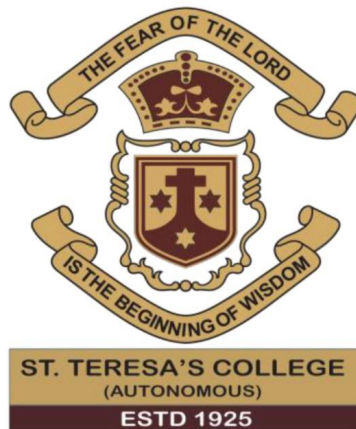


A HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF OACHIRA PARABRAHMA TEMPLE: HARMONY WITH NATURE AND SPIRITUALITY

A Project Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of The Requirements for the award of B.A. Degree In History

St. Teresa's College (Autonomous), Ernakulam

Affiliated To Mahatma Gandhi University, Kottayam



T A FARHA	AB21HIS009
APARNA K P	AB21HIS012
ARTHI RAJPUROHIT	AB21HIS014
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DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

ST. TERESA'S COLLEGE, (AUTONOMOUS)

ERNAKULAM

MARCH 2024

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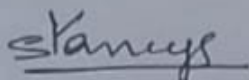
22/3/24

Dr. Gracey RS

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY
ST. TERESA'S COLLEGE, (AUTONOMOUS)
ERNAKULAM
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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the project titled "A Historical Analysis of Oachira Parabrahma Temple: Harmony With Nature And Spirituality" is being submitted by name in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of a B.A. Degree in History of St. Teresa's College (Autonomous), affiliated to Mahatma Gandhi University, is a Bonafide record of the work done by the students under my supervision and guidance. No part of this work has been submitted elsewhere for the award of any degree.

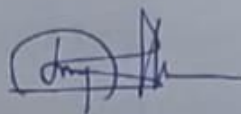


Dr. STANCY S

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DECLARATION

We hereby declare that this project titled "A Historical Analysis Of Oachira Parabrahma Temple: Harmony With Nature And Spirituality" is an original work done by us under the guidance of Dr. Jiya Tharian, Assistant Professor, Department of History, St. Teresa's College (Autonomous). No part of this work has been submitted elsewhere for the award of any degree.

Place: Ernakulam

Date: 22-03-2024

T A FARHA (AB21HIS009)

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We take this moment to appreciate and thank our guide, Dr Jiya Tharian assistant professor Department of History, St Teresa's College for her continuous support and guidance we were able to succeed in our project

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We would also like to take this moment to thank the staff of Kerala History Association, Ernakulam and St Teresa's College for providing us with the resources from the library. We would like to thank the University of Kerala for allowing us to use the resources we needed for our work from their Library. We would also like to thank the respondents for their cooperation in our work

Last but not least we would like to thank our previous families, friends and classmates for their unwavering support throughout the journey of completing our project.

Place: Ernakulam	T A FARHA	AB21HIS009
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Kerala is a southwestern state of India which was formed on 1 November 1956. Kerala is the 13th largest state by population. It is divided into 14 districts. The state capital is Thiruvananthapuram. All the districts of Kerala have their uniqueness. They follow different cultures and beliefs. Kerala is a melting pot of various religions, the predominant among them being Hinduism, Christianity and Islam. There are also Jews, Buddhists and Jains though their numbers are few. The tribal people of Kerala have their own distinct religious beliefs, rituals and forms of worship.¹ Each of these religions contributes to the genesis of the state's heritage and customs. Hinduism plays an important part in the formation of various art, culture and traditions.

Hinduism is the world's oldest religion, according to many scholars, with roots and customs dating back more than 4,000 years. Today, with more than 1 billion followers, Hinduism is the third-largest religion worldwide, after Christianity and Islam. Roughly 94 percent of the world's Hindus live in India. Because the religion has no specific founder, it's difficult to trace its origins and history. Hinduism is unique in that it's not a single religion but a compilation of many traditions and philosophies.

Hindus worship several different gods and minor deities, honor a range of symbols, respect several different holy books and celebrate with a wide variety of traditions, holidays and customs. Though the development of the caste system in India was influenced by Hindu concepts, it has been shaped throughout history by political as well as religious movements, and today is much less rigidly enforced.

