shared with us their knowledge, experiences and perspectives on the various facets of this art form. We would like to thank the journalist Vinu Mohanan, one of the creators of the site padyani.com, for his unconditional help and guidance towards helping us understand Padayani.

We would especially like to thank Kadammanitta Vasudevan Pillai and Reghu Kumar, who have given us valuable information and perspective on the art form of Padayani. We are also much obliged to Marc Lambert, a French choreographer and ethnoscenologist whose research on Padayani gave us new directions and perspectives.

We extend our deepest gratitude to Mr Prasanna Kumar, Mr Venu, Mr Santosh Kumar, Mr Presannen Kumar, Mr Arvindaksham Pillai, Mr Govind Kadammanitta and Mr Kailash G. Nath Kadammanitta for their spectacular yet simple hospitality and eagerness to share their culture with us. They not only introduced us to Padayani's wondrous world but also became our guides in understanding the village of Kadammanitta.

Nanni!

CONTENTS

List of Maps.....	v
List of Figures.....	v
Abstract	vi
1. Introduction	1
1.1 Introduction to Padayani.....	1
1.2 Historical Overview.....	5
1.3 Geographical Setting.....	6
1.4 Research Focus and Objectives.....	7
2. Literature Review	11
3. Research Methodology	17
3.1 Primary Research.....	17
3.2 Secondary Research.....	19
4. Data Analysis	22
A. Research Findings.	22
4.1 Kolams.....	22
4.2 Music	26
4.3 Performance.....	30
4.4 Festival.....	47
B. Analysis and Interpretations.....	51
4.5 Performers.....	51
4.6 Society depicted through Padayani.....	54
4.7 Rituals, Beliefs and Ideologies.....	57
4.8 Relationship with Nature.....	59
4.9 Therapeutic Aspect.....	60
5. Conclusion	62
Appendix	65
Bibliography	68

List of Maps

Map 1: Districts where Padayani is still performed – Pathanamthitta and Alappuzha (Aleppey)....	6
Map 2: Location of Kadammanitta	7

List of Figures

Figure 1: Kadammanitta Devi Temple – The Abode Of Kali	8
Figure 2: Padayani Village Project – Preserving Padayani one step at a time	9
Figure 3: Govind Kadammanitta playing the thappu	27
Figure 4: Kaachi Kootu: Giving thappu its unique sound	28
Figure 5: Kaimani and Chenda(left to right) – Accompanying the Thappu.....	29
Figure 6: The different types of Performances	31
Figure 7: Thavadi –Dancing in a line	31
Figure 8: Pullavruttam- Dancing in circles	32
Figure 10: Revealing the true Paradesi	33
Figure 11: Anthara Yakshi – the Air Spirits.....	35
Figure 12: Arekya Yakshi –Creatures from another realm.....	35
Figure 13: Sundara Yakshi – The beautiful ones	36
Figure 14: Ganapathi Kolam – The Auspicious one	37
Figure 15: Kaalan Kolam – Playing 3 characters in 1 performance.....	38
Figure 16: Marutha Kolam – The Original Mother.....	39
Figure 17: Maadan and Pakshi Kolam(Left to Right) – The Evil Spirits	41
Figure 18: Kuthira Kolam – Men on horses.....	42
Figure 19: Kaanjari Maala Kolam – The Primal Goddess	43
Figure 20: Bhairavi Kolam– Totality of Sound.....	44
Figure 21: The Sacred Stone – The symbolic throne of Kali.....	45
Figure 22: The Ritual of Poopadda.....	45

ABSTRACT

Padayani is a ritualistic art form performed in the Central Travancore region of Kerala. It is an amalgamation of various such as kolams (masks and headgears), music, dance and drama for the worship of Goddess Kali. Believed to have come into existence from Pre-Dravidian times, this art form exhibits a relationship between man and nature. Regional variations have emerged in this art form and this study documents Padayani which is performed in the village of Kadammanitta in Pathanamthitta district. The focus is on studying various components of Padayani and the role that these components like kolams (masks and headgears), music and dance play in the lives of the people living in Kadammanitta. It also focuses on another major component of Padayani; the rituals that reflect the belief of the villagers. This study further explores thematic elements like the relationship of the performers with the spectators, the influence of the socio-economic status and gender of performers on Padayani and its natural and therapeutic effects.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction to Padayani

In the Central Travancore region of the culturally diverse state of Kerala, there exists a ritualistic art form of Padayani believed to have been evolved from Pre-Dravidian times. An amalgamation of music, dance, vocals and headgears for the worship of Mother Goddess (Kali), it is performed outside Bhadrakali temples. According to Padayani expert Reghu Kumar, Padayani is a communal gathering to ensure the physical and mental well-being of the entire village by warding off evil and creating positive vibes. This ancient form of worship transcends the boundaries of caste and religion,¹ generating a sense of unity.

Padayani is also known as Patayani or Padeni. The word Padayani is archaic and has not been clearly defined in Malayalam. Thus, there are various meanings that have been attached to Padayani by several experts.

According to Reghu Kumar, a Padayani expert, *pata* means group of soldiers and *ani* means rows. Thus Padayani means a row of soldiers, which could possibly refer to the martial art tradition of Kalaripayattu, whose influence on Padayani can be seen through some dance movements and formations.² Alternatively he also says that Padayani is a movement for fight or creation since *padakhil* means making or creation and *padachoin* means creator or an offering to the creator.

Vasudevan Pillai provides another interpretation of the art form wherein the words *pada* and *yani* mean creation and dedication. The word *padachavan* means creator and *padachor* is the boiled rice given to the mother goddess. On the whole, Padayani means continuous dedication and devotion to the mother goddess, who is the supreme deity in Padayani.

¹Varrier, Raja. "Glistening Theatrics of Padayani." *Kerala Calling* (2003): 32-34.

²"Kadammanittapadayani." *Kadammanittapadayani*.N.p.,n.d. Web. 20 Nov. 2013.

Padayani is believed to have originated in order to pacify Kali, after she killed the demon Darika. The myth is as follows.

Once there lived a demon named Darika. With years of austere penance, he pleased Brahma, who bestowed upon him the boon that he could never be defeated by any man, god or animal. Brahma also granted him another boon that every drop of his blood, on touching the ground, would produce thousand more demons.

Thereafter blinded by this newfound power and pride, Darika set out to conquer the world. Believing himself to be invincible, he immediately began to slaughter the human population, destroying everything in his path. Darika's dream of conquering heaven, earth and the underworld seemed inevitable. Finally, Indra, the king of gods, was defeated. With trembling hands and fearful hearts, the Gods approached Shiva, the ascetic, who lived in the Kailash Mountain. Upon hearing about the destruction brought about by Darika and the massacre of thousands of innocent lives, Lord Shiva grew livid with rage. His forehead throbbed. His heart felt the pain of the helpless.

Shiva opened his third eye and a flame burst forth; a flame of anger and destruction. From that flame emerged Kali the destroyer, terrifying and powerful. She was dark and naked, with long, dishevelled hair. She wore human heads as a necklace, severed arms as a girdle, serpents as bracelets and children's corpses as earrings. She drew her blood-smeared lips back and laughed, revealing her long and sharp fangs, her tongue lolling out. She had claw-like hands with long nails. In her hands she held an array of weapons, all meant to destroy Darika.

Kali called upon Vadalam, the chief of her demon hosts, the Bhutaganas, and went forth to battle with Darika. She and the Bhutaganas fought a fierce battle with Darika's army. She lunged ahead and with a quick movement of her sword, separated Darika's head from his body. Kali collected Darika's blood in a vessel crafted from human skull, not allowing a single drop to fall on the ground. Tipping her head back, she poured the blood into her gaping mouth, finally ridding the earth of Darika's tyranny.

Though Darika was dead, Kali's fury and bloodlust were untamed. Her eyes half closed with intoxication, she went on a rampage, holding Darika's decapitated head in her hand. Kali's anger threatened to destroy the world.

The Bhutaganas tried to pacify her with songs and drums, masks and dances. But nothing made her smile. On reaching Kailash, she saw a painting depicting her fearsome form. Slowly, her anger vanished and was replaced with a serene smile. From the angry, destructive Kali, she became the benevolent, protective Bhadrakali. She asked Shiva, "Who drew this?" He answered that the painting was made by the Kurup. She glanced at the painting once again and burst into laughter.

Thus, began the tradition of Padayani with a belief that blurs the lines between good and evil, protector and destroyer.

The festival during which Padayani takes place is celebrated during the months of Kumbham, Meenam and Medam of the Malayalam calendar, which are approximately the months of February, March and April.³ Padayani can only be performed on the specific dates of the festival during night. Traditionally it was celebrated for 41 days, which was then reduced to 28 days. Today, the number of days differs from village to village.

This art form is performed by donning headgears, chest pieces and additional accessories which are collectively called 'kolams'. Kolams individually embody a certain character associated with spirits and deities. They are made from natural materials which comprise spathes (*paalas*) of the areca nut palm tree. Natural colours are painted on these *paalas* using a brush made from the stem of a coconut leaf.

Percussion is a major part of Padayani and instruments such as the *thappu* are entirely exclusive to this art form. The performances are based on rhythms (*thaalas*) customary in South Kerala such as Marma, Valiya Lakshmi, Cheriya Lakshmi, Champa, Kaarika, Kumba and Adantha⁴ which are archaic in nature.

Kolams, vocals, percussion, dance and drama usually conclude in the performance of Padayani. The performances without kolams are usually performed in a group. Some of them contain elements of satire and comedy while others are symbolically religious. Some of the kolam performances are dance dramas, wherein stories from Hindu epics are depicted through dance. Each performance starts at a slow pace and gradually leads to a rapid tempo, eventually leading to the performer or percussionist entering into a trance.

³"Padayani." *Padayani*.N.p.,n.d. Web. 20 Nov. 2013.

⁴Varrier, Raja. "Glistening Theatrics of Padayani." *Kerala Calling* (2003): 32-34.

Rituals are vital to Padayani celebrations. The villagers believe that if the festival is not celebrated with adherence to the rituals (elaborated on in later chapters), and if the performances do not happen in a particular sequence, the village will suffer the wrath of Kali.

We decided to study Padayani for the kolams with their several visually appealing variations. On further research, we realized that Padayani was an amalgamation of our interests, which provided scope for study from religion to art. Its aspects like the presence of mystical elements, the ending of a performance in trance, its therapeutic and communal nature appealed to us. The realization that such an interesting art form has not been researched in detail and is unknown to a relatively large population of Kerala prompted us to take up Padayani as our topic for the Discover India Program.

1.2 Historical Overview

In the 4th century CE the Chera Kingdom, which comprised the southern part of India broke down, dividing Kerala into three major princedoms; Zamorin, Cochin and Travancore. This was also the period of the rise of Hinduism in South India, accompanied by the caste system.⁵

The growth of rival principalities led to the importance of warfare and military schools (Kalaris).⁶ Every chieftain had a military of Nairs. The rise of Nambutiri Brahmans led to the introduction of Sanskrit, and a new language called Malayalam emerged as an intermingling of Sanskrit and Tamil. Thus Kerala became a separate region, and the worship of Kali gained importance. During the British rule, Buddhism and Jainism flourished in India.

These historical events have a great impact on Padayani. The Padayani performed in Neelamperoor has clear Buddhist influences. Moreover, the Nair community is extensively involved in the performance of Padayani. The training centres where different components of a Padayani performance such as dance, vocals and percussion are taught are also known as Kalaris.

Padayani is believed to have been performed first on the banks of the river Pamba in Central Travancore, Kerala. The festival during which Padayani is performed coincides with the harvest season, thus hinting its origin in an agrarian society. In the words of Reghu Kumar, in the ancient times, before the advent of religion and temples, Padayani was probably performed in the forests. As time progressed, it was performed at sacred groves of the snake god or the Yakshis (nature spirits). Presently, Padayani is performed in the courtyard (kalam) of Bhadrakali temples. Thus the advent of Hinduism in Kerala becomes another marker in tracing the history of Padayani.

⁵Thomas, P. J. "Kerala In Early Days." *Kerala Studies.Prof. A. GopalaMenon Commemoration Volume. With a Foreword by Sri K.P. KesavaMenon ... Edited by Dr. P.K. Narayana Pillai.* By NARAYANA PILLAI Puthillathu Krishna and AcyuthGopala.MENON. Alliance Printing Works: Trivandrum, 1955. 28-39. Pg 31

⁶Thomas, P. J. "Kerala In Early Days." *Kerala Studies.Prof. A. GopalaMenon Commemoration Volume. With a Foreword by Sri K.P. KesavaMenon ... Edited by Dr. P.K. Narayana Pillai.* By NARAYANA PILLAI Puthillathu Krishna and AcyuthGopala.MENON. Alliance Printing Works: Trivandrum, 1955. Pg 36

1.3 Geographical Setting

Padayani developed as a ritualistic art form in the Central Travancore region of Kerala. It was performed in the districts of Pathanamthitta, Alappuzha, Kollam and Kottayam⁷. Presently due to migration, lack of teachers and waning interest in performing, Padayani is performed only in the villages of Pathanamthitta and Alappuzha.⁸

Within Pathanamthitta district, there are several villages in which Padayani is performed. However, the forerunner and the most important village practicing Padayani is Kadammanitta. Kadammanitta is located five kilometres from the Pathanamthitta town, and is a major Padayani centre. It comprises of the Kadammanitta Devi Temple where Padayani is performed. The focus of this research is on Padayani which is performed in Kadammanitta and the impact it has on the lives of its inhabitants.



MAP 1: DISTRICTS WHERE PADAYANI IS PERFORMED – PATHANAMTHITTA AND ALAPPUZHA (ALLEPEY)

⁷Pillai, Katammanitta Vasudevan. *Pateni: The Traditional Epic Theatre*. Chengannur: Rainbow Book, 2009. Print.

⁸Lambert, Marc Paul. "Padayani: A Foreigner's Impression." *Kerala Calling* (2007): 37. Web.

