

VIJISHA P. "IMPACT OF FOLK SCIENCE AND ACCEPTED SCIENCE ON THE SUPER
HUMANNESS OF RITUAL PERFORMANCES- A STUDY BASED ON THE PERFORMANCE
OF POTTEN THEYYAM". SCHOOL OF FOLKLORE STUDIES, UNIVERSITY OF CALICUT,
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CHAPTER THREE

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

3. 1 Introduction

The chapter analysis and interpretation of data is divided into two parts A and B. A part is the analysis of data and B part is the interpretation of the researcher.

PART A

ANALYSIS OF DATA

3. 2 Select folk Performances as rituals in Kerala

Parnettu or kaliyuttu

Parnettu or Kaliyuttu is a performance very popular in Thiruvananthapuram district. The stage is constructed with the 20 feet length pillar of the stem of coconut and areca nut with separate stage for dancing Dharika and Kali. The fight seen should be performed in the land.

The movement of fight is very risk.

Elavoorthukkam

Elavoorthukkam is performed at Elavoor near Aluva. It is a traditional ritual performance in the premises of Elavoor Bagavati Temple. It consist of 20 feet length teak wood and the top of the teak wood 3 metal hook are fixed.

To hang the performer on the hook which is stitched on the back of the body. Then the crowd to take the whole teak wood stem and with performer and rounded the temple thrice. This is performed by limited families near by the temple. Those who are offer this performance the devotee can pay money to that particular person, belongs to traditional community. At the time of the performance the performer should practice penance and diet control

Kuthiyootam

It is a ritual performance practiced in the Bagavathi temples of Southern Kerala. Mainly this performance is practiced by children. The children those who practicing this ritual kept gold or silver bar or rattan stick on their body through making a hole on the body. Than they jumped and play with this bar.

It is a ritual performance practiced by Nair male members in the Bhagavathi temples of Kottayam District. Kanhirappally kavu of Meenachil, Puthiyabhagavathi kavu Ponkunnam, Cheruvally Bhagavathi temple Panamattam are the main temples of this performance. The performer take knife and an areca nut keep on the edge of the knife. The knife keep in the left arm and it touch on the chin. A fired folk torch take on the right arm and it keep beneath under the knife. The flame spread over the both cheeks. The performer rounded the temple with this process. He takes the carbon from his cheek and decorates on the forehead of the devotee.

Kuthiratheeb

It is a very risky performance is done by the performers of Muslim community. The performer stab their own body with sharp pointed knife like weapon. It is a brutal performance.

Paathalahomam/Velanpravrithi

It is a magical ritual performance by Malaya community. This performance is known as Velan pravrithi at Southen part of Kerala, Paathala homa at Northern part of Kerala.

It is a magical performance to avoid devils from the body of a sick woman. The magician should be gone under a pit of six feet length two feet breadth and three feet height. Then it covered with mango tree stem and put mud over that with air proof. On above that the assistant magician did homa (A fire ritual). At the time of this performance the magician spend 8 hours in the North Kerala and 20 hours in the South Kerala.

Chandaatam

'Chandu' (Compound ointment of gum of teak wood). Usually chandu is gum used by women for facial decorations with very diluted solutions. In Marakattery kavu with thira performer is applying teak wood gum all over his body as make up. This particular gum when it fallen in the body of a man that part should be burn. It is very powerful solution. It is a ritual practice in

Marakattery shrine, Malappuram district. The childhood of the deity of the Marakkattery kavu as part of the Thira the performer smearing the teak wood solution all over his body but his body is not burn. It is considered as a Super human performance.

Choral Padayani

It is a version of folk performance Padayani. This Padayani is performed at Edanaatu kavu, Cheganoor and Thilliyoorkavu at Pathanamthitta. The performers brought rattan plant from nearby forest and it spiralled over the body and performed. It is risky performance so it considered a Super human performance.

Muchilot Pothikal (A kind of Oracles)

Muchilot kavu is a temple of Vaniya community of North Kerala. Their traditional job is oil making. In muchilot kavu there are Theyyam and oracles. The oracle wound their body themselves on forehead. They are also lighting oil lamp keep their chest both action is very risky. The oracles of other shrine also make wound on their own body.

Ayyappanvilakku

Ayyappanvilakku is a ritual performance on the mandala season. The performers take embers on their hands. The performer also burnt camphor on their palm. All these things are performing a risky one.

Martial Art-Kalary Payattu

In Kalary payattu the fighting between two persons with weapon like urumi(Damascene blade) and shield is very risky one. The folk adore them. In Theyyams the urumi practice is used in Kathirvanoor Veeran Theyyam and Thacholi Othenan Thira. This risky factor make the Theyyam performer as Super human.

Kaalapootu/Kalaporu (The fight between bulls)

It is an agricultural performance involved with bull and human being. It is also known as bull fight. This performance is very dangerous.

Mutelneenthi nercha (Swim on knee on the floor)

It is a ritual performance of Christian community. The devotee offering this rituals for to fulfil their wishes. The devotee visited in the church and offer this ritual. It is practiced in mainly two churchs namely Thangipally of Alappy district and Cherppungal church at Pala, Kottayam district. The Christian devotee sit in the church on knee like that this performance started with sitting on the knee and walked with knee. There is a particular place for doing this ritual in the courtyard of church. They walk nearly 100 meter in the premises of church. The skin scratched by rubbing of the land. It makes heavy pain on the knee.

Madanukoda (Offering to folk God Siva)

It is a very rare performance of the temples of Nair community of Kollam, Thiruvananthapuram (Kerala) and Kanyakumari district (Tamilnadu). The priest of the temple trans as Madan and behave like an oracle. He drunk boiled turmeric water with both hand and swallowing unbroken egg as much as the devotees offered to Madan and he beat himself with a whipcord. At last he blessed the devotee and predict something as Madan. At the time of the trans of the performer as Madan a women also dancing as Isakki (Goddess Parvathi). Then the Madan became unconscious. It is the end of the ritual performance.

Parakumkaavadi

It is like Elavoorthookam. Metal hook is connected the body of the man with stem which arranged in the body of the lorry or goods auto. The hook stitched on the shoulder and leg. The vehicle rounding all over the village boarder. This performance is taken place at Subramanya temple of Thiruvananthapuram district.

Kanalaatam (The dance on the ember)

The folk performance Ayyapantheeyat is conducting Ayyapan temples and shrines. The second phase of Ayyappantheeyat is the dance of oracle. This oracle is dancing over the ember. This is not done by an ordinary man. The same thing is doing by the oracle in the shrine. The priest

is performed with fire in a dangerous atmosphere. Like wise *Potten Theyyam* also sometimes run over the ember. There are different kind of Theyyams related to Fire. Potten Theyyam is lying over ember. The Theyyem Uchitta is sitting over the ember. The Theyyam Kadanaarkelan running over the fire with full costumes. The Theechamundi Theyyam jump over the ember. There are Theyyams with wearing flambeau at waist and headgear. They are Puthiya Bagavathi Theyyan, Ghandaakarnan Theyyam and Dhumabhagavati Theyyam. Certain Theyyam is climbing over *Erythrina indica* (Murikku). This tree have full of throne. The ordinary man does not do this performance. In folk performance Pulluvanpaatu there is a particular item has done by the performer that is nothing but Thiriuzhichill. It is a flamebeau specially prepared by the performer and it is rubbing all over the body. It is also make feel a Super human action.

Fire Theyyams

The ancient and difficult ritual Theyyam art is surviving even in the 21st century in the hearts of the devotees, even though if it is assumed as 2000 years of old by the historians. Some of them are dancing with headgear of 50 feet, some are jumping to the fire embers, while some are dancing with lightened sticky to the waist.

Fire walking

For thousands of year people of many different cultures and regions from all the parts of the world were practised fire walking. Many people attribute the ability to remain burn free due to paranormal phenomena. In contrast ,physicists suggest that the presumed danger is an illusion claiming the ember are not great conductors of heat and the artists feet have limited contact with fire. Those who expect the fire to burn them get burned and vice versa. The belief of the artist is the most important determinant. Those who successfully complete the fire experience claim the principles of quantum physics. The observer creates the reality.

3. 3 A brief introductions of Theyyams of Kerala

The Theyyam performance is flourished in Kannur and Kasargod district. To certain extent the Northern side of Calicut district is also performing Theyyam. Theyyam performance is very much influenced in Northern Kerala. This was promoted by Kolathiri dynasty. Most of the Hindu community of Malabar have their own folk deities.

The ritual performance Theyyam is performed in the light of folk torch and ritual lamps. In this sense all Theyyams are existing in the presence of fire. Each and every Theyyams are performed through a definite process. In the part of ritual, certain Theyyams are doing some Super human activities according to the myth of particular Theyyam. The fire Theyyam can be

divided according to the nature of materials which is used for fire. That is in three kind ; ember, ember and dried coconut leaf, flambeau.

3. 4 Different Theyyams of Kerala

The Theyyams are classified as mother goddess, animal, martyr, hero, ancestor, demi god, ghost, magical gods and gods of Purana. It can be again classified according to the material culture, caste of the performer, main devotee of the deity and the ownership caste of the deity, and the origin of the caste of deity.

Mother Goddess

Mother goddess Kali is a primitive god of Indian folk. Kottavai, Cheerumba, Korathi, Uchitta are all belong to this category. The majority of the Theyyam are included mother Theyyams. Mother Theyyams is known as in different names, each and every tharavadu(Joint family) of North Malabar have atleast one Mother goddess.

Animal Theyyam

This type of Theyyam is related to animal gods. The colourful Theyyam in this category is Bali Theyyam. Pulikandan, Pulimarinjathondachan, Nagakali are all included in this category

Martyr Theyyam

This kind of Theyyam is originated from the martyr fighting for the social justice. Kuttichathan was a Theyyam fight for justice to the agricultural labour of Kaalakkattu illam and he was burned in the fire by the landlord. In the case of Vishnumoorthi Theyyam the lower myth depicting as follows; Paaladayi Kannan belongs to a backward community loved the nice of Kuruvate kurup, landlord of Neeleswaram. He was killed by the assistance of Kuruvate kurup. So he become the martyr of love affairs.

Hero Theyyams

Thacholi Othenan of Meppayil tharavdu was a great warrior of his age. He won several battle all over Kadathanadu . He was a hero of vadakkan paatukal [Ballads of North Malabar].

Kathirvanoor veeran Theyyam

Mangaat Mandhappan was a brave soldier. He was born as the son of Meethale illathu Kumarachan and Parakka illathu Chakki amma. He was learned all kind of martial arts. As a youth he went Kodagu for trading. His friends gave him alcohol and he was slept. His friends were left the place but he followed the the print of the wheel and he reached Kudagu. Then he married his maternal cousin Chemarathi and stayed there. When he went for trading oil as usual but one day he could not return back to home. The very

next day he returned in the home but Chemmrathi was not given proper consideration, abruptly he went to fight Kudagu market and he won over the fight but the enemies killed him by cheating. He become a hero god.

Ancestor Theyyam

Vellur Gurikkal Theyyam is a Kaaranavar Theyyam of Pulaya community. He was a great magician in his life time. He cured the problem of the king Allada sworooopam. The 7th day of the death of Gurikkal certain symptoms are outburst . So the family members of the Gurikkal approached an astrologer. The astrologer predicted to celebrate Theyyam of Vellur Gurikkal.

Demi Gods

The deity between man and god is considered as Demi god. Yaksha, Gadharva, Kinnara are all included in this category. At the time of Gadharvanpaatu and Paathalahoma this type of god will be performed.

Magical God

There are five gods included in this category Uchitta, Bairavan, Potten, Gulikan and Korathi. The worshipers of magical gods are arguing that they get the power of magical gods through praising the god. The god itself takes possession of the magician or the performer.

3.5 Theyyams on the basis of Materials – An effective classification

The form and structure of a Theyyam is a differentiate with other but let us categorize them with the application of material for their costume and other decorations. Certain communities are using natural materials. The communities like Pulaya, Copaala, Velan and Malayan are using tender coconut leaf for costumes. All others are using rice paste, charcoal, turmeric and lime for face decoration. The communities like Malaya, Vanaan, Anjutaan and Munutaan were using costly material for facial make up like cinnabar and cobalt. The headgear also very different. There are 13 kind of headgear are using by Theyyam performers. The lengthy headgear is made up of bamboo or areca nut lath and cover it with, silk cloth and its bottom will decorate with metal flower or wooden decorations. Kadamberi Bagavati, Thiruvangaat Bagavathi, Thaya paradevatha, Parakutti Bagavathi are all using this type of headgear. Another type of headgear is round headgear . Its size may be differentiate Theyyam to Theyyams. This type of headgear is made up of canes and make the round shape. Then it is decorated with small pieces of wood and flowers. The Theyyams are wearing this short headgear are Kakkara Bagavathi, Narambil Bagavathi, Kanaankat Bagavathi. The outer layer of the headgear may be decorated with tender coconut leaf in the case of flambeau Theyyam. Other Theyyams are using peacock feather. Other type of headgear is peacock feather headgear. It is semi-rounded headgear and top of the headgear a bud shaped projection is necessary,

Vettaykorumakhan Theyyam is using this kind of headgear. Pookatti headgear is made up of the wood either *erythrina indica scholaris* [It is a soft wood taken from thorny tree with red flower]. It is for hero Theyyams like Kathirvanoorveeran, Padaveeran, Kudiveeran, Thuluveeran, Khandanaarkelan and Pulimarinjathodachan.

3. 6 Koombumudi

Koombumudi is made up of woods either *erythrina indica* (Thorny tree with red flower). The middle piece directly fixed on the head. It is cylinder shape. A symmetrical wooden sheet is joining both side. Chettamudi is made up of lath of areca nut and bamboo, it is joint with twin and metal flowers and cloth. The Theyyam can be classified according to the peculiarity of the facial painting. There are 14 type of facial painting is practiced. There are nearly 400 Theyyams performing in Kerala. All other facial painting is slightly changed according to the character of Theyyam. Certain Theyyams are using mask. Mask may be made of leather, film of areca and wood. Theyyam on the basis of worship place are differentiate from place to place. Temples, kavu, houses of Brahmins, houses of common people and the stanas like mundya, kottam, muchilot and palliyara are the worship centre according to the socio economic condition of the trustees.

