



PADINJARE KOVILAKAM -THE ZAMORIN'S RESIDENCE

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ABSTRACT: *Padinjare Kovilakam is one of the main branches of Zamorin's residence at Calicut. This study is trying to find out the factors that resulted in the down fall of Zamorin's power by sketching out the biographies of Ravivarmas. While studying the life of them we can understand not only the external factors but also the internal factors within the Zamorin's house hold and the kingdom were responsible for the decline. This study also helps to understand the social circumstances and chaos the age that witnessed and also contributes much to the history of Kerala.*

Keywords : Padinjare Kovilakam, zamorin, Kovil, Kovilathikari, Padipura, untouchability, kingship

INTRODUCTION

A Kovilagam is the household of local political authorities who are present in length and breadth of Kerala from medieval times onwards. This is the residence, where all who have not succeeded to get kingship (raja) remain under the management of the eldest resident male or female member of that particular branch of the family. Literally kovil is a space where a deity dwells. Kovilakam is therefore a walled compound where the kovil is situated. The Kovil, being the abode of deity, possesses a supreme position in the day to day life of the members of the kovilagam during the medieval period though it has lost its importance in the present. The domestic practices as well as political life of the members of kovilagam are centered on the Kovil where the family deity is dwelling. Kovilathikari who is the supreme authority of the Kovilagam wielded his power ritually as the authority over the Kovil as the protector of the deity. Kovilagam may also include the properties attached to the household. Kovil which alliteratively called koyil also connote the Raja in the sense that Raja possess status equal to a deity. The king of Beypore thus is called Pappukoyil; the king of Parappanad, Parappu koyil and the

Zamorin is called the Neidiyiruppu koyil. Likewise, the elder authority is called mootha koyil and the younger one is called Ilaya koyil. Normally, the one whose responsibility is to look after the interior of the Kovilagam is called Akakoyil and the one with whom the external affairs is entrusted is called puramkoyil. The women in the kovilagam are generally called kovilamma.

Methodology

The method applied in the study is not plainly historical. The study made use of tools of micro history. It is totally different from the traditional historical method of 'grand historical narratives'. Micro history is the intensive historical investigation of a well defined smaller unit of research. most often a single event, and the community of a village, a family or a person. However, micro history can be distinguished from a simple case study in so far as micro history aspires to large questions in small places.

The micro historians placed their emphasis on small units and how people conducted their lives within them. By reducing the scale of observation the method tries to reveal the complicated

function of individual relationships within each and every social setting and they stressed its difference from large norms.

Sources

The main sources of the study are the primary and secondary sources. The primary sources includes archival documents, Kovilakam records and interviews on the people associated with the Kovilakam. The secondary source includes the secondary literature: books, journals, references, etc.

PADINJARE KOVITAKAM

Zamorin's capital city was Kozhikode. It was also called 'koyilkode'. It is claimed that its old name was Vikramapuram. Arabs called it 'Calicoot' and the English 'Calicut'. The Chalappuram Kovilakam, Ambadi Kovilakam, Puthan Kovalakam, Padinjare Kovilakam, Kizhekke Kovilakam, etc. are the prominent Kovilakams of Calicut. All these Kovilakams belong to Zamorins. There are many opinions regarding the meaning of Zamorin such as it is the name for a position, it is the name for the race, a degree of rank, and a form of address and so on. He is referred as 'Poonthurakon' according to the English commercial treaty in 1615 and 'Samoothiri Rajya Poonthurakon' according to another treaty in 1752.

There is some ambiguity's regarding the exact course of events that led to the establishment of Zamorins rule over Kozhikode. According to Prof. A. Sreedharamenon, immediately following the fall of Rama Kulasekhara, Calicut and its suburbs formed part of the Polanad Kingdom ruled by the Porlathiri. The original seat of the Zamorins family was Nediyruppu village

in the Ernad Taluk of present Malappuram district. So he referred to as 'Nediyruppu Muppa' and dynasty was Nediyruppu Svaroopam belong to the Eradi sub division of the Nair-caste. The ruler of the Nediyruppu Svaroopam was popularly known as 'Zamutiri'. The word ,Zamorin is the European form of local "Samuri", or Tamuri. The Eradis wished to have an outlet to the sea to initiate trade and commerce with distant lands. To accomplish this, the Eradi marched with their Nairs towards panniankara and besieged the Porlathiri in his head quarters for about 50 years. The Eradis emerged victorious in their conquest of Polanad and shifted their capital from Nediyruppu to Calicut. The Eradi built a fort at a place called Velapuram to safeguard his new interests. The fort most likely lent its name to koyil kotta, the precursor to Kozhikode.