1.4 Research Focus and Objectives

Though the foundation of Padayani remains the same, there are slight variations in the Padayani performed in different villages. Most of the deviations are in the preparation and design of kolams. Though the Kadammanitta village till today continues to use only natural materials to make kolams, several villages have started using artificial materials in order to hasten the process. Every village has its own set of prominent kolams which are performed every year. The percussion also differs slightly. Though the basic structure of the *thaalas* remains the same, the pace of the beats and method of percussion differs according to the teachings of the guru.

In the midst of these regional variations, Kadammanitta in Pathanamthitta district appears as a prominent village famous for its Padayani. Kadammanitta is one of the few villages which have tried to preserve the tradition of Padayani. Currently there are local Padayani experts such as Reghu Kumar and Vasudevan Pillai who are making attempts to preserve and promote Padayani through books and websites.



MAP 2: LOCATION OF KADAMMANITTA IN PATHANAMTHITTA DISTRICT



FIGURE 1: KADAMMANITTA DEVI TEMPLE – THE ABODE OF KALI

Moreover, Kadammanitta is also the home of the famous Malayalam poet and Kerala Sahitya Academy awardee, Kadammanitta Ramakrishnan. His exposure to Padayani during childhood is said to have played a formative role in his writing style.⁹

Kadammanitta has also been chosen by the Tourism Department of the Government of Kerala for the Padayani village project. It was first proposed by Kadammanitta Ramakrishnan. The Padayani village has been built as a research and tourist centre for the preservation and documentation of Padayani. Estimated to cost around 1.9 crores rupees, it is being constructed on three acres of land near the Kadammanitta Devi temple.¹⁰

⁹"Kadammanittapadayani." *Kadammanittapadayani*. N.p., n.d. Web. 20 Nov. 2013.

¹⁰"The Hindu : Kerala / Pathanamthitta News : Kadammanitta to Get 'padayani' Village. N.p., n.d. Web. Jan. 2014. <<http://www.hindu.com/2009/09/17/stories/2009091752670300.htm>>.

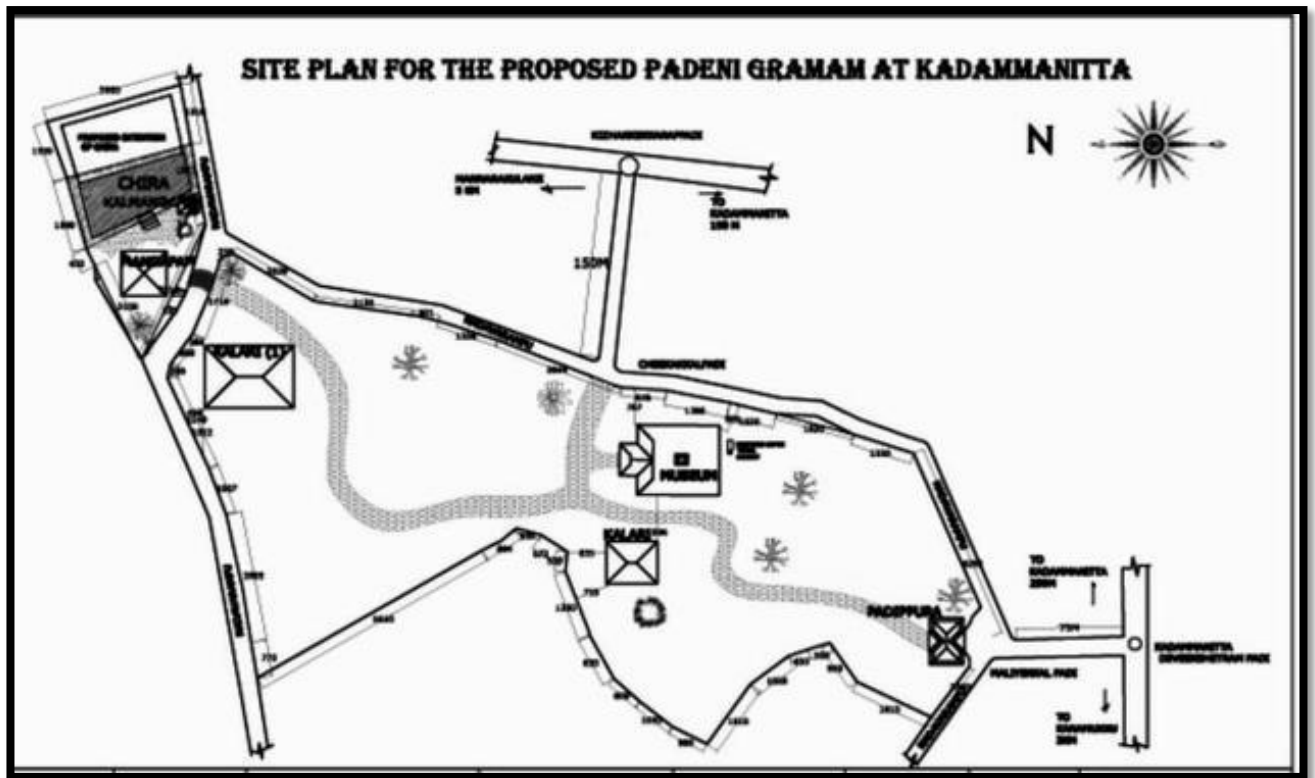


FIGURE 2: PADAYANI VILLAGE PROJECT – PRESERVING PADAYANI ONE STEP AT A TIME

According to Mr. Haridas, President of Padayani Village Project, the goddess of Kadammanitta temple was originally from Chengara. Chengara had been plagued by evil and upon the prayers of its inhabitants, Goddess Kali rid Chengara of all the evil. She then travelled to Kadammanitta, which was a forest at that time. Kali met a man living in this forest at a pond, and asked him for a place to stay. Her dwelling is presently known as the Kadammanitta Devi temple. The land chosen for the Padayani village project is considered to be sacred by the villagers, due to the presence of the pond, which forms an integral part of this myth.

Therefore our research has been narrowed down to studying Padayani in Kadammanitta. The research statement is as follows -

A study of the components of Padayani and their role in the lives of the inhabitants of Kadammanitta village in South Kerala

Our research has been divided into two parts. The first part documents various components of Padayani and the second part of our research attempts to analyse the role of these components in the society and lives of the people living in Kadammanitta village.

The objectives of our research include:

- To study the significance of Kolams in the art form of Padayani
- To analyse the different components of a Padayani performance such as vocals, percussion and dance
- To understand the rituals of Padayani as a representation of the beliefs of the villagers of Kadammanitta
- To evaluate the influence of the components of Padayani on the lives, society and culture of the people living in Kadammanitta village

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Padayani has been thriving in the Central Travancore region of Kerala but is still veiled from the world's view. There are several literary articles and books written on this art form which have recently been made available in English. The scholars writing on Padayani are primarily Padayani performers themselves or have been commissioned to do so by the Government of Kerala. However, the research done on this art form is limited and does not provide a detailed analysis of the art form. This section is aimed at segregating the information provided by secondary sources.

Origin of Padayani

The origin of Padayani is based on a central belief that it was formed in order to pacify Kali when her thirst for blood and vengeance could not be quenched after killing the demon Darika. Passed from one generation to the next strictly through oral tradition, this story has several versions.

In another version of the myth, Darika tried to hide from Kali by splitting the earth. But Kali caught him with her tongue before he could enter the depths of the earth. She then decapitated him. In order to pacify her, Shiva's son Ganapathi played the percussion while his other son Subhramaniam made the kolams. The bhootaganas, Shiva's demon spirits danced wearing these kolams. Finally, when Kali saw her picture drawn at the gate of Kailash, she was appeased.¹¹

According to one source Kali fought Darika alone, while according to another Shiva fought with her. In one version, Shiva sends his son Ganesh and his bull Nandi in the guise of children to appease Kali, appealing to the motherly affection of a wrathful woman.¹² These variations highlight the impact of Brahmanic Hinduism has had on Padayani as well as the introduction to the rituals and practices of the Shiva-Shakti cult which is quite prominent in the art form.

¹¹Pillai, Kadammanitta Vasudevan. *Pateni: The Traditional Epic Theatre*. Chengannur: Rainbow Book, 2009. Pg 51

¹²Varier, Raja. *The Legacy of Padayani*. Thiruvananthapuram: Information and Public Relations Dept., Govt. of Kerala, 2005. Pg 18

Kolams

Kolams form a significant aspect of Padayani. Kolams can be characterized as the performers visualizing a super human appearance. Kolams are the characters or deities which perform in front of the audience. Their main aim is to add the element of amusement and satire.¹³

In addition to that, kolams are also a major instrument for the narration of historical events and stories. Such instances can be seen through the Kuthira or the Horse Kolam which expands upon the trade relations between Travancore and Arabia. The story which unfolds through this Kolam comprises of the king of Travancore who acting upon the threat of war from the King of Madurai in Tamil Nadu, arranges for horses to be imported from the country of Arabia. The journey along with the dealing with the horse dealer is portrayed through this kolam.

Similarly, the Kaalan Kolam, which dramatically portrays the legend of Markendya, not only acts out the story but also symbolizes the concept of time in itself. "The mask used by Shiva denotes the past, present and future"¹⁴ Thus Kolams not only narrate popular myths and stories but also serve as moral and spiritual lessons one must learn to succeed in life.

The kolams are also a medium through which man is reminded of his folk roots and religion. The Pre-Dravidian religion is dominated by the worship of natural elements and their significance in aiding subsistence of life. In this fashion, the Yakshis highlight the relationship between man and nature as well as embodying spiritual and philosophical ideas and thoughts which lead to self-realization. They are also considered to have a therapeutic side.

The therapeutic claim is based on the belief that the Kolams which portray deities and spirits are considered to have healing powers. The Marutha Kolam for instance, is believed to be the deity of small pox; she is believed to descend from the mountains to partake in festivities hosted by children.¹⁵

¹³Varrier, Raja. "Glistening Theatrics of Padayani." *Kerala Calling* (2003):Pg 33

¹⁴Varrier, Raja. "Glistening Theatrics of Padayani." *Kerala Calling* (2003):Pg 34

¹⁵Varrier, Raja. "Glistening Theatrics of Padayani." *Kerala Calling* (2003):Pg 34

Most importantly Kolams are performed to worship the Mother Goddess, to seek her blessings and her assurance to safeguard the village.

Kolam-making is also an art in itself. A kolam is said to be written when a complete mask is made¹⁶. According to Reghu Kumar, only natural materials are used in the fabrication of the Kolams is because they would contain the power of nature. Moreover, fresh masks are made for every performance due to their susceptibility to brittleness as well as because it is believed that they lose its magic power.

Performance

Padayani is also a reflection of various musical inventions which have completely changed the way one would view a ritualistic art form. It encompasses of Thappu; “a percussion instrument with a wooden ring covered with leather on one side”¹⁷ Other than that, one can see that Padayani has a completely different set of rhythms (thaalas) and tunes which are unique to Southern Kerala. These rhythms are called “Marma, Valiya Lakshmi, Cheriya Lakshmi, Champa, Kaarika, Kumba, and Adantha.”¹⁸

These rare thaalas dictate the movements and pace of the performer. The music in Padayani also reminds one of a tribal setting. It is believed that through the performer, “the spiritual force of divine mother is showered upon”¹⁹ the audience.

The musical instruments in Padayani are best showcased through Melam or Orchestra. Each important instrument has a Melam dedicated to them. In a Padayani performance, the number of thappus is always odd like three, five or seven. “Padayani drumming is almost like a language. As the rhythm of the dance increases, the dancer goes into a state of trance”²⁰ The distinct sound which the thappu produces is achieved by a very arduous process called Kaachi Kootu, where it is heated and cooled continuously for a number of times.

¹⁶ , and AnushkaRavishankar. *Masks and Performance with Everyday Materials*. Chennai: Tara Pub., 2003Pg 29

¹⁷Varrier, Raja. "Glistening Theatrics of Padayani." *Kerala Calling* (2003):Pg 33

¹⁸Varrier, Raja. "Glistening Theatrics of Padayani." *Kerala Calling* (2003):Pg 33

¹⁹Varrier, Raja. "Glistening Theatrics of Padayani." *Kerala Calling* (2003):Pg 33

²⁰ , and AnushkaRavishankar. *Masks and Performance with Everyday Materials*. Chennai: Tara Pub., 2003Pg 29

The Padayani songs are the extension of the tradition of oral transmission. They are essentially poems that are dedicated to the deity that the people of Kadammanitta worship. “The songs are very much different from the ancient songs according to the opinion of the Padayani Masters”²¹. The songs recite stories that are embedded into the rich culture of Kerala.

The Padayani performance consists of elegant complex steps accompanied by the primal beats of the Thappu. Along with the Ganapathi thaala, there are several other thaalas that are played such as Jeeva thaala, Valiya Ganapathi thaala, Marma, Valiya Lakshmi, Cheriya Lakshmi, Champa, Kaarika, Kumba, Adantha Urulu Kai, Thom-thi-minthaka, Edayaam, Thaka-Thakkan and Thaka-Thim Thim²² which enhance each performance through the energetic atmosphere they create.

Regional Variations in Padayani

Even though the Central Travancore region is the major geographic setting where Padayani is practiced and performed, within its intricate structure the villages performing Padayani modify Padayani in accordance with their beliefs and practices.

Padayani is celebrated in two major districts of Alappuzha and Pathanamthitta. Alappuzha is a coastal region while the Pathanamthitta district lies in a mountainous region. Currently, Padayani is performed in front of Devi Temples whose deity is Goddess Bhadrakali or Kali. But before temple worship, Padayani was performed in front of sacred groves.²³ The coastal and mountainous regions have their variations in terms of the origin of the goddess where villages in Pathanamthitta believe that she had come from the sacred groves.

Within Pathanamthitta, there are six villages which practice Padayani; Kottangal, Ezhumattoor, Othara, Pulladu and Kadalimangalam and Kadammanitta.