3. 7 Ember Fire- Main attraction of Fire Theyyams

Ember fire is making by woods like jack fruit tree, tamarind tree, and oleander. Usually the Fire Theyyam performance will start in the evening and end with the next day noon. The pieces of above said woods are keeping near of the temporary shrine. The helpers of the Theyyam performance gathering the wood pieces in the particular place. Before arranging ritual the performer take lighted lid from the shrine. This lid is made up of rice and cloth. Take a small quantity of row rice and covered in a piece of cotton. This cloth is distributed by the traditional washer man community of the region. The cloth will keep in the pre arranged place and lighten it. The helpers keep the small pieces of wood at first then big pieces of wood will be arranged. There is a folk technology is applied for the arrangements. Make it sure that the easy flow of the air in the wood bunch. The flame will come out gradually. The helpers make a small accumulation wood in the premises of shrine. From the twilight the wood becomes flame. It is very attractive in the night. Around 4 am at the next morning the whole wood become ember. The temperature of the ember is very high. After cleaning the unfinished wood ember become red and hot. This time nobody could not move towards it due to heavy heat. But the performer easily jumped over it, lay over it or sit over it.

The second type of fire is the mixture of ember and dried coconut leaf. As in the first case make the ember. Then put dried coconut leaf. Its flame become very high.

The third one flam beau is made up of coconut oil and cotton cloth and fibre of coconut outer cover. A bunch of cleaned fibre of coconut cover on the end of a stick with cotton cloth and it immersed in coconut oil for four hours. Then it fixed on the waist of the performer for performance. It is used for the decoration of the headgear. The small flam beau is not covered with coconut fibre. The number of the flambeau will be fluctuated from Theyyam to Theyyam according its context and the performers community.

3. 8 The Theyyam related to ember

The Theyyam Ottakolam or Theechamundi is using the bulk quantity of ember for the performance. The ember heaps is known as meleri in Malayalam. The biggest meleri is usually used for the Theyyam Theechamundi/Ottakolam. Usually six to ten load wood is used for the meleri. The myth of Theechamundi is related to the higher myth of Prahlada son of Hiranyakasupa . When Hiranyakasupa has thrown his son Prahlada into fire, fire has laughed. This affectation of fire is not digested to Mahavishnu. So he decided to jump over the fire uncountable time. Mahavishnu gave a blow to fire for his proud. The action of Theechamundi Theyyam is the remembrance of the deeds of God Mahavishnu. When a devotee is decided to conduct

Theechamundi Theyyam. The devotee of the region are ready to offer wood for meleri become big. The performer is jumping over the fire early morning with the costume of tender coconut leaf and plantain stem. The row rice paste will be smeared over the body of the performer. He is jumped over the heap of ember towards front side, when the performer jumped over the ember the trained helpers pulled from the ember. Usually 101 times the performer jumped over the fire. After the completion of the course he removed the outer layer of the make up which is made up of tender coconut leaf. Then again the performer jumped over the ember at least 51 times. This scene is the climax of the performance. The crowded gathering shouted the slogan govinda govinda. . . from the beginning to the end of the jumping of the performer towards ember.

The Theyyam Uchitta will sit over the ember. The devotees believed that Uchitta is the goddess Sathi, the daughter of Dhaksha. Sathi was suicide in the yaga fire of Dhaksha due to the intolerable insult made by his father to his husband Lord Siva. The remembrance of the action of Sathi is displaying in the midst of Theyyam ritual by the performer.

Certain Theyyams like Bali Theyyam, Thodachan Theyyam [Vayanaatukulavan], Kannangattu Bhagavathi Theyyam were climbed up and down over the meleri with oracles sometimes.

The second category the mixing of the ember and the dried coconut leaf is performed by the performer of the Theyyam Kadanaarkelan. The Kadanaarkelan Theyyam is running over the fire. In the myth itself it is clearly depicted that Kadanaarkelan Theyyam was the martyr of the transformation of the labour from hunting to agriculture. The heap of the meleri divided into equally four portions and jumped from the traditional stool to the fire. When the performer is rounding around the fire, the helpers put dried coconut leaf over the ember, when its flame become very high the performer run over the flame with all his costumes. The helpers are belong to Thiyya community and the performer belongs to Vannan community. Two persons to hold the arm of the Theyyam on both side. Then three of them are run over the flame. They are trying to make burn each other. The third category of the fire is the flam beau. It is also in the three kind according to the nature of flam beau. There are three kind of flam beau; namely Kuthupantham [The four of flam beau fixed on the waist by screwing the stick], Kettupantham [Four big flam beau tied on the waist], Arayadiyadium panthavum [The biggest flam beau keep on the waist].

The goddess Dhooma Bhagavathi Performed by Vela community wearing kuthupantham on the waist. At the same time this Theyyam was performed by Malaya community use kettupantham.

The Kadaamkottu Maakam Theyyam is performed by Vanaan community. This Theyyam is wearing kuthupandham on the waist with six in number. The Muchilot Baghavathi Theyyam, Puthiya Baghavathi Theyyam, Perkulagara Baghavathi Theyyam, Thottumkulangara Baghavathi Theyyam were wearing 4 kettupandams.

The Agni khangakharnan Theyyam is wearing sixteen big of flam beau on the waist and 101 small flambeau on the headgear.

In the ritual performance of Kerala there is a usual practice to bless the devotee by the main performer of the ritual performance. The Kali of Parnettu, Kaaliyuttu and Mudiyyettu are all blessing the devotee. Likewise in the performance Ayyappantheeyattu, Vettaykorumakan paatu and Bhadrakaali paatu , the oracle [Komaram]were blessing the devotee. Even in classical art form Kathakali and Krishnanaatam were practicing the blessing by the Sreekrishna performer. When Sree Krishna Character is presenting Viswaroopa on the stage in Kathakali performance the audience rushed to the stage and bow their head in front of the performer. In Krishnanaatam performance also the audience get blessing from the Sreekrishna performer. All these things are proving that the interaction of the devotees and god is the impact of Theyyam rituals of Kerala. According to Dr. K. K. N. Kurup the origin of the Theyyam is in the worship of Velan virayaat of Sangam period. The Sangam literature also depicting Kerala is

part and parcel of Tamilakam, so certain elements of the ritual Velan virayaat were spreading here and there in Kerala. But it is dominant in North Kerala. The ritual Theyyam are performed in North part of Kerala especially Kannur and Kasargod district. But the impact of Theyyam ritual is extended up to Thiruvananthapuram. The main sponsor of Theyyam ritual was Kolathiri kingdom. The Travancore royal family was adopting princess from Kolathiri royal family frequently. Mavelikkara, Prayikkara Nedumbram, Ennakaat, Karthikapally, Mariyapally, Aaranmula royal families are also adopted princess from Kolathiri royal family. At the time of adoption some other caste families are also migrated to Travancore for skilled work. Those days the Malaya community was alone doing the labour work of mid wife. The root of Malaya community begins from Tamilnadu, they are custodian of magical ritual. They are singing the song of Thiruvaaranmula songs for the magical rituals to remove the evil eye. The Velan pravriti of Kottayam district and Pathala homa of Kannur district is very similar. In both cases they are singing the song from Velamahabharatha. Another ritual Nizhalkoothu is also singing the songs of Velamahabharatha. Nizhalkoothu is a ritual practiced by Velan community of Middle Kerala. This community was the traditional magical ritual activist. Usually those who are interested to revenge their enemies they approach the magician belongs to Velan community. They uttering hymns continuously. After completing the course uttering mantras the magician hits on the sketches with a stick. The folk believed that at the time of this hit the

enemy become dead. This ritual is related to Mahabharatha story about incident of Dhuryodhana appointing a magician to destroy Sreekrishna and Paandava . But the wife of the magician was a devotee of Sreekrishna and she applied another manthras to nullify the actions of her husband. The Velamahabharatha is an text of folk epic. The Theyyam cult is spreading technicaly Kassargod and Kannur district. But the impact of Theyyam ritual is effected all over Kerala due to the migration of Brahmins from Northern part of Kerala to Thiruvananthapuram.

3.9 Melery

The melery [The heap of ember]is made up of in a particular way. The priest of the shrine is find out a place for melery then they make a small mud heap. The lightened lid is kept on the mud heap and put very small pieces of wood over that. Gradually that melery is arranging from small pieces to large pieces. It is very particular that each and every piece is keeping which the assurance of air circulation. The proper arrangements of melery make it sure that the complete burning of the wood with proper flame and getting maximum ember. It is happened due to the application of folk science.

3.10 Guruthi [The symbolic sacrifice with the solution of lime, turmeric, and red colour flowers mixed with water].

The primitive people was practiced animal sacrifice even human sacrifice for the well being of the folk. Gradually the impact of Sanskritisation

or Bramanisation the ritual of sacrifices slightly changed as the symbolic sacrifices. In the Brahmin house of North Malabar this symbolic sacrifice is an annual celebration at the time Kaliyaatam [The cluster of Theyyam performances in a joint family]. At the time of Kaliyaatam in the presence of main Theyyams of tharavadu the Brahminis doing the ritual guruthi. It is given a unique experience to the participant. Whenever the Brahmins migrated from one place to another their core interest were keeping for ever . Mostly the Tulu Brahmins and North Kerala Brahmins are the priest of temples of Travancore. Their gusters and way of presentation of different kind of offerings is similar in here and there.

3. 11 Theyyam Performers in Kerala

The ritual Theyyam is the product of feudal system. The land ownership of Kerala goes to Brahmins and temples. It is known in Malayalam Brahmswam [Brahmin] and Devaswam [Temple]. The have not have the right to perform traditional occupations and rituals. It is traditionally known as Cherujanmaavakaasham. The right to perform Theyyam is getting to a family through cherujanmaavakaasham traditionally. Most of the Theyyam performers are belongs to either scheduled caste or scheduled tribe. Their main livelihood is not the Theyyam ritual only. It is a seasonal profession. Some of them are finally engaged with agricultural work. Some others are involved technical job like bed making, mat weaving,basket

making and umbrella making. Some others practiced folk medicine, magical ritual and fishing. They are practicing Theyyam performance traditionally. There is no proper teaching or coaching. They born, grown and death with Theyyam. They are practicing Thottam songs, playing of musical instruments, making of costumes and other Theyyam related activities from the early childhood. Traditionally they have no land for their own. They are tenants of landlords. Usually Theyyam performers are economically very poor. So they know the problem of the society. It help them to understand the difficulties of common people as he become the deity at the time of performance.

3. 12 Scope and Future of Theyyam

The density of belief is increasing day by day. At the time of renaissance movement and the establishment of communist party were fighting against orthodox thoughts and belief system. The Vaagbhadanandha movement and the Sahodharan Ayyapan movement was creating an awareness against blind belief and worship of god. Now day by day the Bhakthi movement is become strong the installation of new shrine and renovation of old is progressing. In the globalized social order the possibilities of getting jobs are increased. It produced new haves. They facing an identity crisis they were left from the group of have-nots and not at reached in the group of haves. So they are involving in the construction of the new folk through the construction of new temples and the renovation of the old. The

activities of belief oriented programmes is given opportunities to develop the personality of the involved. So the chance of the artist of the ritual performance is more and more in the future. In another product of globalization is the scope of tourism. The urban tourist is wishing to watch folk performances as a nostalgic feeling. Most of the tourist destination were supporting to perform Theyyam arts.

3. 13 Thumbakool Ramachanran Paniker - An example of dedicated Theyyam Artist

Thumbakool Ramchandra Paniker, traditional Theyyam artist born in 1962 May 30th at Cheruthazham village of Kannur district. His father is Raman Paniker and mother Mrs. T. Paaru. Traditionally his family is belongs to Malaya community. Their birthright as Cherujanmaavakasham to perform Theyyam and magical rituals. He started his carrier at the age of 7 to perform Aivedan under the guidance of his father Raman Paniker. At the age of 10 he performed Vishnumoorthi Theyyam and got recognition pattum valayum (A silk shawl and gold bangle is given as a token of recognition by the chieftain of the village). At the age of 10 he performed *Potten Theyyam*. He was performed Rakthchamundi, Uchitta, Ghandakarnan, Thekkan Guligan, Vadakkan Guligan, Karimkuttichathan, Muvalankuzhi Chamundi, Panchuruli, Rakthesweri, Madayil Chamudi, Kizhakeara Chamundi, Dhumaabagavati, Yakshan, Kuttichathan and Bairavan. He also performed Paathala homa,

Malayankettu, Kanerupaatu, Kothamuriyaatam and magical rituals. He is a specialist in folk medicine of child. He did all kind of costume work of Theyyam. He performed more than 400 Rakthchamundi Theyyam and 603 *Potten Theyyam*. He also performed two Theechamudi Theyyam. He is an all rounder of Theyyam rituals. His education is a pre-degree with science subject now he is working ED. Postman at Mandoor post office. He went abroad several time to perform Rakthachamundi Theyyam and Karimkuttichathan. In 2010 he visited Tecxas in America for presenting Theyyam. This year itself he visited Singapore, he spend 5 years at Mascut as an employee. In 2012 he visited London, and performed Theyyam Karimkuttichathan and Rakthachamundi. He performed Theyyams in every state of India except Kashmir and Rajastan. His wife is Mrs. Nisha, she is a house wife. He have two children eldest one is the daughter Drishya is plus two student, his sun is Deepak studied at 9th standard. He lead a carmfal life with satisfaction. He told he got sufficient recognition and moderate income from this profession. I am a strong believer of god, the god gives me every thing. Nowadays the public is promoting Theyyam and Theyyam artists. So anybody can survive with Theyyam performance. He could not continue his job at Muscut due to the compulsion of his family for performing traditional Theyyam. He maintain his health through penance and diet control. Traditionally they are good folk psychologist so they can identified the disease and its impact. It give them a confidence to control health problems.

