

## CHAPTER-III

### CULTURE OF KERALA

#### Indian Culture- Perspective for Tourism

India for tourism purposes is projected as a cultural destination. Indian culture is unique in several ways. Indian culture shows a rich plurality of cultural traditions and not a monolithic entity. Cultural advance is a continuous process- reformulation and redefinition in the context of the demands that history makes as human beings is its hallmarks. Culture and tradition play an important role in the promotion of tourism. Kerala State is so much inclined to cultural and health tourism. Festivals, Ayurveda treatment, Martial Arts, untapped rivers, birds and beautiful beaches make Kerala a favorable tourist destination.

Cultural resources include places that provide for entertainment, health, sports, and religion. Health spas, centers for physical fitness, weight reduction and special medical treatment become travel objectives for many travelers. Successful tourism is not simply a matter of having better transportation and hotels but of adding a particular national flavor in keeping with traditional ways of life and in projecting a favourable image of the benefits to tourists of such goods and services.<sup>1</sup>

Kalari is a ritualistic heritage existed in Kerala from 12<sup>th</sup> Century AD which contributed to Martial Arts and Treatment. The place of martial training is known as a Kalari. Having completed a detailed literature review in the previous chapter, the strength of Kalarippayattu as well as healing therapy is discussed here. As a body

practice cultivated through tradition, the Mother of Martial Art Kalarippayattu has a universal application in many fields.

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

Buddhism believes in the ultimate evolution of Buddha as the knower of the three times-Past, Present and Future. This evolution is helped by the power of Meditation. Shaolin Temple developed into a full-fledged Martial art centre by blending Zen Buddhism, Kungfu and Meditation.

Bodhidharma is thought to have been born in Kanchipuram, near Madras, as the third son of a local king, Simhavarman. His teacher, Prajnatarā, changed the boy's name from Bodhitara to Bodhidharma. Following his father's death, Bodhidharma served Prajnatarā for many years spreading Buddhism. Upon Prajnatarā's death Bodhidharma left his monastery in India to follow his master's last wish that he go to China and spread the teaching. Buddha saint Bodhidharma carried Buddhism to the world outside as well as took with him the concept of scientifically

arranged steps of Kalarippayattu that can be found as the base of all martial arts like Karate and Kungfu. The disciple Bodhidharma has a great knowledge of martial arts, Veda, Yoga and Philosophy.

### **KALARI HAS GREAT SIGNIFICANCE IN NORTH KERALA CULTURE**

**3.1 Theyyam** is a ritualistic art form, so closely related to the Kalari system, in which the Theyyam dancer has to acquire skill in the use of sword and shield. Theyyattom ( Thirayattom) is still prominent in North Kerala. The total influence of Kalarippayattu can be seen in the ritualistic folk art Theyyam. For a Theyyam artist, Maipayattu and Angathari are to be practiced from childhood onwards to perform Veera Artiste. **Theyyam, Thira, Kathakali, Poorakali, Kolkali, Parichamuttukali, Chavittunatakam, Konganpada and Ochirakali** has INTERNAL CULTURAL INFLUENCE. Heroic Theyyam like Kathivannur Veeran, Thacholi Othenan enter with sword and shield and Urumi and are well-versed in Ankathari. Confined to the erstwhile Kolathunadu of Kannur and Kasargod districts of north Kerala, the annual season for Theyyam is a time of resplendence or brilliance.

Performances can be witnessed in temple spaces from mid-October until the end of mid-May. They are generally held during nights; based on beliefs and concepts of tree worship, serpent worship, hero worship and Kali worship. The chenda and elathalam are the accompanying instruments in Theyyam. There are about 45 different types of Theyyams including the Agni Theyyam where the dancer walks on fire.