The variations which exist between these villages and Kadammanitta are based upon the sequence in which the Padayani festival starts that is the rituals with which each village begins their festival. Kottangal village begins Padayani with the major families of

²¹Varier, Raja. *The Legacy of Padayani*. Thiruvananthapuram: Information and Public Relations Dept., Govt. of Kerala, 2005. Pg 51

²²Varrier, Raja. "Glistening Theatrics of Padayani." *Kerala Calling* (2003): 32-34.

²³Varier, Raja. *The Legacy of Padayani*. Thiruvananthapuram: Information and Public Relations Dept., Govt. of Kerala, 2005. Pg 35

Kadookurup and Aryad Kurup performing the initiating rituals. This practice is not observed in Kadammanitta since it is the teachers or ashan who begin the rituals.²⁴

Similarly there are differences in the days on which Padayani is performed as well as its duration. In Othara village, Padayani is performed in two sections whereby it begins in the month of Kumbham however there is also Chootu Padayani which begins after the Padayani procession. The Chootu Padayani is celebrated for an additional eighteen days, whereas Kadammanitta celebrates Padayani for a span of ten days only. The Ezhumattoor village celebrates Padayani from the “twenty-fifth of the Meenam month, till the festival of Vishu”²⁵, which is approximately the month of March.

There are differences in terms of the Kolam characters performed in the festival as well. In the village of Kadalimangalam, the Kaala Yakshi is performed whereby the performer is made “to sit imagined as woman”²⁶. This Yakshi mainly performs with fire and the performance ends with the performer holding the burning embers in their hands as well as culminating the Padayani festival²⁷. In comparison to that, in Kadammanitta the Bhairavi Kolams is the last Kolam to be performed by multiple performers.

²⁴Varier, Raja. *The Legacy of Padayani*. Thiruvananthapuram: Information and Public Relations Dept., Govt. of Kerala, 2005. Pg 37

²⁵Varier, Raja. *The Legacy of Padayani*. Thiruvananthapuram: Information and Public Relations Dept., Govt. of Kerala, 2005. Pg 39

²⁶Varier, Raja. *The Legacy of Padayani*. Thiruvananthapuram: Information and Public Relations Dept., Govt. of Kerala, 2005. Pg 43

²⁷Varier, Raja. *The Legacy of Padayani*. Thiruvananthapuram: Information and Public Relations Dept., Govt. of Kerala, 2005. Pg 43

Safeguarding the Art Form

Furthermore, Padayani as an art form was not only researched upon by the people associated with it but also by ethnoscenologist Marc Lambert, who became the first foreign national to have had the privilege to learn Padayani.

According to him “Padayani is a bodily as well as cognitive, emotional and spiritual act”²⁸ Kerala which showcases various regional art forms as well as famous art forms such as Kathakali and Theyyam still lacks a structure or a authorized body which would safe guard these art forms from going extinct.

Mr Lambert stated that the Padayani Village Project was commissioned in the Kadammanitta Village and was started for the promotion of Padayani. This Project will extensively preserve the art form of Padayani with infrastructures such as museums, training centres, beautification, ample nature land and resources being made at the disposal of the locals and Padayani practitioners.

Measures have also been taken by the Padayani artists to preserve the art form and also spread awareness about it. Websites have been created in an attempt to educate the readers about Padayani. This art form eclipses the barriers of caste and class hierarchy and provides an egalitarian platform for the whole community to celebrate their inherited culture. Padayani “is not merely an art form but it is a mode of factual culture”²⁹

²⁸Lambert, Marc Paul. “Padayani: A Foreigner’s Impression.” *Kerala Calling* (2007): Pg 37

²⁹Varrier, Raja. "Glistening Theatrics of Padayani." *Kerala Calling* (2003):Pg 33

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This section is divided into two parts. The first section explains how we conducted our primary research and the methods of data collection. In the second section, we have listed and analysed our secondary sources in order to understand the credibility of our theoretical knowledge. The research conducted is Exploratory, Descriptive and Analytical.

3.1 Primary Research

In order to collect comprehensive information on-field, we used observation and interviews as a method of data collection. The information collected was qualitative.

Since our research is focused on Kadammanitta, our on-field locations were also based in Kadammanitta. Most of the experts, performers and kolam-makers we contacted also lived in the Kadammanitta village.

We visited the Kadammanitta Devi temple in order to understand the ritualistic aspect of Padayani and the Kalari (training centre) where we witnessed performances and training sessions. Another important location was the Padayani Village, where we saw the process of kolam making and learnt about the Padayani Village project.

The locations we visited outside Kadammanitta were mainly for the purpose of interviewing experts such as Marc Paul Lambert, whom we visited in Trivandrum. We also visited the Aiyappa temple in Pandalam to watch a Padayani performance.

We conducted in-depth interviews with Padayani experts such as Reghu Kumar, Vasudevan Pillai and Marc-Paul Lambert. We also interviewed Padayani performers, percussionists and kolam makers.

Different set of questions were asked on the basis of the interviewee's association to the dance form. While the questions asked to the kolam makers focused on the kolams and their preparation, the performers and percussionists were asked questions regarding the technical aspects of the art, the myths and the rituals involved in the festival. The experts were questioned regarding all the aspects of Padayani.

Also, the festival of Padayani happens only once a year and usually between the months of February and April. The kolams, made of natural materials, are prepared only two days before the performance and they wither quickly. Since our field trip was in January, we were able to view the performance but we could not witness the actual festival.

Since Padayani is an art form performed by men only, the female researchers faced certain restrictions. They were not allowed to touch the musical instruments or kolams and their movement in the temple premises was limited, which led to a few difficulties in conducting research.

Using this methodology, we were able to gather maximum and detailed information regarding Padayani performed in Kadammanitta village. The additional secondary sources obtained helped us to verify the information collected on field. The corpus of primary and secondary information guided us towards our research focus.

3.2 Secondary Research

The secondary research for this project has been drawn from five books, three articles and two websites.

Raj Varier's article titled 'Glistening Theatrics of Padayani', published in Kerala Calling in 2003, explores the ritual of Padayani, an art form of southern Kerala. The article dissects the art form on the basis of the kolams, musical accompaniment, its relation with nature and the various myths enacted through Padayani.

However, this article was featured in 'Kerala Calling', a magazine published by the Government of Kerala, thus it is possible that the article could have been written with the objective of glorifying their culture. As a result, the reliability and validity of the information in this article comes into question.

Raja Varier also wrote "The Legacy of Padayani", published by the Information and Public Relations Department of Government of Kerala in 2005, explains the entire structure of the art form. Varier in his book provides an extensive introduction to the various kolams performed in the festival along with the various rituals associated in the preparation and performance of Padayani.

Though 'Legacy of Padayani' touches upon several aspects of Padayani, such as geographic extent and regional differences but it does not cover all of them. . There are several concepts which are not explained or mentioned thus providing very generic information on the art form.

"Masks and performance: With Everyday Materials" written by Gita Wolf and V. Geetha, published by Tara Books in 2005 contains only one chapter devoted to the understanding of a kolam used in Padayani. This chapter contains an interview with Kadammanitta Reghu, a veteran Padayani dancer, who provides information regarding how kolams are made, the materials used for making them and their significance in the society.

Thus this book has been helpful in laying a foundation for our research and highlighting the important elements of this dance form.

Marc Lambert's article titled "A Foreigner's Impression" published in Kerala Calling in 2007 explores the relationship Padayani has with nature and its impression on the author. The author discusses the disputed origin of Padayani as well as stating reasons as to why he thinks Padayani is a dying art, the relationship between the performer and the kolams and their spiritual significance. The main emphasis of this article is on the inferences of the author drawn from this art form rather than the art form itself.

Pateni (The Traditional Epic Theatre) written by Kadammanitta Vasudevan Pillai is a book, published by Rainbow Book Publishers in 2009, which shows the trajectory of the development and structure of the art form of Padayani. Pillai describes each of the characters portrayed in the performance and their significance, by explaining the past and contemporary geographical extent to which Padayani is performed. He also describes the social structure which is linked to the art form.

The rituals are mentioned in the form of the main festival which describes the type of performance, the artists, the traditions and sequence in which they are performed. The book discusses Padayani very generically and poses several questions instead of answering the existing ones.

The article titled "The Aesthetics and Embodiment of Beliefs and Identity" written by Marc-Paul Lambert published by Aswadanam in 2013, co-relates the practices and implications of a Vedic practice of Tantras to the Dravidian art form of Padayani in Southern Kerala. The features of Padayani highlighted by the author are its historical origin, the ritualistic values associated with this art form and the significance of kolams as well as the role of society in Padayani.

However, the article provides a one sided analysis of the art form, restricting it to the secondary position of bringing out the component of tantrism which is quite prevalent in several other art forms of North Kerala such as Theyyam.

Other than that, one of our major sources is a website called Padayani.com, which is administered by Vinu Mohanan and Manu Kurumpala and its date of conception is unknown. This website dissects each and every component of Padayani from the various stages of a Padayani performance to the making of kolams and the dominant theme of satire to the instruments used in it. This website gathers its information from Padayani experts and dancers such as Professor Kadammanitta Vasudevan Pillai, Mr Kadammanitta Reghu Kumar, Kadapra Gopalakrishnan, Kadammanitta Arvindaksham etc.

Kadammanitta Padayani is a website created by the members of the Kadammanitta Gothra Kala Kalari in the year 2012 in order to create awareness of the art form preserved in this particular village. The website gives a generic overview of Padayani in terms of the rituals, traditions, kolams, the music and rhythms involved and its origin in the Kadammanitta village exclusively.

Thus, conclusively according to several experts such as Reghu Kumar and Vasudevan Pillai, the information about Padayani can only be fully comprehended if it is orally transmitted and thus that's why most of the literary sources written on this art form fail to provide a full understanding of the art form.

4. DATA ANALYSIS

A. RESEARCH FINDINGS

There are different components such as kolams, percussion, music, performance and rituals that make Padayani what it is. Each of these components is equally significant and contributes to the overall theme of Padayani.

4.1 Kolams

Kolams are the attire worn by the performers to represent different characters. They are not just the make-up, masks, headgears and chest pieces worn by the performer, but the very persona which the performer portrays. The visual representation of a kolam changes in accordance with the character being portrayed. According to Vasudevan Pillai, the word kolam means beauty.

The people of Kadammanitta believe that kolams have the power to ward off evil spirits that cause chaos in their lives. During a performance, the kolam is supposed to hold the power of the spirit or deity which it portrays. Each kolam is used only once as it is believed that once a kolam is used, it loses its power. Therefore new kolams are prepared for each and every performance, usually one or two days before the performance. An important feature of kolams is that they are made entirely from natural materials and the process of making kolams does not involve any artificial resources whatsoever.

Since they are made from natural materials, the kolams start withering after two or three days. The villagers believe that using the freshest and greenest spathes ensure the appeasement of the Mother Goddess (Kali).

Kolam making

Kolam making commences the preparations for the Padayani festival. Before making the kolams, the kolam makers light a lamp for Ganapathi and Devi. In Kadammanitta, kolams are prepared in the space allocated for the preservation of Padayani, which is the Padayani Village Project initiated by the Government of Kerala, as all the natural materials required to create the Kolams are available there.

Kolams are made from the spathes of the areca nut palm, known as *paalas*. After cutting them from the tree, they are straightened and peeled to make them smooth using a special knife. The kolam makers draw on the kolams with the help of paintbrushes made from the stems of coconut leaves. The knife is then used for cutting the paala into different shapes. The number of paalas differs according to the kolam being made. No artificial gum or glue is required to attach the spathes since they are stitched together with the help of the sharpened stem of the coconut leaves called the ‘irkili’ (Refer to Fig. 3)



FIGURE 3: THE PROCESS OF KOLAM MAKING: 1. ARECA NUT TREES 2. EXTRACTING THE PAALA 3. PEELING OF PAALA 4. NATURALLY-MADE PAINTBRUSH 5. SHAPING THE KOLAM 6. STITCHING THE KOLAM WITH IRKILI 7. KOLAM READY FOR DRAWING 8. BLACK COLOUR BY BURNING MANGO LEAVES 9. COMMENCING KOLAM PAINTING 10. DRAWING EGG-SHAPED EYES 11. PAINTING THE MOUSTACHE 12. ALMOST DONE 13. THE FINISHED PRODUCT – GANAPATHI KOLAM

The people of Kadammanitta refer to the drawing of kolams as kolam writing. The kolams have a particular design which has some common patterns such as egg-shaped eyes and the drawing of moustaches on the Kolams as visible in Fig.3.

There are five important colours used on kolams; white, black, yellow, green and red. These colours represent the ‘Panchbhutas’; or ‘air’, or ‘sky’, or ‘fire’, ‘water’ and ‘earth’ respectively. The colours used are also obtained using natural materials. The red colour is obtained from red ochre soil, the black colour from charcoal and burnt mango leaves and the yellow colour from turmeric powder. The green and white colours are not applied as they are the natural colours of the spathe of the areca nut palm. According to kolam maker Mr Arvindaksham Pillai, the colours are grinded into a dry powder in order to store them for a longer time. Water is then added to the powder in order to get a paste of the colour which is then used to paint the kolams.

After the performance, most of the kolams are taken home by the villagers. They are hung on trees or poles outside the house. Some are placed on the agricultural field. The bigger kolams such as Bhairavi and Kaanjari Maala are hung on a Peepal tree. The Kolams have a long durability as long as they are not exposed to water and sunlight. The kolams are never kept inside the house as the villagers believe that they should always be kept close to nature. When kept outside the house, they are believed to ward off evil spirits.

Training

In order to learn the art of kolam making, the students go through a vigorous process under their guru at training centres called the Kalaris. In the training centres they begin this process by learning the basic designing of kolams. Since kolams are made only two days before a performance, the students get maximum education and experience about kolam making during the Padayani festival by observing and helping the kolam makers.