3. 14 Potten Theyyam - Research Case Study

Potten Theyyam is very peculiar among Theyyam rituals. The costumes of *Potten Theyyam* is very simple and the language is very rustic. As it is Manthramoorthi [Magical god] it is very powerful. The common folk whenever they faced complex problems they prayed *Potten Theyyam*. There is a phrase among the folk the god reached in front of the devotee when he addressed the god of his difficulties. *Potten Theyyam* have limited shrines but it popularly performed Kannur and Kasargod district. It is an offering Theyyam. Anybody can conduct *Potten Theyyam* any where else as a part of their offerings. The only thing is they should keep all ritual proceedings such as permission to the performance *Potten Theyyam*, the proper arrangements in the plot, the conception of the temporary shrine with dried coconut leaf and melery. It should be make it sure that the purity of the place. If anybody decided to conduct *Potten Theyyam* as offering it may be announced in the region and invite the relatives and nears. Sometimes other devotees also offer some of the materials for *Potten Theyyam* like fire wood. The duration of the *Potten Theyyam* is noon to noon. All the pre-arrangements should be completed with in a stipulated time . In the after noon after some rituals is completed in the temporary shrine. The priest of the performance lightened the melery. After lightening the near by folk is helping to arrange the melery. The wood for the melery the near by folk helping to arrange it. The raw materials for the melery is have limited choice. Usually jack fruit tree,

turmeric tree, oleander and banyan tree woods are may be selected. One mini load wood is necessary, it make big pieces and systematically keep it in the prescribed venue, at the twilight the wood which burning well and make flames, it is attractive. Meanwhile other rituals is to be continued these shrine. Thottam songs is to be performed by the performer with simple make up the women members of the performers' family is also participated in Thottam songs in front of the shrine. Around early morning 3 AM the melery become cleaned by the helpers. The remaining pieces of the burned wood removed from the melery and keep it little distance away to the melery. In *Potten Theyyam* ritual three characters are performed by a single performer. The first character of *Potten Theyyam* is Polamaaruthan. It represents the character of Nandhikesa according to the higher myth. Polamaaruthan played with flam beau of dried coconut leaf. The Theyyams those who which are performed in the night usually use flam beau for light. In the case of Polamaaruthan at the time of the vigorous dance three or four persons showing flam beau with full flame. On that time Polamaaruthan hit all the flam beau with his hand. It is an attractive scene in the dark of night; spark of fire showing around the Theyyam and also the costume both waist and headgear become glint. It is a rare combination of the colour of tender coconut leaf and the spark. The second character of *Potten Theyyam* is Pola Potten. According to higher myth Pola Potten is representing god Siva. Pola Potten will be laid over the ember with very happy and he uttered it is very cool. This action is repeated several

times. Meanwhile Pola Potten will lay over the flames of dried coconut leaf which is fired near by the melery with the remaining parts of woods burned adjacent to the ember heap. This scene is create the speedy heart beat of the audience. The Pola Potten withdraw from the fire only the request of the devotee. After completing the course Pola Potten blessed the devotee and solve the problems of the devotees. The last character of the *Potten Theyyam* is Pula Chamundi changed with the re-placement of the mask. *Potten Theyyam* is the ritual of common folk.

3. 15 Super Human Theyyam rather than Fire Theyyam

Kaaran Gulikan of Cheruvathoor Pallikkara Neleswaram side lay down on thistle and erythrina indica.

Thekkan Guligan-Playing with lengthy artificial leg it can't do by an ordinary man.

Thaaya Paradevatha - The Theyyam with lengthy headgear Thaaya Paradevathha dancing and running at the time of performance. It reflects Super humanness.

3. 16 Theyyam Victims

The performance of Fire Theyyam is a risky one. Here the performer always afraid of unexpected accident in the midst of ritual. The possibility of accident is very high. There are many victims who are alive now. One Mr.

Rajeevan, when he performed the Theyyam Ghandaarkarnan at Thalassery was burned, Kunjaaran aged 65 from Karivaloor belongs to Peruvanaan community performed Theechamundi Theyyam and burned one of his leg severly and cut the leg and removed, later he can cut the leg up to knee. Theechamundi is the Theyyam of Malaya community. Thumbakool Ramachandra Paniker is a well known Theyyam performer from Cheruthazham village. When he was performing *Potten Theyyam* at Vaarankoot illam, Payyanur, ember entered into the mask and burned the face. At the time of performance there is no scope for applying any medicine. After the performance he went to the home his mother all ready prepared a medicine oil with herbal ingredient. With in a week his burns cured. T. Chandu Paniker a specialist in Fire Theyyam was burned his leg at the time of performance at Cheruthazham, Kannur district. During the performance he patiently tolerate the pain then after reaching home he smeared herbal medicine over the burn, with in a week he becomes all right. Preman Paniker a specialist in *Potten Theyyam* performance burned several time during the course of performance. In his opinions it burns due to the less quantity of tender coconut leaf for costumes for waist and head. Another reason is the much quantity ember. He argued that the performer may be burned on account of temple impurity , if the ember is made up of impure woods also for the reason of burning. He counter argued that you can test with your own

body for the reasons of burning you keep tender coconut leaf in your own hand and applying heat by ember you can easily understand the reason.

3.17 *Potten Theyyam* in Natural and Induced Context (Special reference in research)

It is believed that in order to form a Theyyam even a god will also come to the earth as an ordinary human being. Hero worship gives rise to Theyyam. Each Theyyam has a definite myth. Sometimes the myths are borrowed from higher mythology directly. *Potten Theyyam* is very important Theyyam in the North Malabar region of Kerala. Theyyam is a ritualistic dance. Like other Theyyam *Potten, Theyyam* have its own myths. *Potten Theyyam* have higher mythology and lower mythology. The higher mythology has the support from the classical Hindu literature. But the lower mythology is localised among the folk and it spread mainly through oral folklore.

Higher Myth

In order to test Sankaracharya who is on the way to Kashi Vishwanadan temple who attained Sarvanjapeeda, Lord Siva disguised as in the form of Chandaala on his way. Sankaracharya was a scholarly Brahmin asked the Chandaala to move away from his path on account of untouchability, on hearing words of wisdom from Chandaala. Sankaracharya identified Chandaala was not an ordinary man, he was actually Lord Siva.

There is also a variety of lower myth which was rendered in the North Kerala. In Pulingom near Payyanur of Kanuur district in Kerala, there lived a Delit [Pulaya] youth named Alangaran. A saint as the successor of Sankaracharya wandering with his followers through Pullingom and accidentally met Alangaran. Both of them discussed about untouchability and Alangaran become won over the discussion. The followers of Sankaracharya was infuriated and demanded the death of the Delit. They pulled him fire and burned alive. So the folk believed that Alangaran become *Potten Theyyam*. The place were this incident had occurred Kokkotupathi in Pulingom. In the memory of martyr Alangaran the folk celebrate the festival of *Potten Theyyam*. This Theyyam have a magical aspects. The Theyyam performer is lying on the red hot embers for a while. This cannot be performed by a common man. The costumes and body decoration were using in the performer to, protect his body from fire.

The text of a performance is decided by context and texture. There are three kind of context is there one is natural context, second is induced context and third one is quasi natural context. The first case was performed at Cheruthazham village in Kannur district of Kerala. The second case was the performance was conducted at Ootty in Tamilnadu as induced context. The third case was performed at Eravatoor in the Kozhikode district as quasi natural context.

In the first case the performance commence on the evening and end on the next day noon. Here in the natural context the performer followed all the traditonal rituals. Each community have keeping caste hierarchy. The audience of the performance were devoted to the god. Here everybody were very serious. At the same in the induced context the rituals were not follows strictly. The customes and other material elements were not strictly maintained. The audience was not a trained audience. It was gathering of people without tradition. The performing place is not maintained properly. The performer himself was tempted with visual media of the press. In the natural context if anybody trying to make a photograph or video,the photographer/videographer were following the performer without maiking any disturbance to the performer. In the third case that is quasi-natural context the audience is very much co-operative with the performance why because, they are also a practice of ritual performance of Thira which is very much closely similar to Theyyam performance.

Case study

The *Potten Theyyam* performance performed at famous tourist centre of Kerala at Malabuzha garden. It is known as the garden of Kerala. Comparing to all other three cases it was witnessed by a cross section of Indian community why because this was conducted as part of national intergration camp by Nehru Yuva Kenra Sangethan of Palakat district. The

gathering was youths and also is a floating community. Here it was not a solo performance in the function, there are different kind of folk forms from Madhya pradhesh, Karnataka, Andra, Maharakshtra, Goa and so on. The audience was not concentrating the rituals of *Potten Theyyam* because at that time other performance was presenting on adjacent stage. But at the time of the climax scene of performance all other item was dropped. These performance was appreciated by the whole audience with enthusiastic. We felt an active participation of the multilingual audience in the performance. Here there is no divinity was seen in the performance but everybody astonished on account of Super humanness of the performance. Somebody give gift to the performer not as a devotee but as an art lover. All the settings and other arrangements is very valgour compairing to the natural context and quasi natural context.

3. 18 Folk Science application in Theyyams - An enquiry to the Super humanness

Folk science and technology are applied by the folk performers and folk life of Kerala by the different folk in the different region. The beginning of Theyyam ritual start from the temples when the performers receiving kodiya [Tender plantain leaf contented with oil lid and row rice. It is the first step of the performance]. The performer after receiving it and run to traditional green room. The lid is not dim due to the folk technology which

applied folk science. At the time of running there is chance to dimmed the lid due to powerful wind. The plantain leaf is controlling the flow of air circulation and protect the burning lid. The convection of gas is applying here. At the time of make up the traditional performer is using herbal material like cinnabar , cobalt, turmeric powder, rice paste, sandal paste and ash of cow dug. It is not harming the skin. The fixing of costume over the body of the performer with folk technology. The *Potten Theyyam* performer wearing first ornament is anklet with bells on the leg, its shape and the hollowness and fill it with a small ball of metal and it tied with his foot finger is helping make a rhythmic sound. The twine is connected with the edge of the bangle and the foot finger. So the sound frequency is feel well according to the rhythmic of dance

The costume of using on the waist also fixing by the twine and stick. It may covered with other particles some times wooden piece or bamboo piece or cloth. The fixing of these things with keeping of equilibrium position. The gravitational force also applied on it. Like the headgear fixing on the head start with simple to complex. First of all the performer tie a towel like simple cloth fixed on the head then keep thalapali [It is a metal ornament with 21 phalic symbol of serpent]. The position of headgear is tie over the head one by one. Some times certain Theyyam's headgear have a length of 21 feet. This type of headgear is made up of bamboo frame. The front position of the headgear is a shape of triangle. The base of the triangle is towards backward.

It is helping to overcome the obstacles of air. Even the cloth is stitching or pinning not by coir but by paandam [The fibre of coconut leaf's middle stem]. The frame of vadakenbaagam [Vadakenbaagam is a ritual related to Theyyam performance]. It will be prepared on the northern side of temporary shrine. The structure is in a rectangle type take four ribbons of plantain stem and keep it in a rectangle form and fix it with four small sticks on four sides. Now it has seen like tables with four legs. There are four or eight layers of plantain ribbon is interconnected with it. The top of the stem is fixing small flame. All these things keeping well with the application of folk science.

3. 19 Folk Psychology Application in Theyyam

Folk psychology has no authentic book, it is a practice of folk. The Theyyam artist is predicting the problem of the devotees through face reading and the verbal expression of the devotee [Patient]. In the book 'Abnormal psychology' very clearly pointed out the abnormal psychology starts from mesmerism and develops through hypnotism. It denotes that the role of magics and magical rituals in the mental treatment. There are two kinds of magic applicable in folk psychology, one is imitation and the other is touching. The whole magical ritual depends upon this principle. The issue less couples offering Ayyappankoothu of Palazhimadhana in the temple and some couples offering Krishnanaatam avatharam for getting a child. So here the principle like produces likes is applicable. Those who are interesting to

destroy the enemy they are offering to perform Ninabali (A ritual drama of Kannur district). When Kali killed Darika, the devotee think that his enemy will be expired or make accidental death with the impact of Ninabali. To destroy somebody collect the body portion of the enemy like nail or hair and it burned in the fire. When the body portion of the enemy become ash at the same time the enemy will be ruined. In the case of Theyyam is practicing counselling to the mental patient. For example when a number of royal family become jobless due to some technical reasons. When *Potten Theyyam* hearing the problem of the devotees , Potten watched the expression of the devotee and told to him ‘In a long time the King Nala suffered much with the ill treatment of Kali but at last Nala attained every thing. The devotee achieved the goal like Nala and offered Pottan Theyyam. Another incident as follows; when a Brahmin priest requesting *Potten Theyyam* a male baby for the continuation of his family. Why because his four children are girls. *Potten Theyyam* told that you don’t worry i will give you a he baby with in one year,you worshiped me properly and did some penance and take some medicine. With in one year he got a male baby. The Theyyam give inspiration and positive energy to solve their problem .

3. 20 Respondent's views and opinions about the Super humanness of *Potten Theyyam*- Analysis

A. Scientists (Physicists)

To explore the underlying physicists, the Super Humanness behind the *Potten Theyyam*, a study was conducted by interviewing 36 physicists from different parts of India. All of them were allowed to observe the real performance of the Theyyam.

(a) Physicists

Physicists were in the age group from 25 to 45 years (89%). Among them 36% were women and 64% were men. Their qualifications vary from degree to doctorate level. That is, post graduates in physics (80%), among post graduates, 30% are doctorates. (Table-3-1,2, and 3). Only 6% of the physicists are having previous experience about the performance of the Potten Theyyam, among them 9% were males. No female scientists have previous experience of seeing a Theyyam. (Table-3-4) (One lady has seen the Theyyam in TV , that is not treated as valid response.)