Traditionally they got five stanams or positions. They are;

1. Samuthiri Tirumulpad
2. Emad Elamkur Nambiyatiri Tirumulpad
3. Ernad Munamkur Nambiyatiri Tirumulpad
4. Edataranad Nambiyatiri Tirumulpad
5. Nediyruppil Mootha Eradi Tirumulpad

In course of time, as the family increased and the power of the Zamorin expanded, new palaces were constructed. First rose the Kizhakke Kovilakam, then came to existence the puthiya Kovilakam and

Padinjare Kovilakam.. The Tampuratti of the Kizhekke Kovilakam had Sambandham with chalappurattu Narnboothiri. As he had no heirs, he made a gift of all his property including his own illam or house to the Tampuratti. A Palace, was built on the site of the old illam, and it came to be known as the Chalapurattu Kovilakam. For a long time the members of the Kizhekke Kovilakam were continued to be called as “Chalappurathu Kovilakattu Tampurans”.

The Zamorins kingdom mainly consisted of three Kovilakams' They are

- 1) Kizhekke Kovilakam
- 2) Putiya Kovilakam
- 3) Padinj are Kovilakam

These three kovilakams were originally built near Tali Temple at Kozhikode. Padinjare kovilagam was probably near the present Chalappuram Ganapath High School. Kizhakke kovilagam was built in the north of Tali temple. The place now is called chinthavalappu. Puthiya kovilakam was built in the north-western part of the Tali temple'

No clear cut evidences are available about when and how Padinjare Kovilakam came into being. It got first mentioned in books only in 1666. Evidences are not at all available on which Zamotin has built this Kovilakam and how many Zamorins belong to this Kovilakam. It can be guessed that they might have lived in one Kovilakam since Zamorins established themselves as a clan or kingdom. Separate Kovilakams might have come into being due to increase in the number of its members and again with adoption from Nileswaram.

These Kovilakams were destroyed due to Haider's attack. Haider marched towards Calicut and the then zamorir, having no way out other than submission burn himself by setting fire to the powder magazine in his fortress.⁶ The Zamorin (Kunnathoor theepetta Tampuran of Puthiya Kovilagam) who took over the power of the ruling household following the exit of Haider reinstated the kovilakams later at three different places; the Kizhekke Kovilakam situates at Kottakkal, Puthiya Kovilakam at Tiruvannur and Padinjare Kovilakam at Mankav. As per one account each Kovilakams has its own lineages or Thavazhis as follows, Kizhekke Kovilakam has consists of Puthenkette, Kizhekke Malika and Padinjare Malika. Puthiya Kovilakam branches into Thekke Kotte, Padinjare Kette, Kizhekke Kette, Padinjare Kovilakam comprises lineages as Thazhette, Mugalil, and Kalapura. But this view has been rejected by one present resident of Kizhakke kovilakam.

The eldest male member from among these kovilakams was ascended to the position of Zamorin and other powerful posts went into the hands of the elders among them.

The senior most Tampuran of each of kovilakams is called Valiya tampuran. The Ambadi Kovilakam or the household of princesses or Tampurattis built west of Tali. The senior most Tampuratti was called 'Nediyiruppu Mootha Kovil' and the next in age was called Elaya Kovil.

Like the Nayars, the samantas trace their descent and inheritance through the female, their children belong to the caste and family of the mother, and the oldest male member is the head of the family and

represents it in its relations with others. They are, however distinguished from the Nayers by their higher social status and the strict rule of hyper gamy which compels a women to have 'Sambundham' with one belonging to a caste superior to hers.