Kolam maker Mr Arvindaksham Pillai stated that Kaalan, Bhairavi and Maya Yakshi are the hardest kolams to prepare as they are very complex. The preparation of the Bhairavi Kolam takes an entire day with five people involved in its preparation and the Kaalan Kolam takes approximately eight hours when one individual makes it. The preparation of the Ganapathi or the Pishachu Kolam is the easiest as it takes less than an hour.

According to Reghu Kumar, the ancient kolam makers had professions related to astrology and medicine, which substantiates his claim that Padayani is therapeutic. Kolam making is not a full-time profession but a seasonal one. Kolam makers are the only people in Padayani that are paid to make kolams during the festival.

4.2Music

Another important component of Padayani is music. It consists of the vocals and percussion that forms the basis of a Padayani performance. The songs performed in Padayani are poems dedicated to the deity. They are stories ingrained into the culture of Kerala communicated through simple language and rich narratives.

The rhythms (thaalas) form the base of the percussion and the songs sung by the artists. The 'thaalas' are the rhythms generated from the percussion instruments³⁰. It is

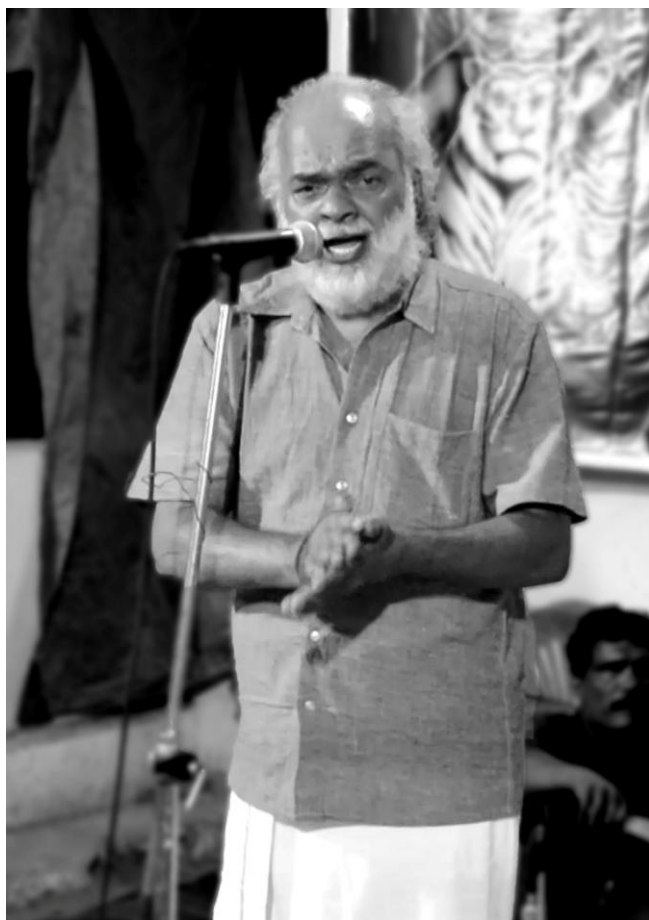


FIGURE 4 VASUDEVAN PILLAI SINGING

believed that each thaala represents different body parts of Kali, defining her physical form when they are performed in the festival. For instance, the Ganapathi Thaala is used to bring out the mother goddess from the temple in the form of a lamp (chootu) which symbolises her as the sacred fire.

Along with the Ganapathi Thaala, there are several other thaalas that are played such as Jeeva Thaala, Valiya Ganapathi Thaala, Marma, Valiya Lakshmi, Cheriya Lakshmi, Champa, Kaarika, Kumba, Adantha Urulu Kai, Thom-thi-minthaka, Edayaam, Thaka-Thakkan and Thaka-ThimThim³¹

³⁰"Some Missing Facts." *The Hindu: Friday Review Chennai and Tamil Nadu*. The Hindu, 21 Dec. 2007. Web. <<http://www.hindu.com/fr/2007/12/21/stories/2007122151510700.htm>>.

³¹Varrier, Raja. "Glistening Theatrics of Padayani." *Kerala Calling* (2003): 32-34.

The songs of Padayani boast of expressive and graceful beats which in turn help the performers stage their act in an elegant manner. The overtone of the songs reflects a duality of fear and peace which keeps overlapping each other. These songs are always sung in a high pitch and have been composed in basic Malayalam so as to be comprehended easily by the masses.

However, it becomes extremely hard to trace the origin of these songs to a particular person or a time period since they have been passed down through the gurus (ashans) to their students via oral transmission. Only very recently they have been documented partially by scholars such as Vasudevan Pillai.

Percussion

Another active element that captivates the audience is the percussion instruments. The instruments used are the Thappu, Kaimani and Chenda. Thappu is the basic percussion instrument used in the performance.



FIGURE 5: GOVIND KADAMMANITTA PLAYING THE THAPPU

Thappu is crafted from the wood of the jackfruit tree and is covered with buffalo skin on one side using gum paste and stone powder. Buffalo skin is used as it provides the optimum sound required by the dancers to perform. The buffalo skin is put in front of fire for as long as one to two hours in order to purify the sound or to ‘tune’ the instrument. The act of heating the Thappu is known as ‘Kaachi Kootu’ (Refer to Fig. 6).

In this process the buffalo skin is cooled down by rubbing it with *panal* (*Glycosmis pentaphylla*) leaves. The process of alternative heating and cooling gives the thappu its distinctive sound.³² The Thappu has always been covered with buffalo skin but alternative methods for its fabrication have also been experimented with such as using cow's skin for creating the Thappu, however it did not give out the required sound.



FIGURE 6: KAACHI KOOTU: GIVING THAPPU ITS UNIQUE SOUND³³

In the Kalari, the Thappu is practiced by students without the buffalo skin (Refer to Fig. 5). According to Percussionists Govind Kadammanitta and Kailash G. Kadammanitta, there are two types of thappus- one is made from the stump and roots of cashew and blackboard (*Alstonia Scholaris*) trees and the other made out of jackfruit and golden shower (*Cassia Fistula*) trees. When these trees are chopped down for other purposes, their stump is used for making the thappu. Ganapathi Thaala is the first song that students are taught to play on the Thappu during their Training session. It is played by beating both the hands on the surface of the Thappu in a systematic pattern.

³²"Instruments." *Padayani*.N.p.,n.d. Web. 20 Nov. 2013.

³³ Photo Courtesy: Kailash G. Kadammanitta

During the festival there are separate performances dedicated to percussion playing called the Thappu Melam or Thappu Concert where thappu players perform for the duration of one and half to two hours. During the concert the number of drums used is always in odd numbers accompanied by other instruments such as Kaimani or the cymbals and the Chenda.

Kaimani is the percussion instrument that is not made from wood. It consists of two bells that are struck together at intervals to create a resonating sound (Refer to Fig. 7).

Chenda is another important percussion instrument in Padayani (Refer to Fig. 7)³⁴. It consists of a wooden body with leather covering on both the sides, held together using leather straps. It usually weighs less than ten kilograms and is slung around the percussionist's shoulders. In thappus, the sound is created by banging ones hands against the surface whereas in Chenda, sticks are beaten on the both sides in order to generate the sound. The Chenda Melam is played during the introduction of certain kolams such as Kaalan, Arekya Yakshi, Kurathi and Anthara Yakshi. It is also a part of other art forms in Kerala such as Kathakali.³⁵

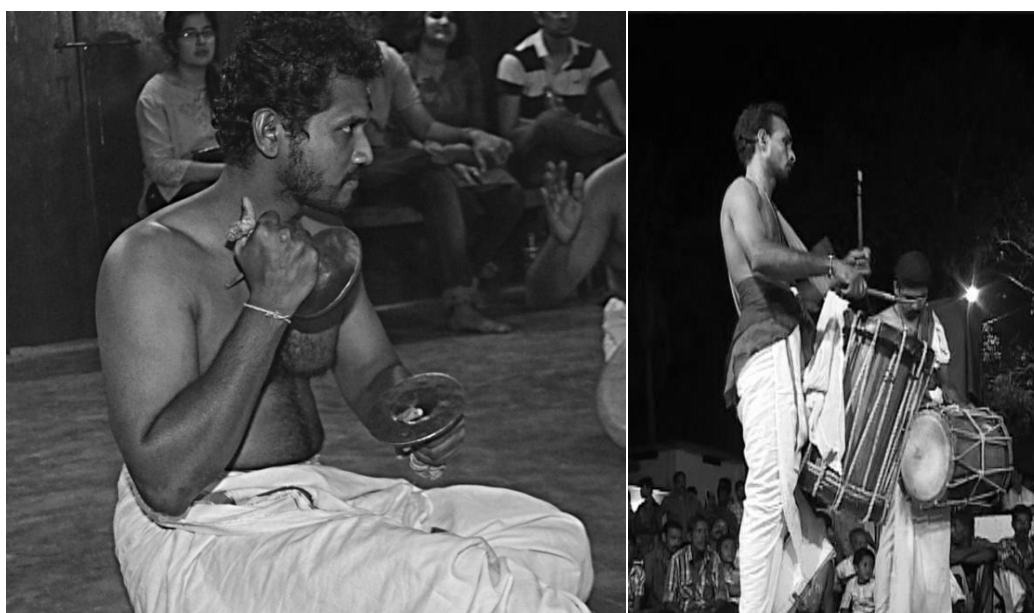


FIGURE 7: KAIMANI AND CHENDA(LEFT TO RIGHT) – ACCOMPANYING THE THAPPU

³⁴"Instruments." *Padayani*.N.p.,n.d. Web. 20 Nov. 2013.

³⁵"Some Missing Facts." *The Hindu: Friday Review Chennai and Tamil Nadu*. The Hindu, 21 Dec. 2007. Web.<<http://www.hindu.com/fr/2007/12/21/stories/2007122151510700.htm>>.

4.3 Performance

Performance in Padayani is the amalgamation of the four core components; percussion, kolams, vocals and the dance. A performance may have any two of these components such as percussion and vocals or percussion and dance, or it might consist of all the components.

The attire worn by the performers is standard throughout the performances with the exception of the changing kolams. They wear a white *lungi* with a red cloth tied around their waist and a white kerchief on their head.

In Padayani, dance is known as Thullal. Due to its proximity to nature, the dance incorporates movements imitating birds, animals and serpents. It also involves revolution and rotation like the solar system.³⁶

Training

Every village celebrating Padayani has a centre reserved for training the villagers in different components of the performance. The training centre (Kalari) in Kadammanitta is called Gothra Kala Kalari. Men of any age are welcome to the centre. The gurus (teachers) of the Kalaris are called ashans. There can be multiple ashans at a time depending on their skill and experience. Vasudevan Pillai, Prasanna Kumar and Gobi are ashans of Kadammanitta Kalari. The guru-shishya (teacher-student) relationship is very important in Padayani. The ashan decides which student will perform which kolam during the Padayani performance.

During the preliminary years, students are given basic training of dance, percussion and vocals. Then they are given the choice of in-depth training in one aspect, based on their skills and preference. Some learn only one component, whereas other men such as Reghu Kumar, Prasanna Kumar and Gobi Ashan learn all the 3 elements of Padayani performance (Triyukta). Usually, complete training in dance requires one and a half to two years and training in percussion requires around one and a half year depending on the person's ability and skill.

³⁶Kumar, Kadammanitta Reghu. "Padayani A Perfect Life Science." *Padayani Articles*. N.p., n.d. Web. 16 Feb. 2014. <<http://www.padayani.com/research%20reghu.htm>>

Each Padayani performance contains one or more components that are performed in a synchronized manner. Dance and percussion are the most common components. There are performances with kolams and without kolams, with further classifications. The different types of dance are listed in Figure 8.



FIGURE 8: THE DIFFERENT TYPES OF PERFORMANCES

Performances without kolams

There are four performances in Padayani without kolams which happen in the beginning of every night: Thavadi, Pulavruttam, Velichappadu and Paradesi.



FIGURE 9: THAVADI –DANCING IN A LINE

Thavadi is a group dance performed with dancers standing in a straight line (Refer to Fig 9)³⁷. It shows influences of a martial art form tradition does not require Kolams and is performed along with percussion.³⁸ The percussion instruments played are primarily the Thappu and Kaimani. The dancer accompanies the music performed in synchronized movements.

Pulavruttam is also a group performance but the dancers move in a circle (Refer to Fig 10). This dance is accompanied with music and vocals. The songs sung during this performance are chiefly about Krishna.



FIGURE 10: PULLAVRUTTAM- DANCING IN CIRCLES³⁹

Velichappadu is a satirical drama wherein the central character is claimed to be a representative of the Mother Goddess (Refer to Figure 11). This character addresses social issues and morals with the help of humour. This comical figure communicates with the audience in the question-answer format and is representative of the norms and values of the village society.⁴⁰

³⁷Photo Courtesy: Kailash G. Kadammanitta

³⁸Varier, Raja. *The Legacy of Padayani*. Thiruvananthapuram: Information and Public Relations Dept., Govt. of Kerala, 2005. Pg.N. 61

³⁹Photo Courtesy: Mithun

⁴⁰Varier, Raja. *The Legacy of Padayani*. Thiruvananthapuram: Information and Public Relations Dept., Govt. of Kerala, 2005. Pg.N. 26



11FIGURE 11: VELICHAPPADU – THE SATIRICAL MESSENGER OF THE GODDESSES



FIGURE 12: REVEALING THE TRUE PARADESI

The performance of ‘Paradesi’ is a combination of dance and drama (Refer to Figure 12)⁴¹. The characters in this performance are supposed to be Brahmans. Since they are supposed to be exotic, their attire is different from that worn by the other performers. They wear a conical red cap which is decorated with tender coconut leaves, a red skirt and a shoulder bag. An important part of their attire is a sacred thread placed in the opposite way.⁴² These Brahmans are travellers who highlight social issues and events occurring at other places. A significant aspect of the performance is the portrayal of a conflict between several performers dressed as “Paradesis” in their attempt to distinguish themselves as the real Paradesis against the imposters. They present the audience with elements of humour.⁴³

⁴¹Photo Courtesy: Vinu Mohannan

⁴²Pillai, Katammanitta Vasudevan. *Pateni: The Traditional Epic Theatre*. Chengannur: Rainbow Book, 2009. Pg N.75

⁴³Pillai, Katammanitta Vasudevan. *Pateni: The Traditional Epic Theatre*. Chengannur: Rainbow Book, 2009. Pg N.75

The thread worn by the Brahmins is believed to be a symbol of their power and purity. Wearing it in the opposite way in addition to elements of comedy suggests a mockery of the Brahmins.