Theyyam usually begins with the 'thottam paattu' narrating the myth of goddess/gods and is an invocation of the spirit and faith of the entire village. Sacred 'thottam pattu' is sung as part of Theyyam, Padayani, Mudi yettu and also in connection with the worship of serpent, Kali, Kannaki and others. Thottam is derived from the root 'thondruka' meaning 'to create'. The myth of the deity sung with the accompaniment of instrument is thottam pattu. The aim is to make appear the deity by the help of floor diagram or by making up one's body in the form of that deity. This ritual song is something that sprouts from the mind of the singer.





**THEYYAM**



### **Theyyam, a ritualistic Art form**

#### **3.2 PADAYANI**

Padayani is a ritual art form performed in the Devi temples of Central Travancore, Kerala. The performance that begins after harvest lasts 28 days that uses evocative language. The story most commonly dramatized in a Padayani is the scene after the annihilation of Darika, when the Kali sets out on her Kailasa journey. A procession of Pakshikkolam, Yakshikkolam, Maruthakkolam etc. is presented on her way to appease her; figures are drawn on the sheaths of areca palm in vibrant colours and there is much musical extravaganza.

#### **3.3 MUDIYETTU**

‘Mudiyettu’ literally means the encrowning of Kali, the Mother Goddess.<sup>ii</sup> This folk ritualistic theatre enacts the story of the annihilation of the demon Darika by Kali. When the Kalamezhuthu of five colours is complete, the play

begins around twelve midnight in a Bhagavathi Kavu. During this war scene between Darika and Kali, there are many dramatic and trance induction elements.

### **3.4 POORAKALI**

A traditional folk dance form prevalent in the extreme north of Malabar has two distinct and diverse aspects---one intellectual, the other related to dance and physical culture. The direct influence of *Kalarippayattu* exercises is evident in the movements of the Poorakali artistes.

### **3.5 AYURVEDA-the tradition of Kerala**

Ayurveda nourishes body, mind and soul. Sprouted in the pristine land of India some 5000 years ago, Ayurveda, the science of life and longevity, is the oldest healthcare system in the world and it combines the profound thoughts of medicine and philosophy. Since then Ayurveda has stood for the wholesome physical, mental and spiritual growth of humanity around the world. Today, it's a unique, indispensable branch of medicine, a complete naturalistic system that depends on the diagnosis of your body's humours - vata, pitta and kapha.

Kerala possesses an unbroken tradition of Ayurveda that has surpassed the many invasions and intrusions both foreign and native. For hundreds of years the Ayurveda Vaidyas (traditional practitioners of Ayurveda) were almost the only access for people seeking healing from every kind of disease in Kerala. The legendary eight families of Vaidyas (Ashta vaidyas) and their successors treated the entire state for



centuries. Unlike the other Indian states the status of Ayurveda in Kerala is not alternative but mainstream. In fact, today, Kerala is the only State in India which practices this system with dedication. Being the only resort of treatment for the people, the Vaidyars of Kerala were challenged to interpret the theories of Ayurveda and adapt them actively into effective healing systems in everyday life. Thus almost all the contemporary procedures and protocols of Ayurveda have evolved in and around Kerala.

Treatments have a great importance in the Kalari system as the training in Kalari can cause accidental injuries because of the use of weapons. The Kalari teachers are well versed with 'Uzhichil' (Massage, Ayurveda, Marma treatment, preparation of Herbal medicines and oil preparation). Many people go to Kalari Gurukkal with their health problems. Gurukkal treat fractures, dislocations, bruises and swellings. Kizhi is an effective treatment with hot pouches containing herbal powder applied on the body. This procedure is mainly used for treating arthritis, swelling, Spondylitis, sports injuries, etc. Kizhi in the treatment can be of different types such as Podikizhi, Manjalkizhi, Elakizhi and Navarakizhi. Many tourists are coming for Marma treatment and Uzhichil mainly from the U.S.A and U.K. The U.K is among the most important markets for Kerala Tourism with tourist arrivals from the country touching 1.5 lakh in 2012.<sup>1</sup>