Table 3.1**Physicists' year of birth**

	1950-59	1960-69	1970-79	1980-89	1990-99	Not mentioned	Total
No.	2	2	9	10	9	4	36
%	5.56	2.56	25	27.77	25	11.11	100

Source - Primary data

Table 3.2**Physicists (Male/Female)**

	Male	Female	Total
No	23	13	36
%	64	36	100

Source - Primary data

Table 3.3**Qualifications of Physicists**

Qualifications of Physicists	Number	%
1. B. Sc	2	5.5
2. B. Tech	1	2.8
3. M. Sc	10	27.8
4. M. Tech	1	2.8
5. M. Sc; M. Phil	4	11.1
6. M. Sc; P. hd	11	30.6
7. M. E	2	5.5
8. M. Tech; P. hD	1	2.8
Not mentioned	4	11.1
Total	36	100

Source - Primary data

Table 3.4

Physicist's previous knowledge about *Potten Theyyam*

Yes			No		Total	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Male	2	9	21	91	23	64
Female	0	0	13	100	13	36
Total	2	9	34	91	36	100

Source - Primary data

Physicists expressed their opinion about the performance of *Potten Theyyam*. They admitted the great effort and bearing power of the performers.

Their general opinions are as follows:-

1. It is better if the purpose behind the performance is propagated more as equality of mankind, removal of untouchability and difference of low & high income groups.
2. The culture is good and attractive. It need to be preserved and exposed to the rest of the world.
3. It is very courageous performance and interesting.
4. New experience, captivating, unforgettable, awesome and enjoyable,
5. The performance is really adorable, worshipping deities in their form is different and incredible.

(b) Super humanness in the *Potten Theyyam*- Physicist's view

In *Potten Theyyam* performance, Super humanness means the performer lays over the ember and gets up with out any burning. (See videos and Photos) (Appendix 7 & 8). This activity can not be performed by others. Researcher's problem starts from this point that whether this activity is Super natural or science. As part of the inquiry, different groups have been interviewed and collected data from scientists (Physicists), performers and helpers, natives and devotees, academicians, sociologists, psychologists, doctors, victims of the performance and trustees, also people from outside of Kerala, including peoples foreign countries.

56% of the physicists do not feel that the *Potten Theyyam* is Super human. If the opinion is taking gender wise, 69% of the females and 47. 83% of the males are sure that there is no Super humanness.

Table 3.5

Super humanness in *Potten Theyyam* (Physicist's opinion)

Opinions of Physicists	Male		Female		Total	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Super human	9	39. 13	4	31	13	36
Not Super human	11	47. 83	9	69	20	56
No opinion	3	13. 04	0	0	3	8
Total	23	100	13	100	36	100

Source - Primary data

Table 3.6**Factors responsible for Super humanness
(Physicists' opinion before ranking variables)**

Factors (variables) for Super humanness		Men		Women	Total	%
1.	Low thermal conductivity	Yes	18	11	29	81
		No	7	0	7	19
2.	Leidenfrost effect	Yes	8	5	13	36
		No	20	3	23	64
3.	Speed of the movement	Yes	13	7	20	56
		No	6	0	16	44
4.	Special mental state of the performer	Yes	11	5	16	44
		No	20	0	20	56
5.	Super natural power of the performer	Yes	0	0	0	0
		No	23	13	36	100
6.	Any other science	Yes	1	0	1	31
		No	22	13	35	97

Source - Primary data

Table 3.7**Factors (variables) for the
measurement of Super humanness (Physicist's opinion after ranking)**

		Yes (%)	No (%)
1	Thermal conductivity of the materials used	81	19
2	Speed of the movements	56	44
3	Special mental stage	44	56
4	Leidenfrost effect	36	64
5	Super human abilities	0	100
6	Any other science	3	97

Source - Primary data

According to the physicists, the reasons for the showing of Super humanness are the following. Most of them tried to explain it in terms of thermal conductivity and speed of the movements. The special mental stage of the performer and leidenfrost effect have no connections with it. 3% of the physicists are doubtful about some other science than thermal conductivity but they cannot mention what it is (Table 3-6 & 7). Factors of Super humanness as variables selected are explained below :

Thermal conductivity of materials used as costume

Thermal conductivity of a materials refers to its ability to conduct heat. Heat transfer is less if the thermal conductivity is low. According to the second law of thermal dynamics, heat always flows in the direction of the lower temperature. Thermal conductivity is defined as “ the relationship between transport of heat per unit of time and the temperature gradient through area A, i.e., the area through which the heat is flowing perpendicularly at a steady rate. There are three modes of heat transfer: conduction, convection and radiation.

There are two common methods to determine the thermal conductivity of a material: steady state method and transient heat transfer method. Steady state is used when the temperature of a material does not change with time. The transient techniques measure during the process of heating up.

The terms connected with thermal conductivity are:

Thermal conductance

The quantity of heat that passes in unit of time.

Thermal Insulance

The heat transfer co-efficient or thermal admittance.

Thermal Resistivity

The reciprocal of thermal conductivity.

Thermal conductivity of the Insulating material

The effectiveness of a material as a thermal insulator can be expressed in terms of its thermal conductivity (TC). The energy transfer rate through a body is proportional to the temperature gradient across the body and its cross sectional area. A substance with a large thermal conductivity value is a good conductor of heat and vice versa (i. e. , a good insulator). Hence the knowledge of thermal conductivity allows quantitative comparisons between the thermal insulation efficiencies of different materials.

Low thermal conductors are good insulations.

Many insulating materials function simply by having gas filled pockets which prevent large scale convection. Natural and biological insulators such as fibre or feather achieve similar effects by dramatically

insulating contradictions of air or water near a skin. The letters and the meaning in quantum physics are as-

H = Heat conduction

K = The rate of heat flow (Thermal conductivity)

A = Total cross sectional area of conductivity surface.

T = Temperature difference, and

X = Thickness of conducting surface separating the two temperatures.

The materials used by the *Potten Theyyam* as costumes are :

1. Tender coconut leaves.
2. Plantain fibre.
3. Flower Chrysanthus
4. Rice paste.
5. Film of areca.
6. Cinnabar
7. Cobalt
8. Eye oinment
9. Sandal paste.

Tender coconut leaves and rice paste are in bulk share and all other materials used are only for the name sake. The used materials are all good insulators also.

Speed of the movement of the Performer

Performance is made according to the 'thala' of drums. Usually it is in speed. Around the ember, the Theyyam dances and at the end of the dance lay over the ember again and again.

Generally when human body touches the ember, body will be burned. But speedy touch and body insulated by tender coconut leaves of the Theyyam do not cause any burn to the performer. That is, according to scientists' opinion, the rate of speed of the movements of the performer is to be taken for the study.

Rate of speed of the movements = Number of movements per minute. As per the supporting video Appendix 8, rate of the movement is approximately 3 movements/minute. The Theyyam lays on the ember for about 16 seconds and on the flame for about 4-9 seconds.

The ember of *Potten Theyyam* is made up of the woods of tarmirand, jack fruit tree, Olenader and ficus indica.

The problems for the researcher which are not analysed are-

- whether the above trees' ember possess more heat than other trees.

- whether they will get ashes speedily.
- whether the ember keep up heat for a long time.
- whether the ember makes more stamina to the human body .

Special mental Stage

At the time of performance, the performer is in a ‘special’ mental stage with the sound of drums, by respecting devotees and the total environment. Moreover, he may be in a semi alcoholic stage.

Leidenfrost effect

The leidenfrost effect is named for Johann Gottlob Leidenfrost, who described the phenomenon in “A Tract about Some Qualities of Common Water” in 1796. In the leidenfrost effect, a liquid in proximity to a surface much hotter than the liquid’s boiling point will produce a layer of vapour that insulates the liquid and physically separates it from the surface. It is very difficult to know the temperature at which the leidenfrost effect occurs. That is, the Lidenfrost point. It means that if a drop of liquid on to a surface that is cooler than the drop will flatten out and heat up and become vapour, and cushion the rest of liquid from contact.

The factors affecting the Leidenfroast effect are-

- Atmospheric pressure
- Volume of the droplet, and
- Surface properties.

The tender coconut leaves take the lion share of the costumes of the *Potten Theyyam* which contains water content than dry coconut leaves.

Super human abilities

Super human abilities are explained in chapter-2 literature review.

Other Sciences

Other sciences means all sciences which are relating to fire. 3% of the scientists have an opinion of the presence of some other sciences but they don't know what they are.

To conclude, according to scientists, two variables- Thermal conductivity and speed of the performer during performance are favourable where as other three variables – special mental stage, leidenfrost effect and Super human abilities are unfavourable towards Super humanness.

Performers and Helpers

In order to get the data from the performers and their helpers, a total of 34 persons were interviewed. Performers and helpers are included in one strata for data collection purpose since they are working inter changeably. That is, performers may be helpers and vice versa. For data analysis purpose, they are named as 'performers' only.

(a) Performers

Table 3.8

Age group of Performers

	16-30	31-45	46-60	61-75	Above 75	Total
Number	2	14	14	4	0	34
%	6	41	41	12	0	100

Source – Primary data

Table 3.9

Performers' Community

	ST	SC	OEC	OBC	Other forward Castes	Total
Number	Nil	34(Malaya-31 and Pulaya-3)	Nil	Nil	Nil	34
%	0	100	0	0	0	100

Source – Primary data

Table 3.10

Qualifications of Performers

	Below SSLC	SSLC	Pre Degree	Degree	PG	Diploma	Professional Degree	Total
Number	2	16	9	4	1	Nil	2	34
%	6	47	26	12	3	0	6	100

Source – Primary data

Table 3.11
Employment of Performers

	Studying (No employ- ment)	Un- employed	Teacher	Coolie	Govt. Service	De- signer	Contra- ctor	Private firm	Total
No.	2	5	2	11	6	1	1	6	34
%	6	14	6	32	18	3	3	18	100

Source – Primary data

Interviewed performers are in the age group 16-75. There are no performers below 15 and above 75 years. That is, 16-30(6%), 31-45(41%), 46-60(41%), and 61-75(12%). That is 82% performers are below the age group of 31-60.

All performers are included in the community of scheduled caste. (91% are Malayas and 9% are Pulayas). That is, Malaya community performs mostly the *Potten Theyyam*. Pulaya community's role in the performance of *Potten Theyyam* is negligible. It is very important to note that no other communities including STs, OECs, OBCs, and other members of the forward communities are performing this Theyyam.

Most of the performers are SSLC holders (47%). Others are below SSLC (6%), PDC (26%), Degree (12%), PG (3%), Diploma (Nil) and Professionals (6%). That is, more than half of the performers are SSLC and below. PGs are only 3%.

Regarding employment, more than half of the performers (52%) are either unemployed or coolies. 18% performers are in Govt. service. Complete performers are theists or god believers.

Table 3.12

Age at which performers have started to perform Theyyam

	Below 5	6-10	11-15	16-20	21-25	26-30	Above 30	Total
Number	14	5	8	6	Nil	1	Nil	34
%	41	14	24	18	0	3	0	100

Source – Primary data

Table 3.13

**Experience of Performers
(Number of years performing *Potten Theyyam*)**

Not performed	Below 5	6-10	11-15	16-20	21-25	26-30	30-35	Above 35	Total
No.	6	5	2	6	5	3	2	Nil	34
%	17.65	14.71	5.88	17.65	14.70	8.83	5.88	0	100

Source – Primary data

The age at which performers have started to perform Theyyam are as follows- below 5 years (41%), between 6-10 (14%), 11-15 (24%), 16-20 (18%), 21-25 (Nil), 26-30 (3%) and Above 30 years (Nil). That is, generally below 10 years of age 55% performers are starting to perform. At 21-25 performers are not trying to start the performance. There are no performers at all who are starting to perform the Theyyam at above 30 years.

(b) Experience of *Potten Theyyam* Performers

17. 65% of performers have no experience with *Potten Theyyam*. No performers have more than 35 years of experience. More than half of the performers (61. 76%) interviewed have the experience of *Potten Theyyam* above 10 years.

Performers interviewed are usually performing the following Theyyams other than *Potten Theyyam* are:

1. Vishnumoorthy.
2. Madayilchamundi.
3. Rakthachamundi.
4. Thekkan Gulikan.
5. Moovalamkuzhichamundi.
6. Uchitta.
7. Karimkuttychathan.
8. Karivalambhagavathi.
9. Bhairavan.
10. Pookkuttychathan.
11. Ottakkolam.
12. Gulikan.
13. Aivedan.
14. Muthappan.
15. Vasurimala.
16. Vedan.
17. Dhumabhagavathy.

18. Ghandakarnan. and
 19. Panjuruli.
- They are also performing the ritual magics as follows-
1. Malayanketu.
 2. Erichudala.
 3. Pathalahomam.
 4. Kannerupattu.
 5. Kothamooriaattam. and
 6. Paravachamundi. (Source – Primary data)

(c) Performers’ Satisfaction level by the performance

Table 3.14

Name of Theyyam and Performers’ Satisfaction

Name of Theyyam	Number of Performers	%
1. Gulikan	1	3
2. Potten	21	61
3. Vishnumoorthy	2	6
4. Theechamundi	8	24
5. Bhairavan	1	3
6. Karimkutchathan	1	3
Total	34	100

Source – Primary data

61% of the performers prefer to *Potten Theyyam* to perform since it gives maximum satisfaction to them compared to Gulikan (3%), Vishnumoorthy (6%), Theechamundi (24%), Bhairavan (3%) and Karimkutchathan (3%).

(d) Precautions against burning by performers

Performers are claiming that they are taking no precautions against burning. But penance, diet control, intake of food from outside the house and total worship of the god must be undertaken. They would keep defilement by death or birth in the family. If burns, the performer communicates to helpers in their “ritual language” and the helpers would apply the rice paste with out knowing by anybody. The rest, helper would do the needful. It is to be noted that regarding precautions, performers are not ready to divulge the methodology.

(e) Super humanness - performers’ feeling

Performers claim that they are feeling a sense of Super humanness while the performance. That is, they are getting a super human power and confidence to lay over the fire. They feel no difference for the natural and induced contexts of performances. The terms ‘natural’ and ‘induced’ are told by the outsiders and for performers all are natural contexts. Every where devotees are offering for the Theyyam. If differences are feeling, it will be in the time setting only according to situations. It varies from 3-26 hours including the time to make meleri or ember. It is compulsory for the performers that the place selected for the Theyyam should be clean and pure with out any pollution.