The theme of *vinodam* or satire is an evidence of the military influences on Padayani. According to Reghu Kumar, this aspect can be traced to the time when the villagers' wealth would be stored in the temple and soldiers would be stationed outside to guard it. These soldiers would spend the night making jokes and dancing. Therefore it became a significant part of Padayani whereby each performance caters to the people's humour.

Performances with Kolams

The characters portrayed through the kolams are a vital theme in the art form of Padayani. The performances with the Kolam characters are the most engaging and visually impactful. The kolams comprise of a radiant and vibrant headgear, masks, face paint and chest pieces worn by the Padayani performers. A feature which makes Padayani stand apart from its contemporaries and successors is the attire and the kolams which decide the way the dancer performs. The whole art form focuses on the deities belonging to the Pre-Dravidian and the Hindu Brahmanic periods and their significance in the society.

According to Mr. Prasanna Kumar an expert on Padayani, the kolams represent devilish spirits. On the other hand, Mr Kadammanitta Reghu Kumar, another expert, states that the Yakshi Kolams represent 'fairies' or 'protectors' and are said to be protectors from primitive times possibly the Pre-Dravidian age. Each Yakshi depicted is devoted to a natural element.

The Ambara Yakshi represents sky, Anthara Yakshi represents air, Sundara Yakshi represents beauty, Maya Yakshi represents illusion, Arekya Yakshi represents destruction, Aayeli Yakshi represents spirits feeding on blood, Naga Yakshi represents serpents and the Kaala Yakshi represents time. Other than the Yakshis, the other Kolams performed are the Bhairavi, Kaalan and Ganapathi Kolam.

In the Kadammanitta village, the main kolams that are used during Padayani are Ganapathi or Pishachu, Marutha, Anthara Yakshi, Arekya Yakshi, Sundara Yakshi, Pakshi, Kuthira, Maadan, Kaalan, Kaanjari Maala and Bhairavi. All the Kolams except for Anthara and Arekya Yakshi are learnt from the ashans within the Kadammanitta village.

Yakshis

Anthara Yakshi is a performance that symbolizes air spirits through the graceful movements of the performer's hands (Refer to Figure 13)⁴⁴. The Kolam for Anthara Yakshi includes not only a headgear but a chest piece as well. The Anthara Yakshi wears a hat-like Kolam which uses nine spathes of areca nut palm for its preparation⁴⁵.



FIGURE 13: ANTHARA YAKSHI – THE AIR SPIRITS

Arekya Yakshi is a performance that depicts destruction and the concept behind this dance is purification of blood (Refer to Figure 14)⁴⁶. The performance commences behind a red curtain which symbolizes the arrival of the spirits to the mortal world. The performers wear a mask and a chest piece with conical breasts along with glass bangles and have grass hair fitted to their mask. The performers dance by fighting each other off in an enthusiastic dance-off.



FIGURE 14: AREKYA YAKSHI – CREATURES FROM ANOTHER REALM

⁴⁴Kadammanittapadayani." *Kadammanittapadayani*. N.p., n.d. Web. 1 Feb. 2014. <http://kadammanittapadayani.com/?page_id=155>.

⁴⁵Varier, Raja. *The Legacy of Padayani*. Thiruvananthapuram: Information and Public Relations Dept., Govt. of Kerala, 2005. Pg.N. 24

⁴⁶Kadammanittapadayani." *Kadammanittapadayani*. N.p., n.d. Web. 1 Feb. 2014. <http://kadammanittapadayani.com/?page_id=159>.

Sundara Yakshi, symbolizing beauty, is performed by a group of five to eleven performers (Refer to Figure 15)⁴⁷. It is believed that the Sundara Yakshi appears only when all the elements of nature (Panchbhutas) have been purified. The dance steps are performed in a circle formation whereby the performers synchronise their steps with each other. The performers attempt to describe the beauty of a woman through graceful movements. Even though all the performers portray the Sundara Yakshi, they are recognized by different names.



FIGURE 15: SUNDARA YAKSHI – THE BEAUTIFUL ONES

Moreover Kadammanitta is famous for its Sundara Yakshi performance and has thus been attracting performers from other villages, who come to this village to learn the performance. The Yakshi Kolams are the hardest to perform and the performers say that if one masters the Yakshi Kolams, and then one can do any other Kolam.

Other than the Yakshis the other kolams performed in Kadammanitta Village are the Ganapathi, Marutha Pakshi, Kaalan, Kaanjari Maala and Bhairavi Kolams which have a significance of their own.

⁴⁷Kadammanittapadayani." *Kadammanittapadayani*. N.p., n.d. Web. 1 Feb. 2014.
<http://kadammanittapadayani.com/?page_id=150>.

Ganapathi Kolam

The Ganapathi Kolam or Pishachu Kolam is the first dance performed in the Padayani festival as it is believed that Lord Ganesh is associated with auspicious beginnings⁴⁸⁴⁹. The performer's face is smeared with green paint. . The mask is made of a single areca nut leaf and black and white in colour. It is always made with a missing tooth to portray Ganapathi The performer wears a chest piece and holds 'chootus' or coconut leaves in his hands and the white dhoti worn by the performer is tied at knee level. (Refer to Figure 16)

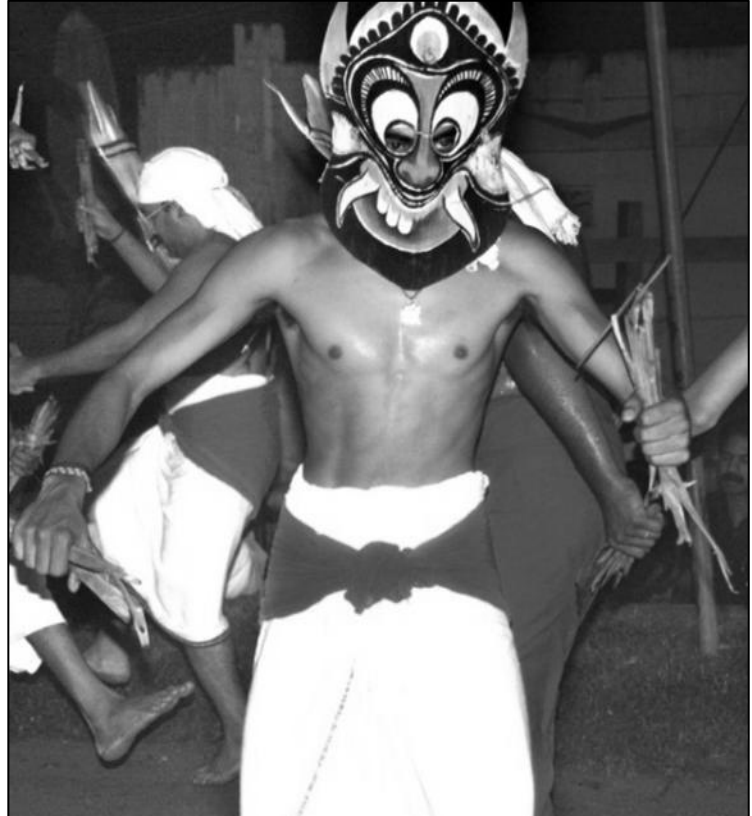


FIGURE 16: GANAPATHI KOLAM – THE AUSPICIOUS ONE

The initial dance steps of the Pishachu Kolam are known as 'Ganapathi Padivattam'. These basic dance steps are the first to be taught during training and are common for all performances associated with kolams. The songs composed for this kolam are related to Shiva and Paravathi⁵⁰.

⁴⁸Varier, Raja. *The Legacy of Padayani*. Thiruvananthapuram: Information and Public Relations Dept., Govt. of Kerala, 2005. Pg.N. 21

⁴⁹Photo Courtesy: Kailash G. Kadammanitta

⁵⁰Varier, Raja. *The Legacy of Padayani*. Thiruvananthapuram: Information and Public Relations Dept., Govt. of Kerala, 2005. Pg.N.22

Kaalan Kolam

The Kaalan Kolam is one of the performances which depict the concept of dance drama since it conveys the infamous story of Markandeya (Refer to Figure 17). Through the same performer multiple characters are portrayed which consist of Yama, the god of death, Markandeya and Shiva which are symbolized by the mask, a sword and flame torch. The Kaalan kolam includes a headgear, chest piece, fake eyes and teeth. The headgear shows three faces which represent the three faces of Shiva. The face is painted black by charcoal and red silk is worn around the waist of the performer which is ornamented with coconut leaves. (Refer to Fig 18) Ten to nine paalas are required to prepare the Kaalan Kolam. There are more than five songs associated with this performance which depicts the tale of Markandeya.⁵¹

It is believed that Markandeya was a gifted individual, born to a Brahman couple as a result of a boon given to them by Lord Shiva. However, Markandeya was prophesized to die at the age of sixteen. Upon finding out his fate at the age of fifteen, Markandeya began to worship Shiva fervently and on Markandeya's sixteenth birthday, Kaalan or Yama arrived to fulfil the prophecy. But he was interrupted as Lord Shiva appeared and saved Markandeya from



FIGURE 17: KAALAN KOLAM – PLAYING 3 CHARACTERS IN 1 PERFORMANCE

Kaalan, engaging into a furious battle with him. This myth is part of the Hindu mythology, demonstrating that Padayani has been influenced by mainstream Brahmanic religion.

⁵¹Varier, Raja. *The Legacy of Padayani*. Thiruvananthapuram: Information and Public Relations Dept., Govt. of Kerala, 2005. Pg.N.22

This performance lasts for one and a half hours. Other than the main performer there is one other performer as well who participates in this performance. Since the main performer is wearing the Kaalan Kolam, he plays the role of all the three characters sequentially; the other performer changes his roles in accordance to the interactions being depicted. For example, when the performer wearing the Kaalan Kolam is Yama, the other performers become Shiva or Markandeya. The performer wearing the Kolam holds a sword in his right hand and a torch in the left. The torch symbolizes ‘Panda’ or the boon given to Markandeya by Shiva. The sword being taken away from Kaalan Kolam symbolizes Kaalan or Yama being killed by Shiva. This performance requires the dancer to be extremely fit and flexible along with an exceptional sense of rhythm.⁵²

Marutha Kolam

The performance of the Marutha kolam is a dance drama as well. It depicts the



FIGURE 18: MARUTHA KOLAM – THE ORIGINAL

relationship between a mother and her children (Refer to Figure 18). Expressions of motherhood, humour as well as worship are seen to merge together in this dance. The mannerisms of a housewife and motherly affection are reflected through the performer’s feminine movements in this Kolam performance. The performers in this dance include the main character, the Marutha Kolam, and several other performers that act as her children. The Marutha Kolam includes not only a headgear but also a mask and chest piece with conical breasts. Twelve paalas of the areca nut tree

are required to make this kolam. Long blades of grass are attached to the Kolam to represent long hair. The performer carries a broom and a grain-sifter. The face of the performer donning the Marutha Kolam is coloured black using charcoal powder with

⁵²Varier, Raja. *The Legacy of Padayani*. Thiruvananthapuram: Information and Public Relations Dept., Govt. of Kerala, 2005. Pg.N.22

oil⁵³ He also wears false teeth and large eyes made of the paalas of areca nut, which form a part of the kolam.

During the performance Marutha is seen husking paddy, sweeping the floor, breastfeeding the children as well as teaching them how to fight battles. The performers who act as her children hide within the audience as the Marutha Kolam tries to find them using comic gestures and frightening howls. All the performers dance in a synchronized manner. The performers wear masks and big chest chains⁵⁴. The colour of the costumes worn by the performers is usually green.

The Marutha Kolam is believed to cure chicken pox or small pox. A plausible reason provided by Mr. Santosh Kumar and Mr. Pressanen Kumar, Padayani performers, could be that during the summer season, Kerala becomes very hot which results in an increase in the cases of chicken or small pox in the area. Subsequently when people leave their houses at night to watch the Padayani performance, the cool air outside acts as a cure for the chicken or small pox and leads to a fast recovery.

Maadan Kolam

The Maadan Kolam represents a demon (Refer to Figure 19). A single Maadan Kolam appears on each day of the Padayani festival with two Maadan Kolams never appearing on the same day. The mask of the Maadan Kolam is made from a single paala of the areca palm tree. Chetta Maadan, Pulli Maadan and Chudala Maadan are some forms of the Maadan Kolam that are well-known among the locals.⁵⁵

⁵³Varier, Raja. *The Legacy of Padayani*. Thiruvananthapuram: Information and Public Relations Dept., Govt. of Kerala, 2005. Pg.N.24

⁵⁴Varier, Raja. *The Legacy of Padayani*. Thiruvananthapuram: Information and Public Relations Dept., Govt. of Kerala, 2005. Pg.N. 24

⁵⁵Varier, Raja. *The Legacy of Padayani*. Thiruvananthapuram: Information and Public Relations Dept., Govt. of Kerala, 2005. Pg.N.23



FIGURE 19: MAADAN AND PAKSHI KOLAM(LEFT TO RIGHT) – THE EVIL SPIRITS⁵⁶

Pakshi Kolam

Pakshi Kolam is another dance drama depicting the story of the demon Bakasura's attempt to kill Krishna, also borrowed from the Hindu mythology. Bakasura was supposed to be a half-human and half-stork, which may be the cause of his association with birds (pakshis). The performer's movements are structured in a way that it represents a bird through their graceful and flowing movements. It is said that the Pakshi Kolam represents evil spirits that attack children thus reiterating the belief that this kolam protects children from such spirits.