Its equable climate, natural abundance of forests and the cool monsoon season are best suited for Ayurveda's curative and restorative packages. Kerala is perhaps one of

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<sup>1</sup> The Hindu dated 9-11-2013,page-8

the few places on earth where a temperature of 24-28 degrees is maintained during a period of continuous rain. This prevalence of moisture in the air and on the surface of the skin makes it the ideal place for natural medicines to work at their highest levels of potency. The land is also blessed with innumerable medicinal plants and provides the continuity and consistency of Ayurveda medicines needed for effective treatment procedures. The same herbs with the same potency are available year after year across every season. The rich alkaloid content of the soil enhances the intensity and potency of many Ayurvedic medicines when compared to other regions. ***Ashtangahridayam***, the practical, user friendly interpretation of Ayurveda, compiled by the great Vagbata is seldom used anywhere in the world as it is extensively done in Kerala. The Vaidyars (Doctors) of Kerala are proficient in this most contemporary treatise of Ayurveda which many scholars consider advancement over the earlier samhitas of *Charaka and Sushruta*, the pioneers of Ayurveda. It incorporates all the previous findings and uses medicines with plants and herbs. It is in Kerala that Kashaya Chikitsa (treatment with concoction) has become a standardised protocol involving hundreds of Kashayams that were scientifically classified and organized according to various treatment needs.

Keralite Vaidyars were the first to focus on the anti oxidant properties of *Abayangam* leading to the profusion of *kizhis*. The largest number of Ayurveda colleges and the largest number of practitioners in comparison to any place in the world has led to a tradition of Ayurveda Research. In Kerala Ayurveda is not just a healthcare system but it is a part and parcel of every aspect of life, in fact it is a

lifestyle in Kerala so to speak. The miracles such as paralyzed people who walk and incurable diseases cured that happen even today inspires respect and awe for the vaidyars of Kerala. Knowledge of the vital spots shares the general Ayurvedic principles that health is a state of humoral equilibrium. All combat injuries fall into 'the traumatic type' caused by an external blow. This principle guides the Kalari master's medical practice which, as a 'hands-on' therapy learned through apprenticeship, is always practical and pragmatic. The Lonely Planet Award for the Best Family Destination was bestowed upon Kerala at the World Travel Mart in London.

**3.6 THRISSUR POORAM- (Festival)** is the most famous annual Grand Event which happens in the Cultural Capital of Kerala. International Tourism Agencies describe Thrissur Pooram as "the most spectacular festival show on this Planet"

Thrissur Pooram was the brain child of [Raja Rama Varma](#) or famously known as Sakthan Thampuran, the Maharaja of Cochin (1790–1805). Before the start of [Thrissur](#) Pooram, the largest temple festival in Kerala was the one-day festival held at Aarattupuzha known as Arattupuzha Pooram. Temples in and around City of [Thrissur](#) were regular participants. One day because of incessant rains, they were late for the [Arattupuzha Pooram](#) and were denied access to the Pooram procession. Felt embarrassed by the denial, the temples went to the [Sakthan Thampuran](#) and told their story.

So in 1798, he unified the 10 temples situated around [Vadakkunnathan Temple](#) and organised the celebration of [Thrissur](#) Pooram as a mass festival. He invited

temples with their deities to City of [Thrissur](#) to pay obeisance to Lord Vadakkunnathan, the presiding deity of the [Vadakkunnathan Temple](#). [Sakthan Thampuran](#) ordained these temples into two groups, namely "Paramekkavu side" and "Thiruvambady side". The Paramekkavu side consists of besides "Paramekkavu Bagavathy", 1) Pookattikkara-Karamukku Baghavathy, 2) Choorakattukara Baghavathy, 3) Chempukkavu Baghavathy, 4) Panemukkumpilly Sastha.