The system of adoption became a part of Zamorin's history in the year between 1706-1707. It was king Shakthan from Kizhekke Kovilakam who first ordered and sanctioned adoption. In 1704, he decided to adopt Tampurans and Thampuratis in two each from Thekkankur.

According to K.V. Krishna Ayyar, about A.D. 1550 the family was threatened with extinction. On the advice of, the Brahmins the Zamorin instituted a monthly Tiruvonam feast. The gods were pleased and the Tiruvonam Tirunal Maharajah, known also as Shaktan Tampuram was born. In the reign of Bharani Tirunal Maharaja, the hero of the 'Mamankhan Kilipattu' and the terror of the Dutch, adoption became once more a pressing problem. So, in A.D. 1704, negotiations were opened for the adoption of two Thampurattis from Tekkankure. But his decision could not be effected due to his sudden death. Later in 1706, his brother and next Zamorin decided to adopt from Nileschwaram clan.

Zamorin kingdom has some relationship with Nileschwaram Kovilakam. There was a long term enmity between Zamorins and Kolathiri Kingdom. It is believed that once a scion of Kolathiri family lived in the Zamorin Kovilakam in disguise and subsequently got married to a Thampurati from Zamorin's Kovilakam. A modern historian says that in the 13th C a Thampuratti had gone away with a prince of the Kola

Swaroopam (Chirakkal) without the knowledge and consent of the Zamorin. The Zamorin disinherited her, and compelled the Koalthiri to cede all his lands as far as Pantalayini Kollam and to settle the Thampuratti at Neeleswaram with all sovereign rights and 3000 Nairs.

Thus three Tampurans and three Thampurattis were adopted from Neeleswaram Kovilakam. They were

1. Thrissivaperoor Theepeta Tampuran [rule 175 I -58]
2. Palayam Theepeta Tampuran [1758 - 66]
3. Kunnatoor Theepeta Tampuran [1766 -88]

Among these three Tampurans, the first two were sent to the Kizhekke Kovilakam and the last to Puthiya Kovilakam. The word 'Theepetath' is a customary usage in Zamorin's history. The term literally means "cremation". Though many other castes were cremated their dead bodies the word theepetath was the exclusive customary usage of the ruling class of Kerala' That is why the word. Theepetath, used by Zamorins to show Status of Zamorins.

Probably, it was for the survival of the clan, they started adopting from other clans. With this the original dynasty came to an end with the 114th Zamorin. The 115th Zamorin (Thrissivaperoor Theepeta Tampuran), the first of the second dynasty, was the oldest of the princes adopted from Nileschwaram in 1706. It is also said that the adoption was resorted to not only for the continuance of the family but also for providing for the succession to the 'stanams',

The three adopted Tampurattis went to three Kovilakams' It is clear that these thampuratis were sisters. But we fail to see their name in any records. The first two girls of Neeleswaram were adopted in 1706. It was in the month of Makaram, 1707, the seven year old girl was adopted from Nileswarm Kovilakam to Padinjare Kovilakam. During that time the padinjare Kovilakam was on south western part of Tali temple. Now it is called as Padiniare Kovilaka Paramba. After this adoption, a girl child was born in Padinjare Kovilakam in the year 890 (1715 AD). The children of this Tampuratis are as follows:

1. Aranmulayil Teepetta Tampuran
2. Tachusastramulla Tampuran
3. Vidwan Tampuran
4. Valiya Tampurati
5. Nadu Tampurati
6. Kuttiyati Tarnpurati

Three lineages come from the above mentioned three Tampuratis. It was after the death of above mentioned Tampurans, Valiya- Ravi Varma has got adopted from Nileswaram. Later he became the most renowned among all Tampurans.

Valiya Tampurati from the first lineage has six children.