Today there are four major sects of Hinduism: Shaivism, Vaishnava, Shaktism and Smarta, as well as several smaller sects with their own religious practices. There are many temples in Kerala; these temples are also known as Ambalam, Kshetram, Kovil, Tali etc. Most of the temples in Kerala is built in Dravidian style. Oachira, also denoted as, Ochira is a village in the Karunagapalli Taluk, Quilon District.²

¹ article by "<https://www.thehouseboatkerala.com/kerala-religion.html>"

² "History of Kerala 1937 Vol IV by K P Padmanabha Menon"

Kollam, also known as Quilon earlier, is a district from the state of Kerala. It was under the administration of the Travancore government before the independence. After India became independent, in 1947, Travancore joined the Indian Union and became an integrate part of the state of Kerala, making it a democratic state.

The city is on the banks of Ashtamudi Lake and the Kallada river. Kollam is the fourth largest city in Kerala and is known for cashew processing and coir manufacturing. It is the southern gateway to the Backwaters of Kerala and is a prominent tourist destination. Kollam is one of the most historic cities with continuous settlements in India. Geographically, Quion formation seen around coastal cliffs of Ashtamudi Lake represent sediments laid down in the Kerala basin that existed during Mio-Pliocene times.³

According to the Kerala District Gazetteers: Quilon - ‘The term Quilon is the anglicised form of the Malayalam word Kollam. There are different views regarding the derivation of the name Kollam. Some writers maintain that the place was named after some great event which took place here giving birth to the new era called Kollam Era. Yet others believe that Kollam is so called because it was really a Kolam or Kulanif i.e., a tank. There is also a view that Kollam was named after Kolu which means “a height” or “high ground”. Some others would suggest that Kollam is a compound of the two words Ko and Illam, Ko meaning a king and Illam, a palace. Accord to this view the place name would mean “the king’s palace”.

The town is also said to have derived its name from Kol (i.e. to slay), meaning thereby a place where some great slaughter took place. It has also been suggested that the name might have had a Chinese origin as Quilon port had close contacts with the Chinese in the past and was their chief sea port in Kerala.

The Quilon District is situated on the South West Coast of India. It extends from latitude 9° 28' N. to 8° 45' N. and longitude 76° 28' to 77° 17' E. The District is boimded on the North by the Alleppey and Kottayam Districts, on the east by the Tirunelveli District of Madras State, on the South by the Trivandrum District and on the West by the Arabian Sea. At its longest point it extends 52 miles from east to west and 48 miles from north to south.⁴

³“Article about Kollam on the website Wikipedia- <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kollam>”

⁴“ Sreedhara Menon, Member, Kerala District Gazetteers: Quilon, Trivandrum, Central Press, 1964, pg no;1-2”

According to the History of Kerala Vol 1, the district is cited as – ‘Quilon had its vicissitudes of fortune. It was at one time a great political and commercial centre. The Nestorian Christians found here an asylum on their arrival on the coast. It was the seat of the first Roman Catholic Bishopric in India. It enjoyed a large trade with China and Arabia, and had also political relations with Kublai Khan, the great Mongol Emperor of China. Its port has been described by early travellers as one of the largest in the world, and its markets the finest in India.’⁵

The district Kollam is known for its religious harmony and cultural importance. The Infant Jesus Cathedral church, St Thomas fort or the Thankasseri fort, Sree Maha Ganapathi Temple, Ashtamudi Lake are some of the important features of Kollam. The temple town Oachira is one of such culturally and religiously significant pilgrim center of the district.

Oachira is one of the famous sacred places of Kerala and India. Oachira is on the border of Kollam and Alappuzha Districts, next to National Highway 66. It is a very ancient pilgrimage center that is centered on the Parabrahma Temple (which is dedicated to the Para Brahman (or Param Brahman) or Ohmkaram, the Universal Consciousness), which covers thirty-six acres of land.⁶

Oachira Parabrahma Temple, also known as Dakshina Kashi, is a culturally and religiously well-known pilgrimage center in the state of Kerala. Its exact location is N.H-14, around 6 km away from Kayamkulam, in Karunagappalli thaluk, in Oachira, the temple town, in the district of Kollam. The temple is dedicated to Parabrahma, the supreme lord or the supreme consciousness according to Hindu mythology, also known as Omkaram. The presiding deity of Oachira temple is Lord Shiva with the Kaala, the bull, having an importance.