According to performers, comparing with other Theyyms, the *Potten Theyyam* is:

1. 'Mandramoorthy' which means that the diety can become favour to the devotee very easily and immediately.
2. The ember is less compared to Ottakkolam and Theechamundi Theyyams.
3. Less expensive.
4. Common and popular.
5. Ember is more compared to Kandanarkelan Theyyam. and
6. Uttering satire .

(f) Role of costumes against burning

According to performers, there is no role for costumes against fire and burning. They are not burned only because of the blessing of their god. *Potten Theyyam* has a simple dress of 'Chandala', the lowest caste person. Other Theyyams are also using the same costumes materials mainly. The items included in the costumes are in Table 3-15.

Table 3.15
Costumes and their usages

Name of costume	Usage
1. Tender coconut leaves	As skirt, hair and headgear
2. Plantain fibre	For stitching
3. Flower chrysanthus	For decorating bangles and Anklets
4. Rice paste	To paste on the whole body
5. Film of areca	As face mask
6. Cinnabar	To paste on hands and legs
7. Cobalt, eye oinment and sandal paste	To paste on the face, hands and legs.

Source – Primary data

(g) Experience of burning

Table 3.16
Experience of burning to performers

Experience of burning	Number of performers	%
Not burned	Nil	0
Burned, not seriously	29	85
Burned severely	5	15
Total	34	100

Source – Primary data

All performers have the experience of burning. But 15% of the performers burned very severely, injured and under took two weeks' treatment. There is a malayalam proverb among performers that "Potten

kettiyal olikkuthu venam”which means that there should be a slight burning while performing the *Potten Theyyam* and that is the sign of god’s blessing.

(h) Among performers, there are different opinions regarding the speed of the movements in Theyyam. They are:

- Nobody moves speedily to escape from fire. The speed of the movement is the part of the performance and according to the rhythms of drums and ultimately according to the will and wish of the god.
- Speed of the movement is necessary for ritual dance.
- According to the peculiarity of the ritual, movements will be fast.
- Either the speed of the movement or quantity of the ember will not help to overcome the fire or burning.

Performers claim that they all are not at all afraid of laying over the fire in *Potten Theyyam* or standing, sitting, walking or running in other Theyyams of fire. They thorough believed that everything is the wish of the god. Experience, thorough belief in god, confidence and mental power are the helping factors for not afraid of fire.

They further claim that they never lost their mental confidence while performance due to the blessing of god, strength of tradition, and belief in their helpers. Usually helpers are their brother- in- laws. It is to be noted that helpers will be either the family members or close relatives of the performers.

(i)Theyyam and future prediction

Performers strongly claim that there is no conscious technology in the prediction of the future of devotees. It is learned from the tradition and experience. They are not ready to say that the prediction of the future of devotees are made by face reading, applied psychology, intuition, accidental or by guessing. There are no pre-planned techniques for the success of the Theyyam.

(j) Female Theyyam performers

There are no female Theyyam performers in any Theyyams whether it is risky or not.

B. Natives and Devotees

To get the views of the natives and devotees (Taken as one strata) towards *Potten Theyyam*, 35 persons were interviewed at random.

(a) Belief of God Versus Belief of Theyyam

Table 3.17

God belief level of Natives

	Theist	Atheist	Total
Number	17	18	35
%	48. 5	51. 5	100

Source – Primary data

Table 3.18

Native's Theyyam belief level as God

	Believing	Not believing	Total
Number	16	19	35
%	45. 7	54. 3	100

Source – Primary data

More than half (51. 5%) of the natives are ethicists, that is, not god believers. More than half of the natives (54. 3%) are not Theyyam believers as god also.

Table 3.19

Theyyam performing community or not

	Yes	No	Total
Number	20	15	35
%	57	43	100

Source – Primary data

(b) Peculiarities of *Potten Theyyam* compared to other Theyyams

Table 3.20

**Peculiarities of *Potten Theyyam*
compared with other Theyyams-natives' opinion**

Peculiarities of <i>Potten Theyyam</i>	Number of Natives	%
1. Fire Theyyam with satire	9	25. 8
2. Magical Theyyam	4	11. 4
3. Theyyam against untouchability	6	17. 1
4. Immediate blessing	5	14. 2
5. Highly philosophical	1	2. 9
6. Popular	1	2. 9
7. Wearing mask and laying over fire	1	2. 9
8. Simple make-up	4	11. 4
9. offering	4	11. 4
Total	35	100

Source – Primary data

Agreement rate of *Potten Theyyam* is different with other Theyyams as- Fire Theyyam with satire (27%), Theyyam against untouchability (7%), immediate blessing (14%), simple make-up (11%), offering (11%), highly philosophical (3%), popular (3%) and wearing mask and laying over the fire (3%).

(c) Potten as God

Table 3.21

Natives' opinion of Potten as God

Natives' opinions	Number	%
1. Adventurous performance with satire	19	54.3
2. Both God and Theyyam	5	14.3
3. Vettakkorumakan	5	14.3
4. Pacca daivam	5	14.3
5. Dharmadaivam	1	2.8
Total	35	100

Source – Primary data

More than half of the natives (54.3%) treat Potten as an adventurous performance with satire. Other opinions are both god and daivam, Vettakkorumakan and pacca daivam (14.3% each), and Dharmadhaivam (2.8%).

(d)

**Secret behind the adventurous performance and laying in the fire
without burning**

Table 3.22

Natives' opinion as secret behind the adventure

Natives' opinion	Number	%
1. Blessing of god	10	28. 6
2. Costumes	22	62. 9
3. Speed of the movements	3	8. 5
Total	35	100

Source – Primary data

More than half of the natives (62. 5%) the secret behind the adventurous performance as their costumes, blessing of god (28%), and speed of the movements by the performer (8. 5%).

Natives'opinion goes like this- after the make-up and 'Urachil Thottam', the man becomes god. Then the performer gets an energy to overcome the fire and burning. The dress wears on the waist is made up of tender coconut leaves is very thick. Hence the heat does not reach to the body of the performer. At the time of laying over the fire, the helpers will keep flam beau as level and the ribbon of tender coconut leaves on the heating surface. Helpers will make sure the distribution of equal heat on the surface of the ember. The Thalapali (Base of the headgear) have 21'mattal' pices like the figure of an expanded hood of a serpent which gives an invisible energy to the performer. There is a belief that it is a representation of their Gurus.

C. Outside Kerala People

In order to get the views of outside Kerala People 24 persons were interviewed including 4 foreigners who saw the *Potten Theyyam*.

(a) *Potten Theyyam*

Table 3.23

**Do you have any performance
in your place like *Potten Theyyam* (Opinion of outside Kerala people)**

	Yes	No	Total
Number	0	24	24
%	0	100	100

Source – Primary data

100% Outside Kerala people including foreigners are sure that there is no performance like *Potten Theyyam* in their places. They cannot compare this with any other performance.

(b) Super humanness in *Potten Theyyam*

Table 3.24

Super humanness in *Potten Theyyam* (Outside Kerala Peoples' opinion)

Opinions	Number	%
Super human	2	8
Adventurous	22	97
Total	24	100

Source- Primary data

97% of the respondents from outside Kerala have the opinion that it is not at all Super human, but it is adventurous.

(c) Application of Science in *Potten Theyyam*

Table 3.25
Applications of Science

	Number	%	
Costumes	8	33	
Speed of the movements	10	42	67%
Mental power	6	25	
Total	24	100	

Source- Primary data

33% of the people outside Kerala admit that the adventurous performance of *Potten Theyyam* is backed up by the application of science with the costumes used by the performer whereas 42% think that it is undertaken by the speed of the movements by the performer and 25% admit that it is due to the mental power of the performer.

(d) Outside Kerala Peoples' general opinion about *Potten Theyyam*

Table 3.26
Total opinion about *Potten Theyyam*

Opinions	Number	%	
1. Excellent	8	33	
2. Good	6	25	
3. Super	4	16	
4. Unique	3	13	
5. Non-comparable	3	13	
Total	24	100	

Source – Primary data

Outside Kerala Peoples' general opinion about *Potten Theyyam* is - Excellent (33%), Good (25%), Super (16%), Unique (13%) and Non-comparable (13%).

D. Academicians

To know the academicians' view towards *Potten Theyyam*, 26 academicians from different areas who are well qualified and experts in folklore were interviewed. Their views are analysed as follows:

(a) Peculiarities of *Potten Theyyam*

Table 3.27

Peculiarities of PottenTheyyam

Academician's Opinions	Number	%
1. Ritual performance	16	61.8
2. Downtrodden art	2	7.7
3. Against social injustice	1	3.8
4. Colourful worship	2	7.7
5. Protest against rejection	1	3.8
6. Production of feudalism	1	3.8
7. Advaita philosophy	1	3.8
8. Expansion of Bootha worship	1	3.8
9. Powerful worship	1	3.8
Total	26	100

Source – Primary data

Above 61% of the academicians view the *Potten Theyyam* as only a ritual performance. 81% opine it as a downtrodden art, 8% view it as a colourful worship and slight opinions as a worship against rejection,

production of feudalism. Also viewed as ‘Advaitha philosophy’ and as Bootha worship.

(b) Classifications of Theyyam

Theyyams are classified based on the following factors:

1. Caste.
2. Myth.
3. Gender.
4. Mother/ancestor Gods.
5. Costumes and make-up.
6. Shyva/Vaishnava.
7. Fire/hunting. and
8. Higher/native mythology.

Academicians unanimously opined that the *Potten Theyyam* is included in Fire Theyyams.

(c) Adventure in *Potten Theyyam*

According to academicians, the adventure the performer is making by the factors- practice, will power, belief, costumes, speed, diet control and mental strength.

Table 3.28

Factors leading to adventure in *Potten Theyyam*

Factors leading adventure	Number	%
1. Practice	13	50
2. Will power	5	19.5
3. Practice and belief	2	7.7
4. Practice, belief & make-up	1	3.8
5. Speed and costume	1	3.8
6. Practice & diet control	1	3.8
7. Practice, diet control & mental dynamism	1	3.8
8. Speed, costume & mental Power	1	3.8
9. Practice, penance & mental strength	1	3.8
Total	26	100

Source: Primary data

(d) *Potten Theyyam* and academic aura

Table 29

Academic aura for *Potten Theyyam*

	Yes	No	Total
Number	25	1	26
%	96	4	100

Source - Primary data

Among the academicians interviewed, only one has the opinion that the *Potten Theyyam* has no academic aura. All others have the differences of opinion. It is very important to note that an academician (Scientist) also has the same opinion that these kinds of rituals are not for research purposes especially its scientific aspects. It will degrade the value and validity of rituals

which may negatively affect the social life of the relevant communities. This point is to be discussed further.

(e) Marginilisation of Theyyams

All academicians unanimously opined that the art of Theyyams are marginilised compared to other art forms especially classical arts because of the socio- economic backwardness of the performers. Even today folk arts are considered secondary to classical arts. This point also is to be discussed further.

(f) Super humanness in *Potten Theyyam*

Table 3.30

Super humanness in *Potten Theyyam*

	Yes	No	Total
Number	0	26	26
%	0	100	100

Source- Primary data

Academicians unanimously state that there is no Super humanness in *Potten Theyyam*. The performer is able to show off the Super humanness due to his belief (27%), and determination and power of mind (73%). 76. 9% of the academicians opined that it is not Super humanness but only an illusion.

Table 3.31

Factors for the ability to show off Super humanness

	Belief	Determination/power of mind	Total
Number	7	19	26
%	27	73	100

Source- Primary data

Table 3.32

Academicians' opinion about Super humanness

	Illusion	Reality	Depending on the individual	No logic	Total
Number	20	4	1	1	26
%	76.9	15.5	3.8	3.8	100

Source- Primary data

(g) Paradox of *Potten Theyyam*

Theyyams are performed by marginalised people. But at the time of performance, everybody including landlords are respecting them. This is also a point to be discussed further.

E. Psychologists

To get the views of psychologists, 5 psychologists were interviewed. Their collective views are recorded.

(a) Symbol fire, ember and flam beau- Meaning

According to psychologists, fire symbol means aggression, purity, goodness, danger or unfulfilled desire. Ember symbol points out the perfectness or liberation and flambeau symbol means the enlightening life.

(b) Ritual, Game and Myth

Ritual, game and myth are confirmed as same nature by comparative studies. It is an expression of suppressed feeling or marginalised feeling which is revealing or exhibiting dual personality of the folk. A myth may be an unfulfilled wish which is from real life.

(c) Mask of the Theyyam

‘Persona’ is the concept by Jung in psychology who was the follower of Sigmund Freud. The researcher’s question is – can the mask of the Theyyam be treated as persona. Symbolically they are same according to psychologists. An ordinary man is not revealing all truths before the society. But in *Potten Theyyam*, mask is to overcome for revealing several truths as god itself.

(d) Mass influence by the adventurous performance

Every human being may keep in their mind a brave man or an adventurous hero. When they are watching the performance and finding adventurous performer, their mind may be saturated with success feeling.

Costumes and make-up are given an extra power and confidence to the performer. The term adventure depends upon the attitude of the viewer. If he is a science man, he may think the technology behind it where as if the viewer is an old man with god belief, he will see the performer as god himself.

(e) Fearless mind state

The risky performance can be done only by a man with fearless mindset. It may be due to mood and emotion, costumes and materials used, experience from the early childhood with in the family, beliefs, assurance of helpers and elders and success stories of magics and archetypes.

Children may be afraid of Theyyams due to influence of bad experiences in childhood, behaviour and belief patterns, way the mind moulded, and fearful folk tales. Matured mind overcomes the fear. A performer is doing the adventurous Theyyams with fearless mindset.

F. Sociologists

To get a collective view of *Potten Theyyam* by sociologists, 7 persons were interviewed. Their views are as follows:

(a) *Potten Theyyam* and association of folk

Table 3.33

Is *Potten Theyyam* makes an association among the folk?

	Yes	No	Total
Number	3	4	7
%	43	57	100

Source- Primary data

Table 3.34

Is there Super humanness in *Potten Theyyam*?