1. Valiya Tampurati.
2. Karumanam Kurissiyil Teepeta Tampuran (Cheriya Ravivarma)
3. Kochiyil Teepetta Tampuran
4. Ambadi Kovilakam Tampurati

5. Dindigal Teepetta Tampuran (ValiyamanaVikramaraja)
6. Palayam Teepetta Tampuran

The children of Nadutharnpurati of Ambadi Kovilakam are

1. Ambadi kovilakarn Tampurati
2. Tampuran
3. Vassuriyal Teepeta Tampurati
4. Vadekke Palliyarayil Teepena Tampuran

The children of kuttiyati Tampurati of third lineage as follows:

- 1) Tarrpurati
- 2) Eranadukara Teepetta Tampuran
- 3) Marumakan Tampuran
- 4) Thrikolator Teepetta Tampuran
- 5) Kondotti Teepetta Tampurati
- 6) Ambadi Kovilakam Tampuratti

Padinjare Kovilakam, like others is protected by a strong fortification. There is a Padipura which is the gate way into the Kovilakam. Both the sides of the gate have securities each. Un touch ability was so strong that men from lower castes are not allowed to enter into the kovilakam. The additional buildings were built according to the increase in the number of members. The structure of the Kovilakam was of the Nalukettu. The women's residence was known as 'kottaram' and the men's was 'Pathayam'. Men were not allowed to get inside the kottaram. The grains were kept inside the pathayam. Those who worked

inside the Kovilakam lived outside it. The members of kovilakam had their own pools to take bath. They believed that a bath involving dipping oneself full in the water-pool is essential for ritual purification. The place where the children were taught was called Srambi, a word of Arab. Persian origin.

Thrissala Bhagavathi was the religious goddess of Padinjare Kovilakam. There was a pool beside the Trissala bhagavathi kshethra. Along with this kshethra there are Sivakshetra and vishnu Kshethra. 'Thevarapura' which was important for performing pooja were built inside the Kovilakam. There was poojaris too inside the kovilakam. To the west of the kovilakam there isa machu were we can see the Bhagavathi, the goddess' The 'sarpakalu is situated to the east-west region of the kovilakam" There was a separate room for the discussions, which was called as 'Asthanam'. Kalari too was practiced in the Kovilakam. Dharmot Panikkar was the tutor of Kalari. Along with this there were distinct locations for the maidan, the room for arms, the godown for oils [Enna Kalavara], the stock of grains, kitchen, Mess [Ootupura], room for keeping utensils and furniture and so on. All kovilakams in Kerala are characterized by these common features.

All the Tampurans and Tampurattis were lived with all elegance till the month of April 1766. It was on 28 April 1766, Haiderali attacked Calicut and the then Zamorin committed suicide and not ready to accept the defeat'

The next Zamorin king who came into power was from Puthiya Kovilakam. He was also the brother of the adopted Tampurati of

Padinjare Kovilakam. The members of Padinjare Kovilakam escaped to Ponnani along with the new zamorin ruler. From there they went to Vadakkan Paravur. Meanwhile Haiderali returned to his own kingdom or country. In this particular situation, the member's of Padinjare Kovilakam returned to Calicut. After constructing a small nalukettu near mankav, the members of padinjare kovilakam started living there. In 1774, Tipptt Sultan, the son of Haider Ali carried out the second attack and in the attack the nalukettu was destroyed. Again the members of this Kovilakam went exile. This time they sought shelter in the Kunnatoor Kovilakam of Karimpuzha which was near Kallada river of Kollam District. Karthika Tirunal Ramavarma, the then Thiruvithanore Maharaj a, gave them assylume.

They lived for fifty four years in Kunnathoor Kovilakam in between 1774 to 1828 and during that period they performed all their old rituals in their life. All of them lived in Kunnatoor Kovilakam except Valiya Ravivarma, Cheriya-Ravivarma, Valiyamanavikrama Raja and Cheriya Mana Vikrama Raia. These Tampurans defended the enemies by staying Malabar. It was during this period that Valiya Ravivarma constructed a Kovilakam in the thick forest of Kalladikotta. He constructed this Kovilakam with the intention of defending enemies and hatching conspiracy to those who tried to eliminate him and his clan¹⁸. But later it was destroyed completely by the British army under the leadership of Thomas Warden, the then Malabar collector, for giving shelter to Ravi Varma and Veera Varma, the nephews of Pazhassi Rajale. Valiya Mana Vikarama Raja was taken into custody and later sent to

the prison at Dindigal. He committed suicide on 31st March 1806 by Swallowing ring. It was the Tampurans of Padinjare Kovilakam Killed the Karyasthan of Zamorin named Swamin athapattar²⁰. By 1806, all tampurans, who fought bravely against the British and the Mysore rule, were died or killed. Karyasthan Tampuran later became the Valiya Tampuran at the age of thirty seven and as such the Zamorin (1826-28).