This is the only temple which was opened to all classes of Hindus before the Travancore Temple Entry Proclamation. Usually, sacred places are associated with particular communities. But Oachira is held sacred not only by Hindus but also others. It is sacred to Muslims as it is to Hindus. The famous Sathivar mosque is situated close to the Oachira temple. It is said that this hallowed place was once a Buddhist centre.⁷

⁵“K P Padmanabha Menon History of Kerala Vol 1, 1924, pg no: 270”

⁶“Article on <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oachira>”

⁷“C K Kareem, Kerala District Gazetteers: Quilon Supplement, Trivandrum, Government Press-Publisher, pg. no:35”

The Ochira Parabrahma Temple holds immense significance as a center of religious and cultural practices that have evolved over time. Its open-air format and association with the distinctive Ochira Parabrahma Festival make it a revered place of worship in Kerala and contribute to its status as a unique pilgrimage destination. Oachira temple holds a history of many centuries, till date the origin of the temple is still unknown. It is said that the temple was present during the emergence of Buddhism, i.e. during the 5th century. The temple is known for its unique myths and folklore which is still believed by some devotees.

The most notable aspect of this temple is, it does not follow any form of idol worship. The lack of sanctum and temple structures makes this temple completely different and unique from other religious institutions across the world, as there are rarely a few temples that follow these same traits. It is an important pilgrimage center, attracting thousands of pilgrims during their festivals. The temple and the various traditions followed there have a close relation to nature and its environment.

The temple is a symbol of non-idol worship where the supreme force of nature is revered. The belief is that the supreme power is shapeless and forms the basis of the temple doctrine. Also, there are strong beliefs that the name derived from Uvachanchira as Uvachan means Lord Shiva. Unlike the other temples, the Oachira Temple is unique in the sense that it does not have a covered structure. People worship the Para Brahma under the trees.⁸

Parabrahma is the main deity worshiped in the Oachira temple. The other deities worshiped there is, the Lord Shiva, the Sarpa Kavu (the abode of snakes), worshipping the Nagas. Another rarity of the temple is the presence of a lot of Bulls around the temple ground. They are considered to be holy and the devotees pray to them and feed them. It is the only temple in Kerala that provides mud as Prasadam (The holy offering that is provided to the devotees).⁹ This tradition of worshipping bull is followed due to the myth regarding the origin of the temple which is explained in the 1st chapter. The temple is said to be created by Lord Parabrahma, there are a few myths and folklore related to the origin of Oachira Temple.

⁸“Article on Oachira Temple from Temple Purohit website <https://www.templepurohit.com/hindu-temple/oachira-parabrahma-temple/>”

⁹“Article about Oachira temple in Pick, Pack and Go website - <https://www.pickpackgo.in/2015/08/ochira-parabrahma-temple-kollam.html?m=1>”

Unlike in other temples of Kerala; there is no big edifice for this temple and the nivedyam offered does not consist of cooked stuffs, The Poojas and other rites are not performed by Brahmins, but by the Kurups, a sub-section of Nairs. The Vazhipadu Sanghom (persons acting as waiters) of this temple are drawn from Veerasaiva community.¹⁰

Oachira temple is known for its festivals, some of them are; the Oachira Panthrandu Vilakku (twelve-lamp) festival, held in November and December. Ochira Kali, according to Malayalam Calendar the Ochira Kali Festival comes on the first two days of Midhunam and according to the English Calender the festival is conducted in the middle of June.