	Yes	No	Total
Number	0	7	7
%	0	100	100

Source - Primary data

According to 57% of sociologists, *Potten Theyyam* do not make any association among the folk and 100% sociologists claim that there is no Super humanness in the *Potten Theyyam* (Tables 3-33 and 34) . A fan or hero to the performer is forming not because of the Super humanness but due to the adventurous , vibrant and risky performance.

(b) Urban Society and the Scope of *Potten Theyyam* and its Hero cult

Table 3.35

Chances of continuation of *Potten Theyyam* in urban society

	Yes	No	Total
Number	6	1	7
%	86	14	100

Source- primary data

86% sociologists opined that *Potten Theyyam* will be continued in urban society too in future because people see this performance in urban society as entertainment or as part of tourism. Rural areas are changing to urban in Kerala day by day. This performance is religious, communal and regional festival. Urbanisation is not affecting this performance. Since folk religion is more powerful than urbanisation. It is amusing and appreciating. Urban folk is not patient enough to see the whole lengthy rituals of performance since new generation has no attachment with traditional folk performances which will be in odd times in midnight and in crowd. They are not ready to be sleepless at night for the folk performances compared to old people since the later is more believing in these myths.

Table 3.36

**Scope of keeping hero cult of
Potten Theyyam in the period of Globalisation**

	Yes	No	Total
Number	2	5	7
%	29	71	100

Source - Primary data

71% of the sociologists see no scope of hero cult of *Potten Theyyam* in the period of globalisation. They opine:

- Compare to old people, new generation is more interested in films and sports as entertainment than folk arts due to speed of life and unavailability of time.
- The hero cult to *Potten Theyyam* is more spreading by the media. Medias can either generate or spoil heroes. Medias make even criminals as heroes and vice versa.
- Rural people keep the hero cult as such to *Potten Theyyam*.
- Jung's archetype is working out in *Potten Theyyam*.
- Hero cult in *Potten Theyyam* is spreading with slight changes from generation to generation.
- The globalised world is not considering much about the heroism of Theyyams.

(c) Women and *Potten Theyyam*

The answers for the question of why women are not performing this Theyyam are:

- Tradition and trustees do not allow.
- This is not a job to claim for them for equal opportunity.
- Women can initiate but it will be a sensitive social issue.
- There is the problem of impurity for women or physical limitations.
- There are claims of process and proceedings as penance which will be difficult for women.
- Absence of awareness.

(d) *Potten Theyyam* and Social discrimination

While *Potten Theyyam* performance, the performer salutes as respect each and every chieftains of different communities in separate and different styles. It may create a feeling of social discrimination to the younger generation. Sociologists' answers to this problem are-

- Discrimination are basic in nature.
- Theyyam recognises the famous people too with the same importance as chieftains of different communities.
- New generation will not respect or recognise anybody. They won't mind the traditional things.

- Traditional community spirit has no relevance today. When the Theyyam salutes, they may aware of at least their traditional community.
- Since Theyyam acts as the god, nobody can blame him in the name of creating social discrimination.
- Theyyam recognises the new power sources and is identified before the society.
- Performer is always trying to please the audience either for money or kind.
- In olden times, each community head had its own role in the society with certain rights and duties. In *Potten Theyyam*, the communities of Pulaya and Malaya initiate to serve the society with Theyyams and other black magics in which they are proud of it also.

(e) *Potten Theyyam* and Social harmony

57% of the sociologists claim that the *Potten Theyyam* is not helpful to either social harmony or alienation. 47% of the sociologists believe the place of Theyyam is the place of meeting of all communities only.

Table 3.37

Is Theyyam helpful to social harmony/alienation?

	Yes	No	Total
Number	3	4	7
%	43	57	100

Source - Primary data

(f) Costumes and *Potten Theyyam*

Table3.38

Role of costumes in showing of Super humanness

	Yes	No	Total
Number	7	0	7
%	100	0	100

Source - primary data

Sociologists unanimously state that costumes have an important role in showing of Super humanness in *Potten Theyyam*.

(g) Elements of Super humanness in *Potten Theyyam*

- Laying over the fire repeatedly gets recognition by the audience.
- Act differently and get unique recognition.
- Myth and tradition is working out to glorify the Super humanness of the Theyyam.
- The power of past and heritage.
- Light effect, rhythm, movements, shining ember and mass mind of the audience are creating an aura to the Super humanness.
- Skill and divine atmosphere. and
- Actions of helpers, respect of trustees and the belief of audience.

(h) Recognition of *Potten Theyyam*

Table 3.39

Recognition of *Potten Theyyam*

	Yes	No	Total
Number	2	5	7
%	29	71	100

Source - Primary data

71% of the sociologists claim that there is no generation gap in recognising the *Potten Theyyam*. They further opine that -

Old people and new generation are living in two different ideological worlds and there is no conflict. Of course, old people think differently. If old people see this Theyyam as god itself, the new generation see the Theyyam either as entertainment or as part of risk or adventure. One thing is sure that the new generation more likes to sit alone and do not like to be in crowd places of folk performances sacrificing food and sleep. There are no fans to folk artists compared to other artists whatever they are doing risky and adventurous performances. They are still continue as neglected by government authorities.

(i) Theyyams and Human Gods

Table 3.40

Is there any methodology in forming 'God'

	Yes	No	Total
Number	6	1	7
%	83	17	100

Source - Primary data

83% of the sociologists claim that there is correct methodology for forming a human being as god.

Theyyams are acted as gods in the performance with the back up of myths, stories and tradition. Performers are poor. The performance has rituals, rules and helped by several people. No marketing is needed for the acceptance since tradition and belief exists. Theyyam is a natural choice and a part of folk religion. Theyyams are everlasting and will be existing in future also. No Theyyams are prosecuted in the name of god in courts. The state of god exists for a short while during performance.

Human god is a program by a team of people and is rich. He/she ends with his/her death. Marketing in different forms are making for the acceptance by the people. Human gods are artificially chalked out by a syndicate. There is no guarantee for the existence of human gods. They may be revealed by media and police before the society and there are a number of cases of prosecution in the courts. The state of god exists up to the death. No human

gods are converted into common men yet this time. But so many heroes and martyrs among common men of the past had converted into Theyyams. A performer is converted into ordinary man after performance but a human god can not be converted into old position even though he/she desires.

G. Doctors

To get a collective view of doctors towards treatments of burning in connection with *Potten Theyyam*, 8 doctors (Two each in allopathy, ayurveda, naturopathy and kalari) were interviewed and their views are analysed as follows:

(a) Allopathy treatment for burning

According to allopathy, the treatment of burning is as follows:

Wash burned portion with water for nearly 15 minutes. It will help to know the depth of burning. There are three grades of burning :

1. Not severe
2. Severe, and
3. Severe and serious.

Second and third grades of burning may need surgery and internal and external medicine. Sterilised tools and ointments are used to avoid water from that body part, to prevent pus and to avoid spreading of burns.

(b) Ayurveda treatment for burning

The treatment in ayurveda is as follows:

Pour water with human body temperature. The treatment is based on the rate of burning. If it is on outer layer of the body (Skin only), 'sathadouthagritham' is enough to apply on the skin. If the burn is at the medium level, that is both skin and flesh, the pulp of Alovera (Kattar vaazha in Malayalam) is applied over the burned portion. Also quath (Kashayam in Malayalam) and other medicines are given. Honey and butter milk can be showered over the burn. The burn is never tied up. However, no treatment for severe burns.

(c) Naturopathy treatment for burning

There is no treatment severe burning in naturopathy. Other wise, the burned portion is immersed in water for a long time. The water should be with body temperature and should be changed frequently.

(d) Kalari treatment for burning

There is no special treatment for burning in kalari. Pour water over the burn and apply honey.

In olden times, the floor had cleaned with cow dung and the leaves of *Mussoenda fromdosa*. It was the practice of local people to pour water in such

floor and smear the same on the burned part for silly cases (The medicinal value of cowdung and *Mussoenda fromdosa* is to be discussed further).

It is noted that except naturopathy, all other treatments use both internal and external medicines for burning. Water therapy is common in all treatments. For burning, surgery is in allopathy only. Except allopathy all other treatments instruct diet control for burning treatment.

Before and after the Theyyam, performers smear rice paste as a precaution against burning. They claim that the rice paste will reduce the wrinkle or smoulder. However, allopathy and naturopathy are dead against this. But ayurveda and kalari people are ready to promote this.

H. Victims of Theyyams

In order to get the views of victims of Theyyams, that is burned persons while the performances, 5 persons were interviewed.

Compared to other Theyyams, Fire Theyyams are risky and adventurous where the performer is always afraid of unexpected accidents. The possibility is very high. Among five only one person (20%) was only severely burned and injured at Mambram, Koothuparamb, Kannur. This aspects are also to be discussed further since other performers blame as it was due to lack of penance and purity where as some others gave the reasons as lack of tender coconut leaves and ember more than enough.

I. Trustees

To get the views of trustees or owners of temples who are conducting the *Potten Theyyam*, 23 persons were interviewed. Their views are analysed as follows :

(a) Conducting of *Potten Theyyam*

Table 3.41
Conducting of *Potten Theyyam*

	Number	%
1. As offering	9	37.5
2. Occassionally	9	37.5
3. Annually	3	12.5
4. On special occasions	3	12.5
Total	24	100

Source – Primary data

Only 12.5% of the respondents are conducting Theyyam permanently as annual ritual. 12.5% on special occasions, 37.5% each as offering and occasionally conducting.

Table 3.42
Intention of conducting *Potten Theyyam*

	Number	%
1. For goodwill	15	62.5
2. For destroying enemies	3	12.5
3. On auspicious occasions	3	12.5
4. For social recognition	3	12.5
Total		100

Source – Primary data

Most of the people (62. 5%) are conducting the *Potten Theyyam* for goodwill. 12. 5% each of the respondents are conducting this Theyyam for destroying enemies, on auspicious occasions or for social recognition.

(b) *Potten Theyyam* offering and receipt of positive results

Table 3.43

Results of *Potten Theyyam* offering

	Positive results	Negative results	Total
Number	19	5	24
%	79	21	100

Source - Primary data

Table 3. 44

***Potten Theyyam* as a boring experience**

	Yes	No	Total
Number	6	18	24
%	25	75	100

Source- Primary data

More than three-fourth of the trustees are experienced by positive results by the offering of *Potten Theyyam*. 75% of the trustees do not feel as a boring experience with the *Potten Theyyam*, even though it is frequently conducting.

(c) New entrance of performers for *Potten Theyyam*

Table 3.45

New entrance of performers for *Potten Theyyam*

	Number	%
1. Only traditional performers	17	70. 8
2. With the permission of traditional performers	3	12. 5
3. With permission of astrologers	4	16. 7
Total	24	100

Source – Primary data

Trustees are not ready to invite a new performer for the ritual. Most of the trustees (70. 8%) prefer to traditional performers and some of them (16. 7%) are ready only with the permission of the astrologer and 12. 5% of the trustees are ready with the permission of the traditional performers. There is a scope for further research regarding the factors connected with the new entrance to the Theyyam.

(d) Source of funding for conducting the *Potten Theyyam*

The performance *Potten Theyyam* may be conducted either in families as offering or in public places as part of rituals. If the performance is at family ground, the fund for the same is shared by family members and if is at public place it will be sponsored by committees responsible for the same by accepting public donation either in cash or kind as wood or food.

(e) Super humanness in *Potten Theyyam*

60% of the trustees view the Theyyam as either an annual ritual or an offering. 40% of among them feel the presence of God and Super humanness while laying over the fire repeatedly combining their opinion with the importance of tender coconut leaves.

(f) Public invitation for the performance

100% of the trustees invite the public to participate in the Theyyam performance. In families during the time of *Potten Theyyam* is conducting, the public is received with food and shelter. If it is conducted by the public authorities or temples, there will be committees to look after everything regarding the Theyyam.

(g) Role of Astrologers in the *Potten Theyyam* performance

Astrologers have a role in the performance of *Potten Theyyam*. The Theyyam itself is conducted as the advice of the astrologer to solve family problems according to some respondents. Astroleger advises the best day and date for the performance. Again after the performance, the astrologer comments upon the satisfactory level of conducting the performance. In certain cases, he will advise to start a permanent place or 'sthanam' for Theyyam in their families and to conduct the ritual annually (This aspect of the relationship between the astrologer and the performer is also to be discussed further).

Part-Two

Interpretation of the Data Analysis

Folk performances (Select) as rituals in Kerala are :

1. Parnettu or Kaliyuttu.
2. Elavoorthukkam.
3. Kuthiyottam.
4. Kuthiratheeb.
5. Paathalahomam or Velanpravrithi.
6. Chandattam.
7. Chooralpadayani.
8. Muchilotpothikal.
9. Ayyappanvilakku.
10. Kalaripayattu
11. Kaalapputtu or Kalapporu.
12. Mutelneendi nercha.
13. Madanu koda.
14. Parakkumkavadi.
15. Kanalattam/ Fire walking. and
16. Fire Theyyams.

Fire Theyyams is the area of the study. Theyyam is the unique performance of Kannur and Kasargod districts of Kerala State. The ritual is performed in the light of folk torches and ritual lamps. Most Theyyams are existing in the presence of fire. Among them certain Theyyams are doing Super human activities according to myth of each Theyyam. *Potten Theyyam* is such a Theyyam. Fire Theyyams are based on ember, ember and dried coconut leaves and flam beau.

Different Theyyams of Kerala are mother goddess, Animal Theyyam, Martyr Theyyam, Hero Theyyam, Ancestor Theyyam, Demi gods and Magical gods. Categorisation of Theyyams is possible with the application of material, costume and other decorations.