Besides Thiruvambady Baghavathy, the Thiruvambady side is having 1) Ayyanthole Baghavathy 2) Nethilakkavu Baghavathy 3) Laloor bagavathy 4) Kanimangalam Sastha. The Pooram was to be centered around the [Vadakkunnathan Temple](#), with all these temples sending their Poorams (the whole procession), to pay obeisance to the [Shiva](#), the presiding deity. The Thampuran is believed to have chalked out the program and the main events of the [Thrissur Pooram](#) festival.



Processions of gorgeously caparisoned elephants, enchanting percussion ensembles like Panchavadyam and Pandimelam and a colorful display of dazzling fireworks are the main features of Thrissur Pooram. Ten temples are taking part in the festival; but Pooram is mainly a healthy competition between the two major parties – the Thiruvambady and Paramekkavu temples. Madathil varavu of Thiruvambady, Paramekkavu starting, Elangithara Melam, Kodamattom are the main events in Thrissur Pooram. Melam and Panchavadyam are enjoyed by many Domestic and Foreign Tourists.



**3.7 Kathakali** is an important dance-drama from Kerala. A Kathakali artist should be proficient in Kalarippayattu in order to attain physical flexibility. Kottarakara Thampuran and Kottayam Thampuran selected Kathakali artists from their soldiers well-trained in Kalarippayattu. <sup>iii</sup> Attractiveness of a state should come from its own activities. The performing art forms of Kerala can be projected as tourist images. Kerala is proud of its two traditions, Kathakali and Kalarippayattu. Kalari should be winning socio-economic units and are looking good to graduate from experiment to expression, from the fringes to the mainstream. For this purpose these martial arts centers should be converted into main health tourism centers.

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

Kalaripayattu has contributed to various dance forms of Kerala. The Classical dance-drama **Kathakali** is so much indebted to Kalaripayattu. In the modern times – many Indian choreographers have relied on Kalaripayattu training and use its vocabulary as an inspiration for their work. The health benefits of Kalaripayattu include flexibility and consciousness to the body. Wearing a kacha is important for breadth control and control of the body's energy. Kalaripayattu, which is a neutral form, has contributed as such to other performance forms. There are many postures and movements in Kathakali, which are recognizable as elements from Kalaripayattu. *The transformation of these ingredients from a neutral form into the performance form of Kathakali or other performances occurred when a new principle was introduced into the Kalaripayattu form.*<sup>2</sup> Every contemporary artist is looking forward to an endless exploration of Kalaripayattu for theatre practice.

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<sup>2</sup> Veenapani Chawla, Adishakti, performing artist.

Almost all dancers have been injured on the dance floor at some point or another in their dancing life. When a dancer does not know which movement causes strain on what muscle, or does not know how much to push the body, or indeed is unaware of how to use his or her body while experimenting with a new vocabulary, then injuries are likely. Dances like Bharatnatyam, Mohiniyattam, Ballet all need flexibility attained through Kalaripayattu and Uzhichil which take the dancer to perfection.

### **3.7.1 Similarities – Kathakali and Kalaripayattu**

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

1. Cattam and kettichattam jumping kicks are based on kalaripayatt's jumps and kicks.
2. The 'Namaskaram' in Kathakali is similar to Puthara Thozhal at the south-west corner of the Kalari.
3. The leg exercises of the Kalamandalam, for Kathakali artists, are derived from Kalaripayattu numerous preliminary kicks.
4. 'Vecciruttal' at kalamandalam is an adaptation of kalari's cat pose.
5. Kai Visal is performed for arm and upper body flexibility. This is also derived from Kalaripayattu.
6. Valaccu visal is derived from kalaripayatt's numerous body circles. This helps the development of the upper body moving in circles.
7. Tancham Vecciruttal is an exercise in which hands are clenched and held in "sword and shield position" across the chest. <sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> . Phillip Zarrilli(1984), The Kathakali Complex Actor, Performance and Structure, Abhinav Publications, New Delhi pp 104-108



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

### 3.8 Martial art tradition



**Kalaripayattu practice** includes **Meipayattu, Kothari, Ankathari and Verumkai**. All exercises in Kalari are performed with Vaytari given by the Guru. The Vaytari is designed specially to give strength, flexibility, endurance and precision.