These two are the most important festivals celebrated there. Some of the other festivals are; Erupethettam Onam, which is celebrated every year in Oachira on the 28th day of the Onam festival with procession generally known as “Kaala Kettu”. Normally the day comes in September or October. Oachira temple attracts thousands of pilgrims each year during these festivals.¹¹

Unlike other religious institutions, the Oachira temple’s traditions and costumes are quite different; people can enter the temple regardless of their caste and the religion they practice. One of the unique traditions followed by the majority of the temples in Kerala is that the men tend to remove their shirts or clothes that cover the upper part of their body; in this temple that tradition is not followed. No particular dress code is followed in Oachira temple. Everyday Annadanam, the tradition or practice of giving food to those in need for free, is provided by the temple authority. Every morning after 9 am kanji, rice porridge and in the noon lunch, the Annadanam is provided.

Apart from worship of Lord Siva, the idols of Ganapathy and Naga Raja (serpent king) have also been installed here on the altharas (platforms raised around the banyan trees). The Wagayakshi is installed in a special corner, north-east to the temple, where pogjas and other rites are performed by Brahmins. Another important place of worship here is the Ganapathy althara at the easternmost end. It is only after offering worship here, the devotees go to the other sides to worship remaining deities.

¹⁰ “C K Kareem, Kerala District Gazetteers: Quilon Supplement, Trivandrum, Government Press-Publisher, pg. no:35-36”

¹¹ “Article about Oachira Temple on Just Kerala website - <https://www.justkerala.in/tourism/pilgrimage/temples/ochira-pilgrimage>”

‘The most important offering made in this temple is ettukandam urulicha (rolling oneself over the ground around the temple). Another one is the distribution of kanji (rice-gruel) to the poor and hungry. On these occasions when kanji is distributed beggars will flock in thousands between the two temples. Yet another important item of offering received here is the various articles distributed to these beggars as alms. This will include articles like salt, betel leaves, rice, pappadam etc.

The Oachira Kaala is one of the most important aspect of the temple. On the entrance of the temple, there will be a Kaala, adorned with various ritualistic ornaments. This Kaala represent Lord Nandhi, the vehicle of Lord Shiva, it also symbolises the myth regarding the legend of Unnikkoran, which is further explained in the second chapter. The visitors have to worship this Bull and touch its head as respect to it and then enter the temple ground.

Nerchakalas (bulls received as-offering) are received here from all parts of the state. The amount realised through the sale of these bulls constitutes one of the major items of income of this temple. Quite often people possessed of evil spirits and suffering from hysteria etc., come and stay here for some time wholly devoting themselves to prayers and meditations. The number of such devotees who get cured is also not small.¹²

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This research work focuses on the traditional and cultural significance of Oachira Temple. There are many speculations regarding the origin of the name Oachira. There is an assumption that the name Oachira came from Uvachanchira, which means Lord Shiva. Some believe that the name is related to God Parabrahma; ‘Om’ is the representation of Lord Parabrahma. The word ‘Chira’ means a piece of land. These two words combined, Om Chira, is read as the land of Parabrahma. Later over time, this came into being called Oachira.

Many books, articles and newspapers have been used to obtain information regarding the Oachira temple. Another means of collecting data was by visiting the place of importance and interviewing people who knew about the temple and people concerning it. Various websites have been used to gather information’s. Books such as Kerala District Gazetteer written by A Sreedhara Menon, District Handbook Quilon by Public Relation Department, Government of

¹²“C K Kareem, Kerala District Gazetteers: Quilon Supplement, Trivandrum, Government Press-Publisher, 1979, pg. no:36”

Kerala, Kerala District Gazetteers: Quilon Supplement by C K Kareem published by Trivandrum Public Press, Kerala Vijnanakosham by P J Rajendran, South Indian Temple and their Mythology by R Patna. Kerala Jillyale Sthalanamangal Oru Padanam by K P Rajendran Nair, Kollathinte Adunika Charitharam by Kozhisseril V. Lekshmanan, Kollam Jilla Sthalanamacharithram by Dr. Vilakkudy Rajendran and The Travancore State Manual Vol IV by Sadasyatilaka T K Velu Pillai were used as reference.

OBJECTIVES

This study focuses on the differences between the Oachira temple compared to other religious institutions in Kerala. This work also focuses on the myths and legends regarding the temple. An analysis of the culture, customs and traditions of Oachira temple.