Ember is the main attraction of Fire Theyyams for which the woods used are jack fruit tree, tamarind tree and oleander tree generally. Among Fire Theyyams, Ottakkolam/Theechamundi is using more ember compared to *Potten Theyyam*. The Theyyam Uchitta will sit over the ember. Some Theyyams like Bali, Thodachan/Vayanattukulavan and Kannamghattu Bhagavathi will climb up and down over the ember or meleri with oracles. Kandanarkelan Theyyam will run through the fire. The folk torches (Pantham in Malayalam) are classified as :

1. Kuthu pantham.
2. Kettu pantham and

3. Arayadiyadi pantham.

The Theyyam Dhumabhagavathi is wearing kuthupantham, Kadamgot maakkam is wearing six Kuthupantham on the waist. Theyyams wearing kettupanthams are Muchilotbhagavathi, Puthiyabhagavathi, Perkulangara bhagavathi and Thottumgarabhagavathi. The Theyyam Agni Khandakarnan is wearing 16 big flam beaus on the waist and 101 small flam beaus on the headgear.

Since the density of belief is increasing and increasing motivation to tourism, the performance of Theyyam finds more scope in future. Thumbakkol Ramachandran panicker is the best example of North Malabar among dedicated artists. He performed the Fire Theyyam especially '*Potten Theyyam*' more than 500 times in Kerala and outside Kerala.

The *Potten Theyyam* and its Super humanness is the research problem for which data collected from different cross sections of the society connected to *Potten Theyyam* as in ten strata :

- A. Scientists (Physicists)
- B. Performers and helpers of Potten Theyyam
- C. Natives and devotees
- D. Foreigners
- E. Academicians

- F. Psychologists
- G. Sociologists
- H. Doctors
- I. Victims (Burned) of Theyyam
- J. Trustees/ owners of temples

There are two kinds of myths rendering about *Potten Theyyam*. One is from classical lore and the other is from folklore. The context is also different due to the traditional elements. They are natural context, induced context and quasi natural context. In this research, the application of folk psychology and folk science in showing off the Super humanness in Fire Theyyams with special reference to *Potten Theyyam* is examined. Here Super humanness is laying over the ember repeatedly and the performer is not get burned which a common man cannot do. Towards the Super humanness of the *Potten Theyyam* different respondents' views are as follows:-

1. Physicists as scientists

Scientists including 64% men and 36% women for data collection who are from different parts of India including 30% doctorates. 80% of the physicists as scientists are post graduates. They are in the age group of 25-45 mostly. Only 6% of them are having previous experience of seeing a Theyyam. Their valuation of Theyyam as - requiring great effort and bearing power, purpose oriented (Equality of mankind and against untouchability)

which is to be presented for the world and performance in the form of deities directly answering to the problems of devotees.

Super humanness in *Potten Theyyam* is the art of not burning by laying in the fire. All scientists are sure that there is no Super humanness to the performer. They ranked the reasons for the Super humanness as thermal conductivity of the materials used as costume and the speed of the movements of the performer. They firmly claim that special mental stage of the performer or leidenfrost effect is not applicable in the Super humanness of the *Potten Theyyam*.

In quantum physics, thermal conductivity is the relationship between transport of heat per unit of time and the temperature gradient through area A. Two types of measurement of thermal conductivity are steady state, and transient techniques. Other terms in quantum physics besides thermal conductance are thermal insulance, thermal resistivity and thermal transmittance. A substance with low thermal conductivity will be good insulator. Insulation means not passing heat from the material to the body. Natural and biological insulations are generally fibre or feather.

Among the materials used by the *Potten Theyyam* costumes, tender coconut leaves and rice paste are used in bulk. All other costume materials like plantain fibre, chrysanthus, and film of areca, cinnabar, cobalt, eye

ointment and sandal paste are only for the name sake. Hence it is decided to test the thermal conductivity of tender coconut leaves and rice paste.

Another reason quoted by the scientists is the speed of the movements of the performer which is also decided to be tested. Rate of speed of the movements is equal to the number of movements per minute.

2. Performers

Performers and helpers for Theyyam are changed each other. Helpers are generally family members or close relatives of the performer. There are no performers below 15 years of age and above 75. 82% of the performers are in the age group of 31-60. All performers are scheduled castes/tribes. Among themselves, more than 90% are Malaya or Pulaya community. Pulayas are negligible in number.

Potten Theyyam is the Theyyam of Malaya's. It is very important to note that no other communities including forward castes are not initiated to perform this Theyyam. It is to be noted that in all other performances like Chakkiyarkoothu, Drum playing, it is started to be performed by others who are the traditional performers like the community of Chakiyar or Marar. It is because of Kerala Kala Mandalam, the University for Arts and performances. But in that institution also unto this times never to think in this regard to teach at least 'Thottam' of Theyyams. It is very pity to note that successful artists of Chakkiyarkoothu from Kalamandalam who are not permitted to perform

inside the temple by most of the trustees. It is the proofs that still people believe in tradition. If this is the case of tradition and if males are nil in the selected performers' family of Theyyam, there is the chance of extinct of the performance like the Ninabali. It was the performance owned by Munnoottan community which that traditional family was not interesting to continue to perform Ninabali and the performance was extinct, the Peruvannan community has studied and performed trained by the Folklore Fellows of Malabar Trust. The artist initiated to perform was Mr. K. V. Kannaperuvannan, Vayalapa, Payangadi, Kannur. Each community in olden times owned by the name of birth right named 'cherujanmavakasam' is given by the landlord of that place. Moreover the landlord was giving a special name 'Panicker' to the performer as recognition by giving 'Pattum valayum'. There was a case in Ezhome where a performer was performed Muthappan Vellattam in a Pulayas house. Due to unauthorised performance some family trustee boycott the artist. This is the utmost example that among this Theyyam community, still the concept of fundamentalism exists even though untouchability is eradicated in Kerala.

More than half of the performers are either S. S. L. C or below in terms of education level. Just like, more than half of the performers are either unemployed or coolies. The complete performers are atheist or thorough believers of god. Below 10 years, they are starting to perform from small to risky Theyyams which are – Madayilchamundi, Rakthachamundi,

Thekkangulikan, Moovaalamkuzhichamundi, Uchitta, Karimkuttychathan, Karivaalam Bhagavathi, Bhairavan, Pookkuttychathan, Ottakkolam, Gulikan, Aivedan, Muthappan, Vasurimala, Vedan, Dhumabhagavathi, Ghandakarnan and Panjuruli. They are also performing the magical rituals like Malayankettu, Erichudala, Paathalahomam, Kannerupaattu, Kothamoori aattam and Paravachamundi Theyyam. There are no performers who have more than 35 years of experience in this field.

More than half of the performers have more than 10 years of experience in the performance of *Potten Theyyam*. 61% of the performers prefer to *Potten Theyyam* to perform since it gives maximum satisfaction compared to others. *Potten Theyyam* is ‘mandramoorthy’ which means easily blessing. Besides, it is less expensive, having less quantity of ember, uttering satire, common and popular. *Potten Theyyam* wears the simple dress of Chandala (The lowest caste person).

Performers claim that they are not taking any precautions against fire or burning. But, penance, diet control, avoiding food from outside the family, defilement by birth/death, and belief of god is compulsory. They agree that experience and mental powers are the main factors for the success. If burns, the performer communicates it to the helpers in their ritual language which no others can understand and the helpers will do the needful suddenly with their

tricks and strategies. Mostly, the rice paste is applied. In fact, most of the performers are not ready to divulge these areas.

Regarding the Super humanness of Theyyams, performers claim that they are feeling the energy of super humanness. At that time they are getting an extra power and confidence till the end of the performance. They are not at all afraid of fire whether to stand, sit, run or lay in the fire. They believe that it is by god's grace. If there is any small burning, they treat it as the blessing given by god as reward. Performers are counselled by the elders by the proverb- "potten kettiyaal olikkuthu venam" which means that small burnings are necessary to be a good performer in future. With this proverb, most performers never mind these small burnings. All performers have the experience of burning but 15% of them severely burned and injured.

Performers feel no difference either in the performance or satisfaction in the natural or induced contexts of performance. For them all are alike. If difference, it will be only in the time taken for the total performance including the time taken to prepare meleri, that is ember which varies from 3-12 hours. Performers are very particular in selecting the place for performance if it is outside families or temples. The place of meleri should be neat and tidy and clean and pure with out any pollution.

Costumes are found no role against fire and burning by the performers. The costumes for Theyyam include generally tender coconut

leaves, plantain fibre, chrysanthus, rice paste, film of areca, cinnabar, cobalt, eye ointment and sandal paste.

Performers have different opinions regarding the speed of the movement in the Theyyam. That is, among them, nobody moves speedily to escape from the fire and burning. Speed of the movement is based on ‘thalam’ of drums. Some Theyyams are speedy and some are slow according to the type of the Theyyam. Either the speed of the movement or the quantity of the ember will not help to overcome the fire and burning. They firmly believe that everything will be happened according to the will and wish of the god.

Performers never lost their mental strength and confidence while performance and agree that the success of the Theyyam is due to their experience in fire, thorough belief of god, helpers and family members, and their mental confidence. It is to be noted that the helpers are either the family members of the performer’s close relatives like brother-in- laws.

Future predictions of the devotees are learned from experience and from tradition. These predictions are unquestionable by devotees and to a certain extent the Theyyam can counsel, motivate and find solutions for their problems which the devotee will say directly to the Theyyam at the time of offering. There is no special technology consciously. But performers are not ready to admit that it is because of facial reading, applied psychology, intuition, accidental or by guessing.

It is noted that there are no female performers even though there are female helpers usually the mother or wife of the performer. Lady friends or lady neighbours of the performer are not entertained as helpers. Now a days, in almost all activities whatever it is risky, female's presence is there. In the field of Theyyam performance, the female participation is nil due to the trustees' non-permission, unfit body structure of female for performance and the problem of bodily purity which is connected with beliefs. But regarding the small children up to 10 years even females are not promoted to be performers when the female Theyyams are acted by men. The progressive movements or feminist activists did not take the matter or listened that there are so many non risky Theyyams.

3. Natives

More than half of the natives of the performers are atheist, that is non-believing in god. According to them, *Potten Theyyam* is different from other Theyyams in the following respects as-Magical Fire Theyyam with satire, adventurous, against untouchability, immediate blessing, highly philosophical, popular, simple, offering and wearing mask. The secret they believe behind the adventure is costumes, speed of the movements and ultimately the luck.

After the make-up and urachil Thottam, the performer becomes god. Then he gets extra energy to overcome the fire and burning. The dress on the

waist which is made up of tender coconut leaves is very thick. Hence, the heat does not reach to the body of the performer. At the time of laying over the fire, the helpers will keep alert at the flame and keep the ribbon of tender coconut leaves on the heating surface. Helpers will make sure the distribution of equal heat on the surface of the ember. The thalappali or the base of the headgear has 21 metal pieces like the figure of an expanded hood of a serpent which gives an invisible energy to the performer. There is a belief that it is a representation of the Gurus.

4. Outside Kerala People

100% outside Kerala people including foreigners are sure that there is no performance outside Kerala like *Potten Theyyam* and they are unable to compare this performance with any other performances in their places. The *Potten Theyyam* is very adventurous but not at all super human. According to them, it is possible with the speed of the movements, and mental power of the performer. That is, below half of the respondent's only claim that Super humanness is with the application of science with costumes.

5. Academicians

Potten Theyyam is a ritual performance. It is a colourful and powerful worship. It is the expansion of Bootha worship. It claims the Advaita philosophy. It is the art performed by the downtrodden people as against social injustice, feudalism and total rejection.

Theyyams are classified based upon caste, myth, gender, mother/ancestor gods, costumes and make-up, Shaiva/Vaishnava, fire/hunting and higher/ native mythology. *Potten Theyyam* is included in Fire Theyyams. The performer makes the adventure in *Potten Theyyam* performance with the practice, will power or mental strength, belief, make-up and speed of the movements. Diet control is advised for the confidence and practice. However, practice is the most important factor. That is, lack of practice may lead to danger or burnings.

Except one respondent, everybody among the academicians claim that *Potten Theyyam* has enough scope and academic aura for further research from different dimensions.

Theyyams are generally marginalised compared to classical art performances. In depth research is needed in these aspects. This may be due to the socio-economic backwardness of performers.

Regarding the Super humanness of *Potten Theyyam*, academicians unanimously have a negative opinion that it is only an illusion with the ability of the performer with his belief, mental strength and determination.

Theyyams are performed by marginalised and downtrodden people. But, while performance everybody including the landlords respect them. That is a paradox.

6. Psychologists

According to psychologists the symbols of fire, ember and flam beau have meanings. But in *Potten Theyyam* it is not relevant since all these are practical or material, not imaginary. Before the fire and ember, the performer act as god and without fear lay over the ember. Ritual, game and myth are confirmed as same by comparative studies. A myth is an unfulfilled wish which is far from the real life. In *Potten Theyyam*, unfulfilled wish of to be equal to a higher caste man of centuries back is depicted in the form of performance. From this the psychologists analyse the social set up of that time and the state of a low caste man at the period of feudalism. Some intellectuals later gave to *Potten Theyyam* the colour of ‘Advaitha’ alert of Shankaracharya.

Psychologists further analyse and points out a great paradox in connection with the *Potten Theyyam* that in ordinary cases, a man wears ‘persona’ (A mask which is in character only) to hide several things from others but in *Potten Theyyam* , the Theyyam wears material mask to divulge several things which can not say in open before the public including the bad and cruel activities of rich and landlords of present day to poor which are having impact if it told open, in the form of satire. Thus through *Potten Theyyam* several truths in the society is revealed as well as the good and bad things done by the people is divulged before the common folk.

The mass is influenced by the adventurous performance of *Potten Theyyam* and the performer creates a hero cult. According to psychologists, the elements responsible for the Super humanness of the Theyyam are – experience from the childhood as helper and performer, worship attitude of the viewer, fearless mindset and confidence, behaviour patterns, costumes and materials used, atmosphere, and mood, sound and lighting including folk torches, emotional approaches of devotees from the childhood thorough belief in the deity, assurance from helpers and elders, success stories and respect gained by elders, stories of tricks, magics and archetypes, expectation of solutions in the mind for the unsolved problems and the relief by opening up the sorrows and problems to god. This session of direct approach to god is just like in the counselling session. Where the counsellor expects answers for their unsolved problems from the counsellor. The solutions to the problems will be according to the perceptions of the counsellor. Here, in the *Potten Theyyam*, in the mood of illusion, the performer gives solutions through face reading of the devotees and they accept the same with full belief. The psychology plays a very prominent role in several aspects of the ritual.