⁵⁶Kadammanittapadayani." *Kadammanittapadayani*. N.p., n.d. Web. 1 Feb. 2014. <http://kadammanittapadayani.com/?page_id=164>.

Kuthira Kolam

Kuthira Kolam is a dance performance which shows four performers dancing with horses thus garnering the label of a Horse Kolam as well (Refer to Figure 20)⁵⁷. The horses are made of sticks and coconut leaves. The performance is supposed to depict the historical story of a king's trade relation with the Arabs for the purchase of Arabian horses. The dancers represent Arabs and attempt to imitate the movements of a horse by moving in circles while jumping periodically. This story can be linked to the extensive trade between Kerala and Middle East for pepper in the seventeenth century.⁵⁸



FIGURE 20: KUTHIRA KOLAM – MEN ON HORSES

⁵⁷Photo Courtesy: Kailash G. Kadammanitta

⁵⁸Thomas, P. J. "Kerala In Early Days." *Kerala Studies*. Prof. A. Gopala Menon Commemoration Volume. With a Foreword by Sri K.P. Kesava Menon ... Edited by Dr. P.K. Narayana Pillai. By NARAYANA PILLAI Puthillathu Krishna and Acyuth Gopala. MENON. Alliance Printing Works: Trivandrum, 1955. Pg 29

Kaanjari Maala Kolam

The next performance to take place is the Kaanjari Maala Kolam, also known as the snake Kolam (Refer to Figure 21). Kaanjari Maala is said to be the original mother goddess. It is said to be a developed form of Marutha who is the actual Mother of Kerala. This Kolam has two snakes called Yeri Naga and Para Naga which represent the ornaments worn by Kaanjari Maala. This Kolam requires a hundred to a hundred and one sheaths of areca nut leaves. Due to the immense quantity of leaves required to create this kolam it takes a whole night for the kolam makers to finish it.



FIGURE 21: KANJARI MAALA KOLAM – THE PRIMAL GODDESS⁵⁹

⁵⁹Kadammanittapadayani." *Kadammanittapadayani*. N.p., n.d. Web. 1 Feb. 2014. <http://kadammanittapadayani.com/?page_id=173>.

Bhairavi Kolam

The Bhairavi Kolam is one of the main Kolams that is performed in Padayani (Refer to Figure 22). It is one of the largest and most important Kolams. It is the actual representation of the Devi (Mother Goddess) where she is depicted as the creator and the destroyer. The songs that accompany this Kolam are about the Devi. According to Vasudevan Pillai, the Mother Goddess is the totality of light and Bhairavi is the totality of sound. The performer's body movements are projected more in this dance as his hands are not free due to carrying the Kolam. These movements are brisk and gentle⁶⁰.



FIGURE 22: BHAIRAVI KOLAM— TOTALITY OF SOUND⁶¹

The Bhairavi Kolam is the heaviest as it weighs a hundred and twenty kilograms. A hundred and one sheaths are required to make this Kolam. At least 15 people are required to pick up the Bhairavi Kolam to place it on the performer. This headgear is worn by the performer who also wears a breast plate. There is a wooden structure made from areca nut tree and bamboo that helps the performer support the structure. The Kolam has a green face and depicts an elephant and lion on the two sides of the Kolam. Like the Kaanjari Maala Kolam, this kolam takes a lot of time to be shaped and finished as it gets finished by sunrise. This is the last Kolam performed in Kadammanitta during the Padayani festival.

⁶⁰Varier, Raja. *The Legacy of Padayani*. Thiruvananthapuram: Information and Public Relations Dept., Govt. of Kerala, 2005. Pg.N.23

⁶¹Photo Courtesy: Marc Lambert

Trance

All the performances in Padayani have their own unique representations, beliefs and style of performance. However there is one aspect which is evident in all of them; trance. At the end of every performance the performer loses his sensibilities and is carried out of the courtyard (kalam) by his fellow performers.

According to Reghu Kumar, trance is one of the reasons why Padayani is also termed as “Cosmic Theatre”, since the performer is able to elevate from the mundane life into a spiritual realm. The vibrations produced by the thappu and other percussion instruments generate a rhythmic energy which is transmitted into the performer’s body. The performer in his kolam performs steps which, in tandem with the pace of the music and vocals, gradually increase towards the end, elevating the performer to a state of trance.

However before we penetrate deeper into the aspect of trance in Padayani we must understand trance as a concept in itself. Trance has several interpretations and associations with other states of mind. According to the English, trance is a “sleep-like state, as in deep hypnosis, appearing also in hysteria and in some spiritualistic mediums, with limited sensory and motor contact, with subsequent amnesia of what has occurred during the state”⁶². An alternate definition is provided by the French whereby they compare trance with the state of ecstasy, “a mental state characterized by profound contemplation accompanied by a loss of sensitivity”⁶³. When in trance, an individual is considered to be in a completely different frame of mind, his relationship with the external world is disturbed, making him susceptible to certain neurophysiologic disturbances.⁶⁴ There is a drastic increase in his abilities, which manifests itself through the individual’s behaviour.

⁶²Rouget, Gilbert. *Music and Trance: A Theory of the Relations between Music and Possession*. Chicago: University of Chicago, 1985. Pg 3

⁶³Rouget, Gilbert. *Music and Trance: A Theory of the Relations between Music and Possession*. Chicago: University of Chicago, 1985. Pg 4

⁶⁴ Rouget, Gilbert. *Music and Trance: A Theory of the Relations between Music and Possession*. Chicago: University of Chicago, 1985. Pg 3

The behaviour of an individual in the state of trance can be quite diverse, ranging from extraordinary displays to extremely discreet behaviour. There are certain symptoms which an individual in the state of trance is supposed to show, such as “trembling, shuddering, swooning, lethargy, convulsions, large extrusions of the tongue, paralysis of a limb, insensitivity to pain, noisy breathing, fixed stare”⁶⁵ etc. Moreover there are two other principle symptoms which characterize the individual as being completely engrossed in trance. One symptom is the incapability of seeing anything beyond the present scenario and thus entering into solitude and the second one being having no recollection of ever going into a state of trance once the individual has emerged out of this particular frame of mind.⁶⁶

Subsequently when one examines the generic state of trance – in the art form of Padayani, one realizes that through engaging in an art form such as this one does go into a state of trance. In the words of Prasanna Kumar, the dancer works to attain a trance and to avoid the devilish existence. Similarly, Marc Lambert, an expert and Padayani dancer, believes that trance is in fact a privilege which is being denied elsewhere due to Brahmanic values and beliefs since it involves the liberation of the soul and body. Attaining a state of trance is believed to be a form of respect to the deity whose kolam the performer embodies, and failing to do so would be considered disrespectful.

⁶⁵Rouget, Gilbert. *Music and Trance: A Theory of the Relations between Music and Possession*. Chicago: University of Chicago, 1985. Pg 13

⁶⁶ Rouget, Gilbert. *Music and Trance: A Theory of the Relations between Music and Possession*. Chicago: University of Chicago, 1985. Pg 4

4.5 Festival

Padayani is performed annually by the villagers for prevention from pollution and protection from diseases, untimely deaths and other dangers. This is done by praying to manifestations of natural elements such as air, sky, beauty, time and death. The central deity in Padayani is the Mother Goddess, which is Kali. The village goddesses are also associated with Kali. The villagers believe that failure to perform Padayani will incur the wrath of Kali, creating a pandemonium in the village.

Moreover, the festival is also a form of ritualistic worship developed in an agrarian society. It is performed during the harvest season to ensure a good yield. Padayani is celebrated in Kadammanitta from the first day of Medam to the tenth day, which approximately lies in the month of April. Padayani is celebrated only at night as creation is associated with darkness, which can only be achieved at night.

“Padayani is performed at night because the time for creation is in darkness. People are in darkness. Light is what people need to attain.”

- Prasanna Kumar; Padayani ashan, vocalist and percussionist

The first night of the festival begins with the Chootuveipu, which is the ritual for calling Bhadrakali outside the temple. The priest of the temple, a Brahman, lights a lamp (*chootu*) made of coconut leaves inside the temple and give the *chootu* to the senior most ashan. The ashan uses the chootu to light a lamp which is placed on the stone kept outside the temple for this purpose. (Refer to Fig, 25) The villagers call Kali out by hooting ‘ee hui’ three times. The fire symbolizes the essence of Kali, which is brought out from within the temple. The villagers make sure that the lamp keeps burning throughout the night to ensure that Kali’s presence is eternal. After that, the goddess is called sent back inside at the end of the night by hooting ‘ee hui’.



FIGURE 23: THE SACRED STONE – THE SYMBOLIC THRONE OF KALI

Every night begins with the senior most ashan of the village playing a specific rhythm on the thappu from four sides of the temple. This rhythm, known to a select few, is called Jeeva thaala. This rhythm is played by the ashan to call the goddess out and he is the one who sends her back inside the temple.

The second night consists of Thappu Melam, where the thappu is played for 1.5 to 2 hours. After this night, every night begins with Thappu Melam. On the third night, along with Chenda Melam the villagers perform Pulavruttam, Thavadi and Paradesi along with kolam performances in the following sequence – Ganapathi, Marutha, Kaalan and Yakshi. The same sequence is followed on the fourth, fifth and seventh day. In addition to the above mentioned performances, the sixth night also contains the Pakshi Kolam and the ritual of Adavi, which is the story of Aiyappa portrayed through villagers carrying a palm tree and placing it over fire.

The eighth night is the most important night in the Padayani celebrations and is known as Velliya Padayani, meaning Padayani celebrated on a grand scale. On this day, the kolams are bigger and the celebrations are extensive. A Bhairavi kolam of hundred to hundred in one paalas is made in Kadammanitta for this night. The celebrations go on from midnight to seventy-thirty a.m. and consist of all the different kinds of arts performed in Padayani.

It is believed that the Devi sleeps on the ninth night. The tenth and final day of the festival begins with Thappu Melam, Thavadi, Pulavruttam and Paradesi in the morning. The villagers draw a picture of Bhadrakali inside the temple using natural powders in a ritual called Kalamezhthitti. At night, the Brahman priest of the temple carries the jeevitha (carriage) around the temple either five or seven times. He is preceded by women and children carrying lamps (*divas*) and flowers. This ritual is known as Ezhunnallathu.



FIGURE 24: THE RITUAL OF POOPADDA

At dawn they perform the Poopadda ritual, in which a man sits on the ground with a red cloth covering his body and head. He starts shaking his body and throwing leaves over his head. The leaves signify flowers and this ritual is done in order to remove impurities and ask Kali's forgiveness for any wrongdoing during the festival. This ritual ensures that Kali has been pacified. Finally, the Padayani performers form the shape of a snake boat and praise mother goddess while singing songs.

This marks the end of the ten-day festival of Padayani. Dance and drama, kolams and music, worship and rituals are intricately woven together through the beliefs and traditions of the villagers. For them, Padayani is not just a festival that happens once a year; it is a part of their lifestyle, a part of their identity.

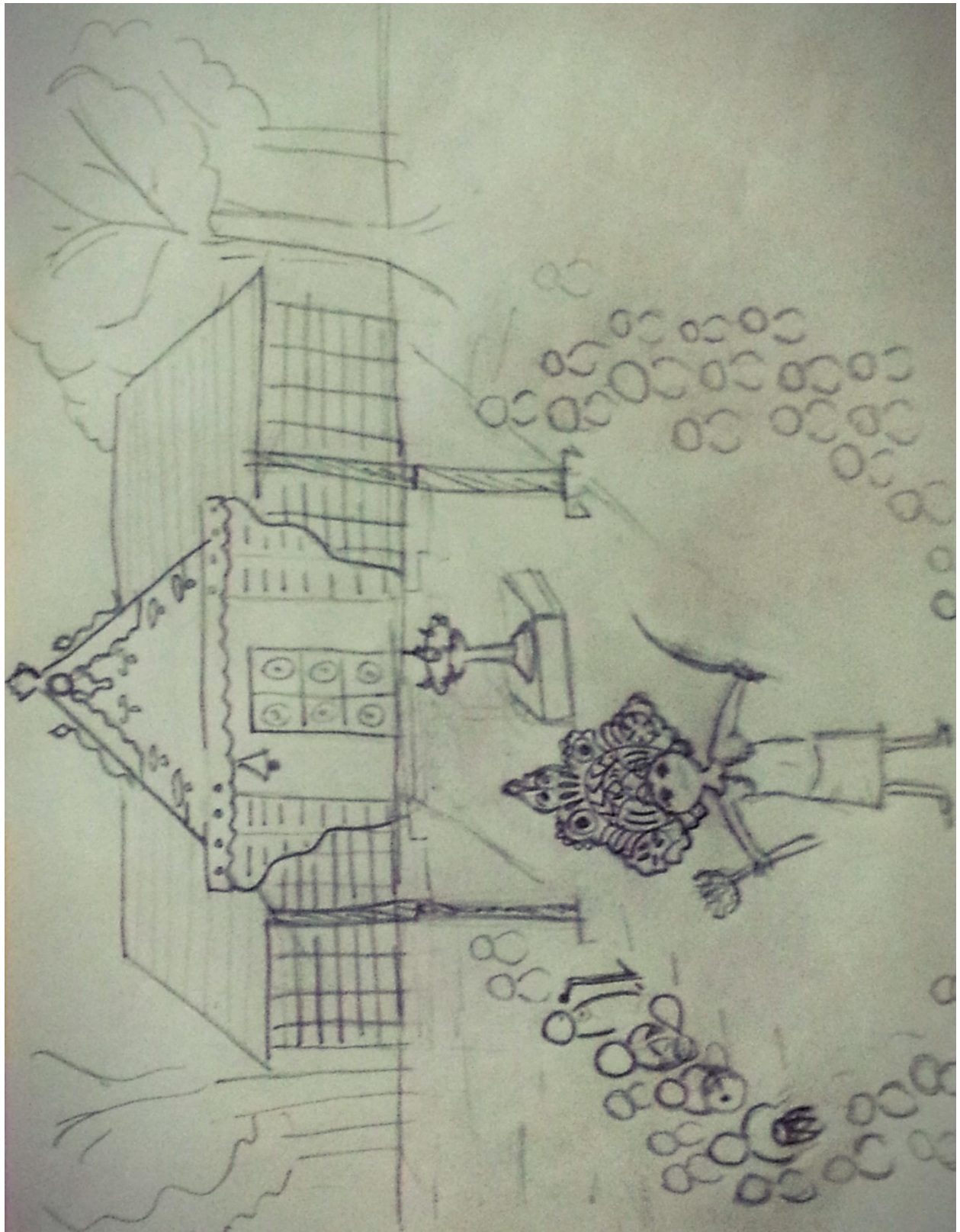


FIGURE 25: PADAYANI PERFORMANCE IN THE KALAM

4. DATA ANALYSIS

B. INTERPRETATIONS AND ANALYSIS

In the previous section we documented the different components of Padayani, their characteristics and significance. In this section we will analyse the given data by co-relating these components and attempting to understand their influence on the people, society and culture of the Kadammanitta village.