Our objectives include –

- To understand the distinct practices followed in Oachira temple.
- To analyze the traditional and cultural differences compared to other religious institutions/ temples.
- To understand the influence of the temple on the natives and their daily lives.
- To assess the contrasting customs and traditions.
- To study the historical background and the temple's heritage.

METHODOLOGY

The research methodology used in this project consists of Analytical and research. This work focuses on the analysis of the culture and traditions of Oachira temples, followed by the study of various festivals. To understand the number of myths and folklore concerning the temple.

The project is in the sense that. Various objectives of this project are collected by the methods of data collection, i.e. Primary sources and secondary sources.

The primary sources of this work consist of the interview method, by interviewing the various temple authorities, the natives of Oachira and the people who have an understanding of the temple. One of the previous priests of the temple was interviewed which was helpful to acquire important information regarding the temple. Questionnaire surveys were conducted along with telephonic interviews. Field visits to the temple were undertaken for a better understanding and the collection of data. These methods were chosen cause of the limited literary works available. The sources consist of various documents, books and records. Official gazetteer's records, Various books like Kshethra Vijnanakosham by P J Rajendran, South Indian Temple and their Archaeology and District Handbook Quilon are some of the books which is used as resources used to collect information. Articles and documents were used as a means for data collection. Various websites like Wikipedia, the temple's official websites and other online sites were used as references, which are mentioned in the Appendix. Magazines and newspaper articles were also used as sources.

LIMITATIONS

Resources about Oachira temple is limited. There was a lack of official records and documents, with limited published books and articles.

CHAPTER 2

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF OACHIRA TEMPLE

Oachira, the town where the Parabrahma temple is situated, was a small portion of land in Onattukarapradesham. Onattukarapradesham refers to the combination of three land areas believed to be one common place for organizing different cultural festivals and events. These three large areas of land areas were known as Karunagapally, Karthikapally and Mavelikarra. In fact, in spite of hundreds of years, these places are still popularly known by these names only in Kollam district in Kerala.¹³

The historical background of the Ochira Temple is intertwined with the rich cultural heritage of Kerala. The region has a long history of diverse religious and cultural influences, including Hinduism, Buddhism, and other traditions. Ochira has been a place where different religious and cultural traditions have interacted and coexisted over the centuries.

While the specific historical origins of the Ochira Parabrahma Temple may not be fully documented, its significance lies in its role as a center of religious and cultural practices that have evolved over time. The Oachira temple's open-air format and its association with the unique festivals of the temple make it a distinctive and revered place of worship in Kerala.

Oachira temple holds a history of many centuries, the temple is assumed to be present even during the emergence of Buddhism in Kerala. There is no actual evidence regarding the origin of the temple, but there are a few well-known folklores about how the temple came into existence, even though how or where it came from has not yet been discovered nor documented. One of the famous myths about this temple is about how this temple was created by Lord Parashurama. Other legend regarding the temple is about the legend of Unnikkoran.

Another myth about the origin of the temple is related to the Pandavas. The Pandavas are the five powerful and skilled warriors in the Hindu Epic, Mahabharata.

¹³ “A study on Oachira Panthrandu Vilakku by Vimal Babu available on the website

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/282199161_Oachira_Panthrandu_Vilakku_A_study_of_a_culturally_embedded_festival_aligned_with_economic_benefits”

It is said that the Pandavas performed a yagna (a sacred ritual) to seek blessing from Lord Krishna. The site where this ritual took place is told to be where the Oachira temple is situated.

Tale of Parashurama

Lord Parashurama is an incarnation of Lord Vishnu, according to Hindu mythology. According to the myth, it is said that Oachira temple is a creation of Lord Parashurama. After Lord Parashurama reclaimed the land from the sea, it is said that he installed the idol of Lord Parashurama in Oachira. As mentioned earlier there is no factual evidence regarding the origin of the temple, these are just assumptions.