Viewers may be either theists or atheists. Theists view the Theyyam with belief of god and the atheists view it with anxiety to know the science behind the adventure and Super humanness.

7. Sociologists

According to sociologists, *Potten Theyyam* is a religious, communal and regional festival. It is amusing and appreciating. *Potten Theyyam* does not make any association among the folk and there is no Super humanness for *Potten Theyyam*. Costumes have the main role to show of Super humanness. According to them, the elements of Super humanness are – laying over the fire, different acting, myth and tradition, power of past heritage, light effect, rhythm, movements, shining ember, mass concentrated mind to the performance, skill, tricks, strategies and presence of mind of the performer, divine atmosphere, immediate actions of the helpers, respect shown by the trustees and the belief of the audience to the performer as deity. A fan or hero cult to the performer is forming not because of the Super humanness but due to the adventurous, vibrant and risky performance. Old people are still believers in the myth and stories behind the *Potten Theyyam*.

Potten Theyyam will be continued in urban societies in future also since people see this as a source of entertainment or a part of tourism. In Kerala, rural areas are changing to urban areas. Urbanisation is not affecting this performance since folk religion is more powerful than urbanisation. Urban folk is not patient enough to see the whole lengthy ritual since most of the new generation has no attachment with the traditional performances. It may be because of the timing, that is in the odd times. That is meleri from 3

p. m. to 7 p. m. , Thottam and Kalasam 7 p. m. to 3 a. m and performance from 3 p. m. to dawn and the rest ritual up to 1 p. m of the next day. New generation is not patient and not ready to avoid food or sleep. There is no generation gap or conflict among old and new generation in recognising the *Potten Theyyam* as an art.

Sociologists see a very wide scope for this performance in the globalised period as tourist attraction. The globalised world is not considering much about the heroism of Theyyams. The hero cult is propagated mostly by medias. If the medias and government authorities take initiative, the performers will be saved by getting more programmes. There is a very important role for medias in propagating this performance in India and abroad. They can either generate or spoil a person or an event. They can make a person as either hero or criminal.

According to sociologists, Jung's Archie type is working in *Potten Theyyam*. The hero cult is spreading from generation to generation with slight changes.

Women are absent as performers in *Potten Theyyam* even though they are working as helpers. The reasons are - non-permission by trustees and tradition, fear of a sensitive issue, their problem of impurity as physical limitation, difficulty to follow penance and ritual due to family

responsibilities and ultimately their unawareness of equal opportunity in the society.

Sociologists opined that even though the Theyyam salutes different community chieftains in different styles, the society is not felt it as social discrimination and more over they are able to remember their tradition and community. Besides community heads, Theyyam respects 'social powers' and VIPs to please them before audience.

Today the Malaya and Pulaya communities are proud of to say that they are Theyyam performers compared to olden times. This paradox is due to increasing social recognition to this art and performance and the abolition of caste system in the present society. *Potten Theyyam* is not helpful either for social harmony or alienation.

Compared to other art forms, whatever the risky and adventurous the performance, there are no fans for the Theyyam artists. Society still sees them as downtrodden and performing for either to maintain the rituals or for bread winning. Even today they are neglected group by the government authorities.

Sociologists see the differences between Theyyam gods and Human gods. Theyyam god is acting as god which is followed by myth, rituals, beliefs and tradition for which no marketing is needed. It is the part of folk religion which will be everlasting and existing in future also with more scope with the impact of globalisation. The Theyyam god is poor who is either

unemployed or working as coolie after the performance since the state of god is only for a short while during performance which is propagated according to the will of media people.

Human gods are programmed by a team by creating stories of experiences to make beliefs and their acceptance among public and society for which marketing are made in different forms through media and huge donations as food, cloth, shelter, health (Both for body and mind) may be made with unknown funds ,claimed as received from devotees. Such gods are living as gods till death until they are prosecuted in courts. Such gods are generally rich with enormous properties. They are not the part of folk religion but create a new religion for them. Their existence is not sure in future. It lasts with the death of the god but due high properties, establishments and institutions, the fame will be existed in future also. Several human gods are prosecuted in courts. They are getting big media coverage. It is a paradox that Theyyam god is respected by everybody, not insulted even by an atheist. But human god is respected by a small group of people made as believers and insulted by many others.

No Human Gods have turned as Theyyam

8. Victims of *Potten Theyyam*

Compared to other Theyyams, Fire Theyyams are more risky and adventurous where the performer is always expects unexpected accidents. The

possibility is very high for burning. Examples of such burned persons are Rajeev, Kunjaran, Thumbakkol Ramachandran Panicker, Thumbakol Chandu Panicker and Preman Panicker.

9. Doctors

Four important ways of treatment for burning are- allopathy, ayurveda, naturopathy and kalari treatments. Each treatment has its own way of method. However, in all these, the primary thing is washing with water of body temperature. Doctors generally grade the severity burning as silly, average and severe. In allopathy several cases are treated by surgery of the burned place with internal and external medicines. Ayurveda treatment is made by internal and external medicines only. In naturopathy water therapy is the only treatment for burning. In kalari, there is no clear treatment for burning. Folk performers use rice paste and some homely prepared oil for burning treatment which ayurveda and kalari are supporting and allopathy and naturopathy are not supporting to experiment for others.

10. Trustees

Trustees /owners of the temples or kavus are either landlord of the past or elected committees. It is to be noted that new richers who are giving huge donations to temples/kavus become member of the committee but not with the same respect to traditional and past landlords. It shows that tradition is treated as very important for Theyyam performers. It may be due to past heritage and

belief of the society. In the same way all most all trustees prefer to traditional performers than new entrants for Theyyam performance. The trustees are ready to invite a new performer only after getting the permission from traditional performers and astrologers. The astrologer has a role in fixing the day and date of the Theyyam and to know the satisfaction level of the deity by conducting it since the performances are mostly conducted as offering by devotees to solve their problems. In some cases, astrologers have advised to start a new permanent place for the Theyyam which is known by different names like kavu, kottam or sthanam.

In some places the Theyyam is conducted annually or on special occasions. Only around 10% of the trustees are conducting *Potten Theyyam* regularly and permanently. Most of them are for goodwill and other objectives as destroying enemies, social recognition and to bless on auspicious occasions.

Trustees claim that they are experiencing positive results by conducting *Potten Theyyam* and are not all bored with the frequent and repeated conducting the same Theyyam.

The source of funding for the performance will be depending up on the ownership. If it is conducted by a family, family members may collect from their kith and kin where as if the performance is at kavu or kottam , or in other Induced (Artificial) contexts, there will be committees and their funds.

Both in natural or in induced contexts, both families and committees are making public invitation for participating in the performance with food and shelter and make it as a festival of the locality.

3. 21 Chapter Summary

The performances Parnettu, Elavoor Thukkam, Kuthiyottam, Kuthiratheeb, Paathalahomam/Velanpravrithi, Chooralpadayani, Chandattam, Kalaripayattu, Kalapporu, Muttelneendi nercha, maadanukoda, Parakkumkavadi, Kanalattam/ fire walking and Fire Theyyams are showing Super human elements. Fire Theyyam is a unique performance of North Malabar. According to materials used for fire, it may be classified into three- that is Fire Theyyams based on -

- Ember
- Ember and dried coconut leaf, and
- Flambeau.

Other classification of Fire Theyyams are based on-

- Mother goddess
- Martyr
- Animal
- Hero, and
- Ancestor.

Among Fire Theyyams Theechamundi is using much ember comparing to *Potten Theyyam* and Uchitta. Kandanarkelan Theyyam is using less ember but more dried coconut leaves. Dhuma Bhagavathy, Kadamgottu maakkam are wearing flam-beau on waist and headgear. There are three kinds of flam beau (Pantham in Malayalam) - kettupantham, kuthupantham and arayadipanthams.

A. The Theyyam has a bright scope in future due to increasing rate of theists and the promotion of tourism by the government. Thumbakol Ramachandran Panicker, a well known Theyyam performer is the best example of dedicated artists who performed more than 500 *Potten Theyyam* in India and abroad. There are three contexts for Theyyam performance – natural, induced and quasi natural. The application of science by folk (Folk Science) in ritual performances with special reference to *Potten Theyyam* is examined in the present research. The application level of folk psychology is also examined. The term folk science indicates the science studied only based on practical knowledge and training and using without studying any theory on it. The data is collected from 10 groups or strata of people of the society directly connected with *Potten Theyyam*. They are :

- A. Scientists (Physicists)
- B. Performers and helpers of Potten Theyyam

- C. Natives and devotees
- D. Foreigners
- E. Academicians
- F. Psychologists
- G. Sociologists
- H. Doctors
- I. Victims (Burned) of Theyyam
- J. Trustees/ owners of Temples

Scientists view of *Potten Theyyam* as a great and risky effort and there is no Super humanness (Laying over the ember repeatedly but no burning which is impossible for a common man) to the performers. It is due to the science behind the materials they are using as costumes. That is the materials such as tender coconut leaves and rice paste are possessing low thermal conductivity or they are good insulators. Performers' speed of the movements also causes for Super humanness in fire. Leidenfrost effect is not applicable. Fearless mental state of the performer helps to lay over the ember. Other costume materials like plantain fibre, chrysanthus, film of areca, cinnabar, sandal paste and cobalt which are used for the name sake, so it is immaterial to experiment the thermal conductivity. Regarding the speed of the

movement, the Theyyam lays over the fire 2-6 seconds, gets up, rounds up and again lays over the ember 7-16 seconds. It means that the rate of the speed that is the number of movements per minute is- $16/60 \text{ seconds} = 0.27$ minutes. The speed decreases with the heat decrease.

Performers and helpers of Theyyam are changing each other. Mostly the helpers are the family members or close relatives. The majority of the performers are from Malaya community. Besides a small percentage of Pulaya community, no other communities including forward communities are performing this art form. Performers claim that they are getting more mental satisfaction from the *Potten Theyyam* for which they are not taking any precaution against burning. According to performers the success factors are penance, diet control, belief in god and mental strength. If burned, the performer communicates the fact to helpers in their ritual language and the helpers who are alert and vigilant always about fire and burning will do needful immediately, mostly smearing the rice paste. Performers themselves are getting a feeling of Super humanness at the time of performance. They don't feel any differences in natural or induced contexts of performance. Performers never think about the role of costumes against burning. Just like the speed of their movements also. They never purposively speed up the movements, but it is according to the rhythm of drums. The art of future prediction of devotees are studied from ancestors and tradition, also from through experience and practice.

Most of the natives are atheists that is non believers of god. According to them the *Potten Theyyam* is different from other Theyyams in the following respects as- magical, Fire Theyyam with satire, adventurous, against untouchability, immediate blessing, highly philosophical, popular, simple, offering and wearing mask. According to them, the secret of the adventure is on costumes and the speed of their movements and luck. There are many cases of burnings. After the make up, the performer thinks that he becomes god. The thick costumes of tender coconut leaves and helpers who will help to make sure that the distribution of equal heat on the surface of the ember.

Outside Kerala people including foreigners who are interviewed did not see such a type of performance earlier. They admit about the adventure behind the performance but never believe about the Super humanness of the performer. According to them, the speed of the movements and performers' mental power are the factors behind the showing of Super humanness.

The majority of the academicians pointed that the *Potten Theyyam* has an academic aura. Super humanness is an illusion that created by the performer.

According to psychologists, myth is an unfulfilled wish. *Potten Theyyam* gives the message of an unfulfilled wish of lower caste and downtrodden people of the past time for getting equal status with higher castes people in that society. Psychologists points out the paradox in wearing

the mask to cover the face. In psychology 'persona' is termed as the cover or hide many things by a human being against his/her personality. But mask is wore by the Theyyam to open up several things of people of the society.

According to sociologists, Theyyam is a religious, communal and regional festival in which the performer has no Super humanness. Costumes plays a main role. Apart from that acting, myth, tradition, light effect, rhythm, movements, shining ember, concentrated mind, mask, skill of the performer, timely help from helpers create Super humanness feeling to the audience. Urban people are also accepting *Potten Theyyam* but as a source of entertainment and also as part of tourism. The new generation is not patient enough to watch the entire and lengthy performance of 24 hours with out food and sleep. They want instant performance for a short while.

Even though ladies are working as helpers to the performance of *Potten Theyyam*, they are not permitted yet to perform due to the non-permission from trustees and their physical impurity. More over ladies are unable to take penance due to household responsibilities.

There are no fans for Theyyam performers whatever risky performances they are conducting just like human gods since they are gods only at the time of performance and the performers are belonging to lower caste and poor communities. Human gods are programmed by rich group of people not backed by any myth, religion or tradition. They are making their

own religion. Unlike human gods, the Theyyam god is never prosecuted before law. Regarding media, compared to human gods, for Theyyam they are giving less marketing or publicity in India and abroad. Theyyam gods after the performance again turned as an ordinary man but a human god lives and dies as god itself.

Fire Theyyams are risky. There are examples of victims, that is, who have burned while performance. It was due to carelessness in handling the fire torch and negligence on the part of helpers and bad luck.

Doctors of allopathy, ayurveda, naturopathy and kalari treatments have studied for burning. Except in kalari, all other three branches of treatment have their own way of treatment. But for burning, surgery is only in allopathy. All prefer to water as first aid for burning. That is, first they wash the burned portions with water of body temperature. There are three degrees for burning- silly, average and severe. Allopathy is only treating severe cases of burning.

Most of the trustees are prefer to traditional performers than new entrants. New performers may be invited only with consultation with traditional performers and astrologers. Trustees claim that they are experiencing positive results by *Potten Theyyam* and they are not bored with the repeated conducting of any Theyyams. The astrologer fixes the good day and date for the conducting Theyyam. After the performance also, the

astrologer evaluates the satisfaction level. The fund for conducting a Theyyam is not at all a matter. If it is in families, family members themselves offer to the head of the family their contribution as offering. If it is outside families or public places, there will be committees to sponsor the performance. In any case whether it is natural or induced context every body is invited by the trustees to participate and watch the performance with food and facilities.