The society is accepting Kalaripayattu as a major Martial Art for health-care. Kerala society is emerging as a good destination for tourists. The Kerala state has been named as one among the world’s 10 best destinations for taking the family for a holiday in 2014. Kalaripayattu has a direct bearing on development of Kerala’s art and culture. Government spent Rupees 4419 crores in 2013-14 on Health.

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The two-fold impact of Kalari is improvement in the health and reduction in Government expenditure.

Kalari has great importance in medical treatment. Many tourists are coming for Marma treatment and Massage. Kalari treatment is mainly for fractures, dislocation, swellings, application of Kizhi, arthritis, Spondylitis and sports injuries.

Kalari has significantly contributed to various dances and performing arts. The Classical dance-drama Kathakali is so much indebted to Kalarippayattu. The modern choreographers get training in Kalarippayattu for flexibility and mental control. Kalari can be used effectively for the promotion of sports. The study revealed that no Kalari Gurukkal is accompanying during sports events for treatment even though countries such as China, South Korea, Brazil and U.K effectively use it. Kalari treatment originated mainly for keeping the physical fitness of students and practitioners inside the Kalari and as a first- aid for injuries. This can be extended to sportsmen in India by providing on the spot first-aid and send him back to the field. The problem of Indian sportsmen regarding lack of confidence and core competency can be solved with Kalarippayattu.

Children are the assets of any nation. They should get proper nourishment at the very young age. The Kalarippayattu is considered as a system of health and physical fitness for students. Spiritual health, mental health and emotional health can be achieved through the practice of Kalarippayattu. For the development of Kalarippayattu and the related tourism, the Kalari Gurukkal and the Government should make a combined effort to standardize the techniques and medicine. Present

generation of students and Gurukkal are working together for the development of Kalarippayattu. Kalari increases the power of self-defence, hence it provides insulation against the fear of insecurity.

Ballads of Thacholi and Putthooram heroes that were sung in the ‘Vadakkan Paattukal’ and several Theyyam Thottam songs of north Malabar may be familiar. Called Chekkonmaar, these two heroic families were experts of Kalarippayattu, an age old institution and martial art of Kerala. ‘Kalari’ the space where the martial art is performed, symbolises the universe. A Kalari student applies gingerly oil or herbal oil (mukkoot) before entering the Kalari, as a way to render coolness and flexibility to the body. They use a variety of weapons—dagger, spear, sword and Urumi ; it is said that the body becomes all eyes for a Kalari performer, meaning the bodymind is in such a concentrated state of acuity and awareness that, the practitioner can see everything around him.

Majority of tourists in Kalari responded that Kalarippayattu is a wonderful heritage of Kerala. Many foreign tourists advised the girls to practice Kalarippayattu as a means of self-defence and protection. That is why it is considered as a means for body-mind- intellect integration. Many dancers acquire flexibility to the body with Kalarippayattu. All the interviewed tourists admitted they got the fullest degree of happiness or satisfaction from Kalarippayattu. This is because of the innumerable advantages attributed to this technique of self-defence. Largest numbers of people

come to Kalari for treatment and for rejuvenation and majority of them are highly satisfied.