Valiya Ravi Varma and Cheriya Ravivarma tried to free Karyasthan Tampuran at Kunnathur from the responsibility of war related matters, on the belief that the future of Tampuratis and children from Padinjare Kovilakam will be safe in the hands of Karyasthan Tampuran' But the death of these twouncles made-karyasthan Tampuran more despair and distress. But he had done what he was supposed to do, that is his duty.

Later, a new kovilakam was constructed at Mankav. The Zamorin Karyasthan Thampuran who was the devotee of Kanyakumari Bhagavati constructed Trissala Bhagavati Temple at the centre of the Kovilakam' He died in 1003 (1828) in Malayalam Calendar when he was about to take his food on the day of Thiruvonam.

The poet Eralpad Raja, made all arrangements to bring the members of the kovilagam here from kunnathur' In the month of Meenam, 1004(1829), Tampuratis and their children entered the Nalukettu after worshipping Trissala- Bhagavathi. During their 59 years of exile, some of the members died and cremated at Kunnathur.

Conclusion

At present, Padinj are Kovilakam, consists of 253 members' Till 1964, the female members and male members lived on the Southern and Northern part of the temple respectively. The members of the family now usually convene a get together once in a year. Their belief in Trissala Bhagavathi still plays an important role in the everyday life of those who are living within the fold of the Padinj are Kovilagam.

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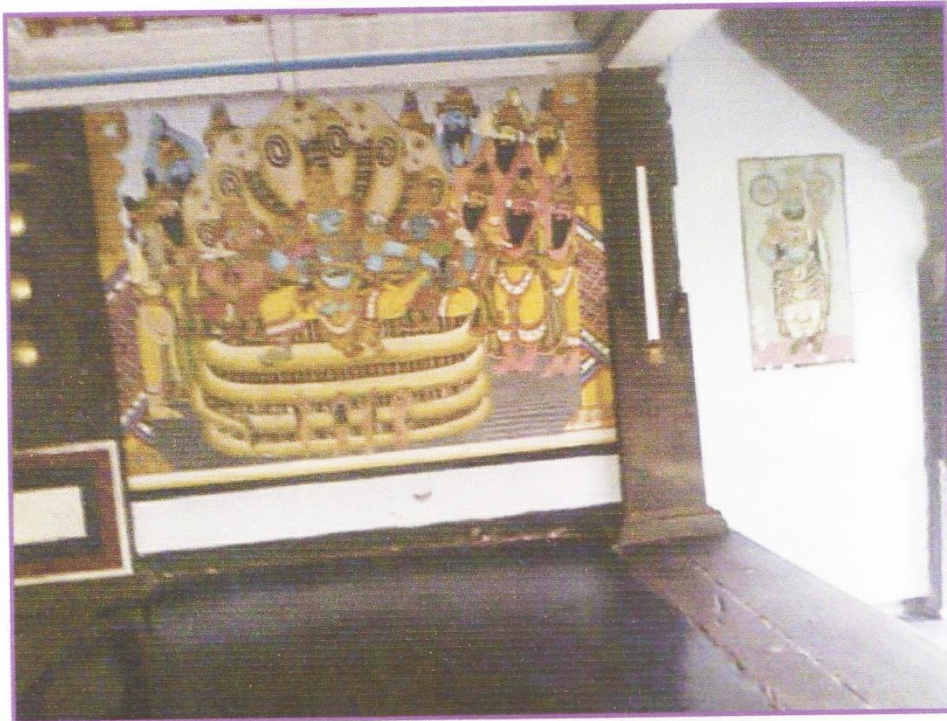
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Thirssala Bhagavati Temple



Sarpakavu in Padinjare Kovilakam



Mural Paintings in the Padinjare Kovilakam