4.5 Performers

One of the major components of Padayani is the performers. They are not only artists; they are also the medium through which the entire village expresses its devotion to the Mother Goddess. On the other hand, they also have their individual beliefs and ideologies regarding Padayani and trance. We have attempted to analyse their relationship with the audience, with society and with themselves.

“There are no viewers in Padayani, they are all performers”

- Santosh Kumar; Padayani performer

Though Padayani is theoretically performed for the Mother Goddess (Kali), practically, the villagers become the spectators during a Padayani performance. It is an enjoyable and entertaining spectacle for the onlookers as well as the performers. The bond which the performers share with the spectators becomes one of the striking features of Padayani. Even though the other villagers are spectators, they contribute in some way to the culmination of the Padayani festival. Through making kolams, thappus and other instruments or by simply hooting during the performance, they empower the performers to worship the Mother Goddess and purify the entire village.

Since Padayani is performed in the kalam (courtyard) of Kali temple, there is no stage or boundary to mark the distinction between performer and spectator. The audience sits or stands on the ground in a circle, defining the temporary boundary inside which the performer performs as seen in Figure -. Thus the performer thinks not about performance, but about celebration.

In performances such as Paradesi and Velichappadu, the performers have direct interactions with the audience. The Paradesi performance keeps the spectators guessing which one of the performers is the real Paradesi. On the other hand, in Velichappadu the performer attempts to establish morals and values and give social messages under the guise of comedy and satire. Other performances such as Marutha Kolam and Kaalan Kolam include the performers rushing towards the audience or moving within the space occupied by the spectators (Refer to Figure). This is done during the Marutha Kolam performance in order to depict a mother searching for her children and the children rushing out from the audience. In the performance of Kaalan Kolam, the performer attempts to frighten the spectators by rushing towards them while depicting the God of Death. Even if the performer goes into trance the audience is not fazed by it but await the next performer to enter. At times they also help in trying to calm the performer down and carry him away from the kalam.

Since the performers and spectators are already acquainted with each other outside the sphere of Padayani, when they are not performing but engaging in their normal occupations, the performers feel a sense of familiarity and uncritical appreciation towards their efforts.

Once a performer masters the art of Padayani, it remains in his memory forever. This was substantiated by our observations at the Kadammanitta Kalari when two dancers performing the Anthara Yakshi did not need to practice it before, and with just a few words and communication with the eyes they were able to perform in sync.

Moreover, the Padayani artists have a dual life since Padayani is not a means of income but a tradition which sustains their culture. It is a part of the performer's identity which they keep coming back to throughout their life. Padayani performers such as Reghu Kumar have moved outside Kadammanitta for occupational purposes, but they come back to Kadammanitta every year to participate in a Padayani performance. However, this does not mean it binds them to the art form or the village. There are several performers who would stop performing Padayani in order to concentrate on earning a living for their family as well.

The performers have different perspectives regarding Padayani and what it means to them. Some performers share a very devotional bond with this art form, and with Mother Goddess. They consider her to be the supreme deity; their protector and destroyer. They even attribute their skills in dance or percussion or singing to her grace. Another few identify with Padayani on a spiritual level, linking trance to reaching the highest level of spirituality. For them, Padayani is about understanding the meaning of life and self-exploration. For the others, the role of Padayani in their life has not been pondered upon. They perceive Padayani as a part of their culture and traditions.

4.6 Society depicted through Padayani

It is believed that Padayani evolved in the pre-Dravidian era and was later infiltrated by the Brahmanism and the system of caste-hierarchy. Since Padayani has been passed down through oral transmission for a very long period of time, tracing its origin to Pre-Dravidian society is extremely difficult as the information available is minimal and inconsistent. The history can only be traced back to the advent of Brahmanism in Kerala, when Padayani did have some caste differentiation. The Kurup caste was solely involved in kolam making whereas the Nair community would perform Padayani.

Since the entire village participates in Padayani, the art form has certain influences on the society and vice versa. This section attempts to understand the society of Kadammanitta through Padayani.

One of the major roles of Padayani is creating awareness regarding current events and social issues. The role of the performances Velichappadu and Paradesi is to highlight social problems using comical and satirical methods and establishing morals and values.

Communal aspect

Padayani is a communal form of worship, which binds the villagers together in their shared beliefs and traditions. It is performed by a select few for ensuring the physical and mental well-being of the entire village. Once a kolam is performed, it is believed that not just the performer but the entire village becomes purified and is rid of evil.

Even though a few men perform Padayani, it is still celebrated by the entire village who take part in some way or the other. The performer performs for the villagers, thus fulfilling their wishes for a better harvest and agricultural seasons. Group performances such as Pulavruttam, Thavadi and Sundara Yakshi require co-ordination and familiarity with other performers, which helps to foster this sense of kinship.

Resembling social institutions like family or school, it is a medium for the villagers to develop social ties. In this manner it fosters unity among the villagers and becomes a pretext for the villagers to come together in a kind of communal gathering, instilling intimate relationships with others.

Socio-economic status

Padayani most likely evolved as a form of worship for the lower castes in a society dominated by Brahmins.⁶⁷ While claiming absence of caste differentiation, Vasudevan Pillai stated that the only role Brahmins play in Padayani is that of the priest, who is associated with the temple exclusively and only thematically transfers Kali from the temple to the ashan outside the temple in the form of a symbolic lamp.

“Brahmins have no authority in Padayani”, Pillai responded on the mention of Brahmins. On being asked if Brahmins were also welcome to participate in Padayani, he said, “They cannot do that (participate). The whole village is standing there. There are one or two priests. That cannot happen.” The performance of Paradesi also shows Brahmins in a comic light. Thus the exclusion of Brahmins slowly became apparent, wherein they equated the entire Brahmin caste with the one or two temple priests and did not welcome them to participate in Padayani.

Presently, the village of Kadammanitta has been fairly successful in overlooking the social hierarchy and establishing equality, though the predisposition against Brahmins still remains. Every villager is free to participate in any component of Padayani, and there is no restriction on the basis of caste or social standing.

The decision regarding which kolam is performed by who rests solely on the guru, who on the basis of expertise and stamina chooses the performers for the particular kolams. Thus Padayani becomes a pretext for ridding the village from social and economic inequality. In Kadammanitta Village, Padayani performers are treated as equals irrespective of their social and economic status.

Gender

Though Kadammanitta Padayani attempts to evade socio-economic differences introduced by Brahmanism, it still remains an art form evolved exclusively for men. Not only are women not allowed to perform, but there is also a taboo on touching the kolams, thappus or any other object related to Padayani. On questioning the villagers regarding this, we got a variety of reasons explaining this restriction on women.

⁶⁷J., Devika. "Possibilities in Eco feminist Politics for Contemporary Kerala." *Samyukta*. N.p., n.d. Web. <<http://samyukta.info/site/book/export/html/21>>.

Reghu Kumar explained that Padayani represented creation through the sexual union of the performer with the Mother Goddess through the performance which culminated in trance. This union would not be possible if a woman performed. On the other hand, Vasudevan Pillai said that women are equated with the Mother Goddess and revered in Padayani; hence it is performed only by men. On asking the performers, they reasoned that women's menstrual cycle is unpredictable and it makes them impure. Hence they cannot perform or even touch the kolams or thappus. The final logic provided by Reghu Kumar and Marc Lambert was that women lack the physical capacity to perform for more than an hour.

Nevertheless, Padayani is a ritualistic art form based on the portrayal of women. It is performed mainly for Kali. The Thappu Melam is believed to be an attempt to define the physical form of Kali. Most of the characters portrayed through kolams such as the different Yakshis, Bhairavi, Kaanjari Maala and Marutha are female. Since the performers essentially portray female characters, their movements are extremely graceful and feminine. Through Padayani, the male performers are able to embrace their feminine side and yet be extremely secure about their masculinity. They believe that portraying femininity brings them closer to Mother Goddess and gives them insight into the minds of the women around them; their mothers, wives and sisters. After the performance they are able to revert back to their original mannerisms.

4.7 Religion and Rituals

Religious Aspect

As discussed before, the claim that Padayani is Pre-Dravidian can neither be proved nor dismissed since there is no detailed information available on the elements of Pre-Dravidian religion and no clear demarcation of the time when it was practised.⁶⁸ However, the religious beliefs and ideologies in Padayani can be linked to Village Hinduism, which is neither Vedic nor Puranic Hinduism. It refers to the Hindu religion that developed in the village and rural communities in India. The motivations for the practice of this religion include the importance of a good yield, fear of outbreaks of diseases, untimely deaths and need to protect children.⁶⁹ These motivations can also be seen in Padayani in the beliefs behind the performances of kolams such as Maadan, Yakshis, Kaalan and Pakshi.

Another important feature of Village Hinduism is the goddess as the chief deity.⁷⁰ In Padayani, this goddess is the Mother Goddess; Kali. Since this is a part of Hindu religion, it is also influenced by mainstream Hinduism. These influences can be seen in Padayani in the form of inclusion of stories from Hindu epics such as the story of Markandeya and Shiva narrated through the Kaalan Kolam and the story of Krishna and Bakasura narrated through the Pakshi Kolam. The association of Mother Goddess with Kali is one of the major visible influences of mainstream religion on Padayani.

The people of Kadammanitta do not consider Padayani to be an exclusive Hindu form of worship. People from other religions such as Islam and Christianity are welcome to participate in Padayani. One of the Padayani experts Marc Lambert, a French national, has performed the Marutha kolam twice.

“Padayani does not restrict religion. It is beyond religion.”

- Prasanna Kumar; ashan, vocalist, percussionist

⁶⁸Elgood, Heather. "Exploring the Roots of Village Hinduism in South Asia." *World Archaeology* 36.3 (2004): 326-42. *JSTOR.Web*.

⁶⁹Elgood, Heather. "Exploring the Roots of Village Hinduism in South Asia." *World Archaeology* 36.3 (2004): 326-42. *JSTOR.Web*.

⁷⁰Elgood, Heather. "Exploring the Roots of Village Hinduism in South Asia." *World Archaeology* 36.3 (2004): 326-42. *JSTOR.Web*.

Rituals

“Rituals are basically guidelines that tell us how the performance is to be done.”

- Vasudevan Pillai; vocalist, percussionist

The rituals practiced in Padayani are based on the shared beliefs and ideologies of the villagers. Since the origin of Padayani is linked to the story of Kali, most of the rituals in Padayani are centred on the belief of an angry Kali who will create havoc if not appeased. Kali is seen as the destroyer who, when appeased, becomes the protector.

However, there is no evidence of idol worship in Padayani. Kali is brought outside the temple in the form of sacred fire. The villagers believe that the lamp represents the essence of Kali, and once that essence is outside the temple, the idol kept inside remains a mere physical form. However, there is some ambiguity regarding whether the kolams such as Yakshis and Pakshi represent particular spirits or are offerings to the spirits. Nevertheless, these spirits are not considered to be deities, but rather they are personifications of the fears or problems faced by the villagers.

According to Padayani expert, Vasudevan Pillai, the rituals in Padayani are based on four concepts (Madans) used to pacify her. The first Madan, Sama, is the narration of stories through satire. Satire is an important part of Padayani and is used to highlight social norms and issues. This Madan includes performances such as Velichappadu and Paradesi. The second Madan is Danam, which means donation. This concept includes the donation to Kali in the form of food or fruits as well as the donation of blood to Kali (Adavi). The third Madan is called Idibadha. It consists of the use of black magic to pacify the Mother Goddess represented as fire. The kolams are supposed to be the carriers of black magic rituals. The final Madan is preservation, which means the preservation of Padayani by the villagers themselves. If they stop performing Padayani, the ritualistic art form will become extinct.

Thus the performances in Padayani are themselves considered to be rituals, making Padayani a ritualistic art form.

4.8 Importance of nature

“(Padayani) represents nature in its varied vibrancy and vitality”⁷¹

Padayani is one of the rare Indian art forms which highlight the concept of harmony with nature. Everything from the *paala* on which kolams are written to the colours used in them is made from materials obtained from nature. The thappus are also made from natural materials. The colours used in Padayani symbolize the Panchbhutas; the five natural elements.

Padayani not only promotes proximity to nature, it also includes the worship of nature. Many deities worshipped in Padayani are related to nature. The Yakshis are probably non-mainstream deities and are personifications of the natural elements. The villagers believe that all these elements such as fire, air, water and sky are purified by the Yakshis. The purification of all elements leads to the advent of the Sundara Yakshi, which personifies beauty in nature.