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

Marma therapy contributes to increase or recharge physical, mental and spiritual energies. Marma can be divided into mamsa marma, asthi marma, snayu marma, dhamani marma, sira marma and sandhi marma according to the place where they are located in the human body.<sup>4</sup>

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4. Kalaripayattu. Vijayakumar.K (2000)

**Table-1**  
**Qualities Inherent in Kalarippayattu which is Instrumental**  
**in Personality Development**

| <b>Factors studied</b>   | <b>Strongly Agree</b> | <b>Agree</b>  | <b>Disagree</b> | <b>No opinion</b> | <b>Total</b>  |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|---------------|-----------------|-------------------|---------------|
| Power of Concentration   | 226<br>(86.82%)       | 6<br>(2.44%)  | 28<br>(10.74%)  | No                | 260<br>(100%) |
| Teacher Worship          | 238<br>(91.54%)       | 14<br>(5.38%) | 8<br>(3.08%)    | No                | 260<br>(100%) |
| Increased will-power     | 234<br>(90.00%)       | 14<br>(5.38%) | 8<br>(3.08%)    | 4<br>(3.08%)      | 260<br>(100%) |
| Discipline               | 220<br>(89.60%)       | No            | 8<br>(3.8%)     | 18<br>(7.32%)     | 260<br>(100%) |
| Ability to Face Problems | 218<br>(83.65%)       | 24<br>(9.23%) | No              | 18<br>(7.12%)     | 260<br>(100%) |
| Feeling of Security      | 238<br>(91.54%)       | 14<br>(5.38%) | No              | 8<br>(3.08%)      | 260<br>(100%) |

Source: Survey data

\*Values in the brackets are percentages

90 per cent Kalari Gurukkal recommend that Kalari is the best means of concentration. The difference from one mind to another mind is only a matter of

concentration. One, more concentrated than the other, gets more Knowledge. Kalari has the power to raise the Kundalini Sakthi within and lead to a state of intense concentration of energy. In 'Kalari, Guru is worshipped as God on 'Puthara'. If a student perceives that the master is not pleased with his practice or behavior the student is expected to search out the fault. Kalari Gurukkal is the pivot around which the Kalari system revolves. Guru-Shikshya relation is so avid in Kalari and 97 per cent feel that whatever the teacher does is done out of love for the art and the teacher's desire to instill that art in the student. In olden days students live with the teacher to learn the Martial Arts.

## **Table-2**

### **Table Showing Internationalization of Kalari with Innovation**

| <b>Opinion of Gurukkal</b>  | <b>Agree</b>    | <b>Neutral</b> | <b>Disagree</b> | <b>Total</b>  |
|---|-----------------|----------------|-----------------|---------------|
| 1. Promotion of Institution to International Standards  | 210<br>(80.77%) | 14<br>(5.38%)  | 36<br>(13.85%)  | 260<br>(100%) |
| 2. Integration of Indian and Foreign Martial Arts with domestic ones.                               | 228<br>(87.69%) | 14<br>(5.38%)  | 18<br>(6.93%)   | 260<br>(100%) |
| 3. Course module and curriculum of International standards.   | 120<br>(44.72%) | 4<br>(1.54%)   | 136<br>(53.74%) | 260<br>(100%) |
| 4. Manufacture/ Marketing of Medicines and weapons on commercial basis with proper quality control. | 176<br>(67.69%) | 32<br>(12.31%) | 52<br>(20%)     | 260<br>(100%) |
| 5. Taking Kalari culture to foreign countries.  | 238<br>(91.54%) | 14<br>(5.38%)  | 8<br>(3.08%)    | 260<br>(100%) |

Source: Survey Data

The prestigious ITB Berlin Fair Award was presented to Ayurveda. Similarly with our Mother of Martial Arts, Kalarippayattu, Kerala can promote Tourism to international standards. 85 per cent Gurukkal are confident about this. Ayurveda-Yoga and Kalarippayattu can be beautifully blended for the development of Kerala Tourism. 70 per cent Kalari Gurukkal admits that innovation has not been introduced to Kalarippayattu as other martial arts. They wanted to keep it as a tradition passed on from forefathers. But now many Gurukkal feel that integration with foreign Martial arts is an innovation in this field without impairing the quality of this powerful Martial art.

### **3.8.1 SOUTHERN KALARI FOUNDED BY AGASTHYAMUNI**

Keralite Vaidyars were the first to focus on the anti oxidant properties of *Abayangam* leading to the profusion of *kizhis*. The largest number of Ayurveda colleges and the largest number of practitioners in comparison to any place in the world has led to a tradition of Ayurveda Research. In Kerala Ayurveda is not just a healthcare system but it is a part and parcel of every aspect of life, in fact it is a lifestyle in Kerala so to speak. The miracles such as paralysed people who walk and incurable diseases cured that happen even today inspires respect and awe for the vaidyars of Kerala. Knowledge of the vital spots shares the general Ayurvedic principles that health is a state of humoral equilibrium. All combat injuries fall into 'the traumatic type' caused by an external blow. This principle guides the Kalari master's medical practice which, as a 'hands-on' therapy learned through apprenticeship, is always practical and pragmatic.

### **3.8.2 Kalari Marma Massage**

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

Kalari Marma treatment is entirely different from *Ayurveda and Panchakarma treatment*. In Ayurveda people get relief from medicines than massage



whereas in Kalari people get relief from Uzhichil and Marma Chikitsa. According to Kalari system, there are 108 marma points which are extremely vulnerable. Marma points should not be mistaken as the 'trigger points' described in modern orthopedics and sports sciences. (Trigger points are tender points in the muscle tissue which when stimulated, can elicit pain.) Disturbances to the Marma points can cause severe pain, deformity and even death. Depending on the degree of trauma to these points, the after effects may vary. The first aid for trauma to Marma points should be sought from a Kalari Master as early as possible, since delay in treatment can severely worsen the condition.

Anatomically speaking, a severe trauma caused by external forces can cause internal bleeding due to rupture of blood vessels which is called hemorrhage. This causes a marked decrease in blood supply to the part affected. As a result, supply of oxygen and necessary nutrients are decreased. This leads to enormous cell death. Accumulation of dead cells can lead to a condition called sepsis. It then spreads along with blood to lungs causing pneumonia, septicaemia then to brain, causing meningitis. The Gurukkal (Kalari master) performs Marma treatment with spiritual thoughts, blessings from God and Masters and with mental power. He helps the person to find relief from ailments like severe joint pain, back ache, disc prolapse and other injuries by manipulating the Marma points. A perfect knowledge of the muscle system, nervous and circulatory system and bone structure is necessary for performing Marma treatment. While performing Kalari Marma Massage, the

Gurukkal provides deep emphasis on the presence of Marma points within the part massaged.

Kalari Marma massage has its effects on Lymphatic drainage system. Movements to the skeletal muscles cause contractions to the intrinsic muscles of lymph vessels, thereby promoting the flow of lymph. Lymph is the medium of transport for harmful waste products and also the substances that are responsible for immunity. Thus Kalari Marma massage helps in fast removal of harmful waste from the body, reduces oedema and also enhances immunity. Kalari Marma massage provides a cleansing effect to the body. It purifies blood and also reduces skin diseases. It also helps to improve muscle function, venous drainage, and nervous system of the body. Kalari Marma massage influences the breathing pattern, thereby inducing a reliable respiratory mechanism. This in turn imparts its effects in sleep disorders and also in psychotic individuals.

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

Even healthy individuals, who are devoid of any potential diseases, can undergo Kalari Marma massage as a yearly fitness programme. Since the immunity system is enhanced, it helps to keep one disease free and in a state of positive health.

Kalari Marma massage has proved to provide an overall relaxation effect and also provides rejuvenation to the cells in the body. Kalari Marma massage to whole body is performed, aiming at producing relaxation and rejuvenation to the body. A course of such type of massage, in which a single session lasts for two and a half to three hours, is enough to keep a person healthy and immune for the rest of the year. People find relief from various disorders like sprains, arthritis, back ache, disc prolapse, cervical spondylosis, neck pain as well as neurological conditions where other systems of treatment like homeopathy and modern medicine could not succeed.