Other than Yakshis, the Mother Goddess herself has several interpretations and representations. Kali is symbolically represented through fire, which is a natural element. According to Reghu Kumar, before the development of temple worship sacred groves were worshipped and Padayani was performed in front of them. Sacred groves are also called Kavu (small jungles) and are considered to be the seat of the deity or the mother goddess.

In addition to that, sacred groves were also worshipped in connection to Yakshis and serpents. However due to the penetration of Tantric and Brahmanic rituals these deities were taken out from the groves and sculpted in shrines.

Moreover, Padayani is only performed outside the temple; in open air and on the ground. It is never performed indoors or on a stage. The setting of Padayani itself reflects the importance of nature. After the performance, the kolams smaller in sizes are brought to cultivation fields and are placed there in the form of scarecrows to protect agriculture. Similarly, Bhairavi and Kaanjari Maala which are bigger kolams are hung on a Peepal tree, since it was initially believed that Peepal tree was a deity.

⁷¹Varrier, Raja. "Glistening Theatrics of Padayani." *Kerala Calling* (2003): 32-34.

Thus harmony with nature becomes an important aspect of Padayani.

4.9 Therapeutic aspect

Padayani is not only an art form that provides people with a mode of worship; it is supposed to have a therapeutic side as well. The earliest kolam makers were probably astrologers and medicine men. Padayani is said to cure illnesses like epilepsy, impotency, vomiting etc.

It is believed that Padayani not only heals the performer, but the entire village. The villagers believe that diseases are caused due to mental and physical impurities, which are washed away with the performance of Padayani. Performing the Marutha kolam is believed to cure small-pox. The Pishachu kolam is intended for treating fever whereas the Yakshi kolams help in pregnancy. The Pakshi kolam helps in protecting children. Though these properties have not been scientifically proven, the villagers claim to have witnessed them.

According to Reghu Kumar, illnesses can be cured in two ways – through medicine or magic, and Padayani consists of both. Attempts have been made to identify the medicinal properties in the materials used to make kolams. Since they are made from natural materials, it is possible that some of them might have medicinal properties, but there have been no substantial findings.

The thappus used for practice are made from the wood of blackboard (*Alstonia Scholaris*) and golden shower (*Cassia Fistula*) trees. These trees have certain medicinal properties and their barks are used in treating skin infections.⁷² Moreover, the steps have been designed in a particular way in order to ensure mental and physical well-being since wrong placement of the foot on the ground can result in brain damage.

However, none of these explain the therapeutic qualities of Padayani. According to Santosh, it is possible that for a person suffering from chicken pox, witnessing Padayani in the cool night air would help him get well faster. This could have been attributed to the Marutha Kolam.

⁷²"Choose a Plant." *National Tropical Botanical Garden*.N.p., 2014. Web.<http://www.ntbg.org/plants/choose_a_plant.php>.

Another plausible explanation is that the villagers see improvements in their health due to the atmosphere of a Padayani performance and the strong belief that Padayani is therapeutic.

Padayani is an art form that illustrates and influences the society and culture of Kadammanitta. Thus, a study of the different components of Padayani helps in understanding the people of Kadammanitta; their beliefs and lifestyle.

5. CONCLUSION

When we embarked upon the journey of Discover India Program, we had certain expectations about our research and field trip. Finding a topic that appealed to all of us was a challenge and one that culminated in the finding of Padayani. Initially there was very little information available on Padayani, which we perceived as a test of our abilities.

Starting out with Google as our sole support we were able to find out when, where and how Padayani was performed. It led us to two districts of Kerala, Alappuzha and Pathanamthitta where Padayani is primarily performed. With some debate and discussions we brought the hammer down on Kadammanitta village in Pathanamthitta district, one of the most famous villages for Padayani performances.

What made Padayani stand out was the claim that it descended from the Pre-Dravidian era and its use of Kolams. An era with uncertain elements was offering us a whole art form to study!

A train journey of thirty two hours took us to the small town of Chengannur, our residence for the coming week. From here we commuted to the Kadammanitta Village, where the art form of Padayani awaited us. As the frequency of our visits to Kadammanitta increased we were overwhelmed with the amount of information Padayani as an art form had to offer. Through individually discovering each component; Vocals, Dance, Percussion, Kolams; we realized how Padayani was an ensemble of ritualistic expression.

We interviewed Padayani experts, performers, percussionists and kolam makers in order to gather information about Padayani and to understand what it meant to them. Since Padayani is a visual art form, we observed different components of the performances and the performers themselves. Using these techniques we were able to gain insight into the workings of the Kadammanitta village and the minds of the villagers which enabled us to change the focus of our research from Kolams to Padayani performed in Kadammanitta Village exclusively.

Padayani explores certain aspects of society which elevates it from a mere art form to a belief, a cult in itself. One such aspect is the relationship between the performers and the audience, which makes Padayani a very intimate form of worship more than a staged performance. It is a medium through which villagers associate and communicate with each other to celebrate their beliefs and traditions. It is an art form which within its boundaries provides for an egalitarian foundation for people from different castes, economic status and religion to also participate and perform.

In our quest for knowledge we also came across certain limitations which reflect on the patriarchal nature prevalent in Padayani. This art form is exclusively for males, where women have a minimal role. However, women play a significant role figuratively where men portray women and pray to them in the form of the Mother Goddess. Recently, they have also started taking part in the making of the kolams as well as form an interactive part of the audience as well.

Furthermore, what really amazed us was the way the kolams dictated the nature of the performance with exclusive percussion rhythms and songs dedicated to each kolam. The kolams embody the deep rooted beliefs and traditions of the village which are colorfully brought out and celebrated. Once the kolams are donned, the performer transforms into a beautiful or ferocious goddess, a lady or a nature spirit and leaves the entire audience awed by his performance.

Nature is an integral aspect of this art form. In many ways it is also the backbone of this art form. The kolams and thappus are made from natural materials and worship of natural elements is a significant part of Padayani. In addition to this, Padayani also has a therapeutic side; it is believed to cure physical and mental illnesses.

All of these aspects make Padayani an exceptional and fascinating art form. It is somewhat similar to other folk art forms of Kerala such as Theyyam. They are both folk art forms involving villagers using masks and trying to enter the state of trance. And they are both believed to have been developed as forms of worship by people of the lower castes. However, Theyyam is performed in North Kerala and Padayani is performed in South Kerala. Theyyam is based on the belief that the person wearing the mask becomes God whereas in Padayani, the performer tries to achieve trance in order to become one with the Mother Goddess.

Kalaripayettu, on the other hand, is the foundation of the basic movements in Padayani. The origin of Padayani can be traced back to the Nair soldiers and martial art techniques. Nonetheless, there is no other influence of Kalaripayettu on Padayani. While Kalaripayettu is a fighting art, Padayani is a performance in front of Mother Goddess.

According to Padayani expert Mr. Vasudevan Pillai, the classical form, Kathakali, has been derived from Padayani. There are some similarities between the two art forms. Seven out of eight possible endings (astakalasam) of a Kathakali performance are similar to the performance of Kaalan Kolam in Padayani; Otta (single), iretti (double), odi (running), chaadi (jumping), katti (twisting), vatta (circular) and panda (with fire). This theory requires further investigation as the initial Kathakali performers used Kolams as dressing for the different characters in Ramanattam.

In our view, these similarities or differences do not matter when one views Padayani as a whole. The vivid and varied representation of ancient concepts and beliefs makes Padayani unparalleled. These representations may have changed over time along with the society and culture that they characterize and influence, but beliefs that they portray remain constant.

For the villagers of Kadammanitta, Padayani is a way of life. We interviewed people who have migrated to different parts of the world, but still come back every year in order to perform Padayani. It thus becomes a part of their culture and defines their perceptions. It exemplifies a part of their identity. Padayani made us aware of the cultural diversity which exists in India.

Through the field trip, our apprehension regarding this project transformed into awe and intrigue. Padayani served to be a complete juxtapose from our own culture, from our beliefs. It made us feel we had arrived in a parallel universe all together. The people of Kadammanitta are impeccable hosts and went out of their way to ensure we received all the information one could possibly receive on Padayani. They were as excited to give the information as we were to receive it. At the end of our trip, we were all saddened to leave ‘God’s own country’. Overall, our research on Padayani was an amazing experience which enabled us in so many ways to form new perspectives and avenues of thought.

APPENDIX I

Glossary

Paala - a sheathing bract or pair of bracts

Irkili – stem of coconut leaf used as to held paalas together

Peepal – A kind of a tree

Kalari- a training center where Padayani is taught

Thappu -a percussion instrument exclusive to the art form of Padayani

Kaimani- a Padayani instrument

Chenda- a Padayani percussion instrument

‘Kaachi Kootu’- the act of heating the buffalo skin to tune it.

Thappu Melam – a Thappu concert.

Chootu – torch made out of coconut leaves

Ashan – a teacher or guru

Madans - The four concepts behind the Padayani rituals

Jeevitha - Carriage hoisted on the shoulder

APPENDIX II

Our On-field Encyclopaedia

Reghu Kumar

Padayani artist and Percussionist

Teacher in an unaided educational institution since 1985



Venu

Percussionist, Kolam maker

Photo not
available

Kadammanitta Vasudevan Pillai

Padayani vocalist and percussionist

Founder and President of Kadammanitta Gothra Kala Kalari

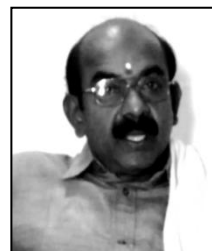
Made a trust – 10,000 annually goes to oldest person who knows most about Padayani



Prasanna Kumar

Padayani vocalist and thappu player

President of Gothra Kala Kalari



Marc Lambert

Padayani performer and researcher



Govind Kadammanitta

Son of Reghu Kumar

Dancer, Percussionist, Vocalist



Kailash Kadammanitta

Dancer, Percussionist, Vocalist



Haridas

President of Padayani Village Project



Arvindaksham

Kolam Maker



BIBLIOGRAPHY

Choose a Plant." National Tropical Botanical Garden. N.p., 2014. Web.<http://www.ntbg.org/plants/choose_a_plant.php>.

Devi, Ragini. "Festivals of the Goddess Bhagvati." *Dance Dialects of India*. N.p.: MotilalBanarsidass Publications, 1990. *Google Books*. Web.

Elgood, Heather. "Exploring the Roots of Village Hinduism in South Asia." *World Archaeology* 36.3 (2004): 326-42. *JSTOR*. Web.

Gaarden, Bonnie. *The Christian Goddess: Archetype and Theology in the Fantasies of George MacDonald*. N.p.: Government Institutes, 2011. *Google Books*. Web.
"Instruments." Padayani.N.p.,n.d. Web. 20 Nov. 2013.

"Kadammanittapadayani." *Kadammanittapadayani*. N.p., n.d. Web. 20 Nov. 2013.
Kumar, Kadammanitta Reghu. "Padayani A Perfect Life Science." Padayani Articles.N.p., n.d. Web. 16 Feb. 2014. <http://www.padayani.com/research%20reghu.htm>

Lambert, Marc Paul. "Padayani: A Foreigner's Impression." *Kerala Calling* (2007): 37. Web.

Lambert, Marc Paul. "The Aesthetics and Embodiment of Beliefs and Identity." Padayani. N.p., 19 May 2013. Web. <<http://www.padayani.com/frame/article.htm>>.

"Padayani." *Padayani*. N.p., n.d. Web. 20 Nov. 2013.

"Padayani." *Just Kerala RSS*. N.p., n.d. Web. 20 Nov. 2013<<http://www.justkerala.in/culture/kerala-dance-forms/padayani>>.

Pillai, Kadammanitta Vasudevan. *Pateni: The Traditional Epic Theatre*. Chengannur: Rainbow Book, 2009. Print.

"Placebo Effect." Oxford Dictionaries. Oxford University Press, n.d. Web.
Rouget, Gilbert. *Music and Trance: A Theory of the Relations between Music and Possession*. Chicago: University of Chicago, 1985. Pg 3

Roy, Catherine Rhea. "POSSESSED by Padayani." *The Hindu*. The Hindu, 16 June 2013. Web. 25 Dec. 2013. <<http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-features/tp-sundaymagazine/possessed-by-padayani/article4818904.ece>>.

"Some Missing Facts." *The Hindu: Friday Review Chennai and Tamil Nadu*. The Hindu, 21 Dec. 2007. Web.<<http://www.hindu.com/fr/2007/12/21/stories/2007122151510700.htm>>.

"The Art Forms of Kerala - Patayani." *Malayalam Resource Centre*. Malayalam Resource Centre, n.d. Web. 12 Dec. 2013. <<http://www.malayalamresourcecentre.org/Mrc/culture/artforms/patayani/main.html>>

"The Hindu : Kerala / Pathanamthitta News : Kadammanitta to Get 'padayani' Village. N.p., n.d. Web. Jan. 2014. <<http://www.hindu.com/2009/09/17/stories/2009091752670300.htm>>.

Thomas, P. J. "Kerala In Early Days." *Kerala Studies. Prof. A. GopalaMenon Commemoration Volume. With a Foreword by Sri K.P. KesavaMenon ... Edited by Dr. P.K. Narayana Pillai.* By NARAYANA PILLAI Puthillathu Krishna and AcyuthGopala. MENON. Alliance Printing Works: Trivandrum, 1955. 28-39. Print.

Varrier, Raja. "Glistening Theatrics of Padayani." *Kerala Calling* (2003): 32-34.

Varier, Raja. *The Legacy of Padayani.* Thiruvananthapuram: Information and Public Relations Dept., Govt. of Kerala, 2005. Print.

, and AnushkaRavishankar. *Masks and Performance with Everyday Materials.* Chennai: Tara Pub., 2003. *Google Books.* Web.

Zarrilli, Phillip B. *When the Body Becomes All Eyes: Paradigms, Discourses, and Practices of Power in Kalarippayattu, a South Indian Martial Art.* Delhi: Oxford UP, 1998. Print