### **3.9 Kalam of Mother Goddess**

The Kuruppu, Mannan and Maraar communities are masters of Devi Kalamezhuthu. The five basic colours used are organic—yellow from turmeric, black from burnt husk, green from leaves of ‘vaka’, red from lime and turmeric and white from rice flour. The Kalam of Mother or Devi can be as elaborate as an image of hers with upto 64 hands. Thottam Pattu are sung while the Kalam is drawn. When the Kalam is complete, the final step is to draw the eyes of the Devi; this imparts life to the Mother Goddess.

The indigenous communities are masters of Kalamezhuthu, the floor paintings. For performances such as Mudi yettu, Theeyattu it is ritualistic to draw a Kalam on the floor. The song of praise for Kali is sung while the picture is drawn. When the picture is complete, the final step is to draw the eyes of the Devi. In these Kalams, the scene is usually of Kali wearing the expression of ‘raudra bhangi’ after slaying Darika and blessing her people. Different communities across Kerala engage in this folk art – the

Pulluva, Paraya, Kuruppu, Mannan and Maraar are some. There is an incredible variety of these paintings-Pathirakkalam, Kolam, Mantravadakkalam, Kuttichathankalam, Sarppakkalam and Devikkalam. A Sarpakkalam is usually drawn in sacred groves.

### **3.10 Nagakalam**

A Sarpakkalam is usually drawn in sacred groves. The knots formed in the intertwined serpents are of great relevance. A Pulluva couple plays the Pulluva veena and the Pulluvakkudam and sings invocations to the serpent gods. The Pulluva community performs serpent songs in sacred groves. They are the main custodians of the rituals. They are also community healers who handle common diseases in children. After the agricultural harvest the bards wander around in the villages and sing songs of prosperity.

Three core musical instruments are used in the performance. Pulluva veena is called a 'veena kunju' (baby fiddle). There is a primitive manner of making the strings. The ritual is performed in the front yard of the house or in the kavu. Temporary structures called 'naattupandal' are built and are decorated with flowers, leaves and fruits symbolising the fertile landscape. Inside the pandal floor, pulluvars decorate the snake figures in natural powders of various colours in folk style. The knots formed in the intertwined serpents are of great relevance. An Ashtanagakkalam is composed of 8 intertwined serpents, drawn with great skill and precision. Karinagam, Anjanamaninagam are varieties of Sarpakkalam. A Pulluva couple plays the Pulluva veena and the Pulluvakkudam and sings invocations to the serpent gods.

The five colours used in kalam symbolise the growth of life in nature. Visual anthropologists split them as two cool colours, two warm colours and one neutral white. The dancers smear the kalam with tender arecanut flowers. During the process of transformation, they declare what snakes are inside their bodies and the wishes that would be fulfilled for the prosperity of the community and the family.

## **SARPAKALAM**



i Tourism and Culture; K.K.Sharma(1999)

ii Nattarivu; Dr.C.R.Rajagopalan.

iii Kalalokam; Dr. Narayana Pisharodi. P.V

### **3.11 KUMMATI**

During the festival season of Onam in Thrissur, children and youngsters participate in a masked semi ritualistic performance called Kummatti. They believe that the Kummattis are the bhootaganas of Lord Shiva of Vadakkunnathan temple. The Kummattis performed at Kezhakkumpattukara, Villatam and Oorakam are the most famous. The characters in the dance are Kaattalan, Hanuman, Sivan, Kiraatan, Bali, Sugreevan, and Sri Raman; Thalla (grandma) leads the troupe. Wooden masks sculpted by wood carvers are from trees such as Kumizhu and Jack fruit tree. Parpadaka pullu a kind of native grass is worn as costume. Kummatti songs are sung with the folk instrument Onavillu.

### **3.12 Dance forms from other States are also coming to Kerala as a Dance Festival**