The Legend of Unnikkoran

The most famous and important myth regarding the Temple is about Unnikkoran, who encountered the divine presence of Lord Parabrahma, the supreme power of the Universe. The story unfolds as;

There used to be a Brahmin saint who visited temples frequently. He was a loyal servant, and that person was Unnikkoran. This Brahmin saint worshipped Lord Parabrahma and travelled to places for pilgrimage along with Unnikkoran as his assistant. Unnikkoran was faithful to his master. One day the Brahmin saint was praying to Lord Parabrahma, and seeing this Unnikkoran got curious about it and he innocently asked the saint what the lord looks like, and how he visualized the god when he prays. The Brahmin saint thought of it as a funny question, and as he looked around, he saw a bull nearby them. The saint pointed in the bull's direction and told his servant that Lord Parabrahma was in the form of that bull. Unnikkoran believed that and started to worship the bull as God. After this event, the servant started to worship the bull and told the Brahmin saint about how he kept encountering this bull because of his devotion to Lord Parabrahma. The saint thought it was his silly imagination and didn't believe him.

Later, after some days, the Brahmin saint decided to travel to another temple for pilgrimage along with his servant, Unnikkoran. The servant was asked to pack their necessities, as the travel will be for a few days. Unnikkoran packed bag for both of them as he thought they will carry their own respected necessities, but turned out the servant had to carry both the bags, his

and the saints. They started their journey as the brahmin walked in the front while Unnikkoran had to carry the weight of both the bags and keep up with the saint. On their way Unnikkoran

10

again, met the Bull, and it offered the servant to carry both the bags: so, the bull travelled along with them, unknow to the saint. The saint heard Unnikkoran talking to something but didn't care to check whom he was talking, as he thought his servant was talking to himself and kept walking without turning back. They travelled through forests during their journey and along the way, they had to go through some grooves. The Brahmin saint passed through the grooves quite easily, but it was not the case for the other two companions. The Bull got stuck in the grooves and Unnikkoran stayed back to help the bull out of it as the saint got out of them. The Brahmin, as he was walking, noticed that his servant didn't follow him and that he was alone. The saint walked back in search of Unnikkoran, but what he found there was unthinkable. He saw Unnikkoran near the grooves, talking to something invisible like he was talking to himself. The saint asked him to whom he was talking and Unnikkoran replied he was trying to help the Bull out of the grooves who was helping them carry their bags. As he looked into the grooves, he didn't see any bull, but their bags suspended in the air without anything holding them. As he looked into the grooves, he didn't see any bull, but their bags suspended in the air without anything carrying them.

The Brahmin were astonished and asked what magic it was and what was carrying their bag, Unnikkoran explained how the bull which was the Parabrahma came to their help to carry those bags. The Brahmin saint understood that because of Unnikkoran's devotion and prayers towards the god, Lord Parabrahma blessed Unnikkoran with his presence by appearing in front of him in the form of a Bull. The Brahmin bowed before Unnikkoran apologized for not believing him and requested to take him as Unnikkoran's disciple. Unnikkoran became a true devotee of Lord Parabrahma and worshiped him along with the saint.

The place where Unnikkoran showed the bull to the saint became the renowned groove "Undikkaav". Later two banyan grooves were constructed in the premise for shade as well as an abstract form for worship. Various small structures rose to provide shelter to the weary wanderers. Today the Oachira Parabrahma temple resides as a symbol of worship of the Supreme with prime importance to bulls in honor of the bull form that appeared to Unnikkoran. The temple premise also includes the Yakshikkaav where a Yakshi "female nymph form" has

11

been believed to have dwelt nailed into a tree.¹⁴

Similarly, there is a myth which is quite similar to the legend of Unnikkoran.

That is the myth of Akavoor Chathan. The story is mentioned in the 'Aithihyamala' it is the collection of folklores of Kerala. Almost as same as the Unnikkoran's. in this myth a servet of the Namboothiri asks the same question about who he visualize when he worships the god, or what the god looks like. The Namboothiri replies that the god, Lord Parabrahma, is in the form of Madan Pothu, a buffalo. With the same context as Unnikkoran's, Akavoor Chathan starts to worship the god by visualizing the Madan Pothu. Later, Para Bramham was so pleased with Chathan's innocence and sincerity that he appeared in front of him in the form of a Madan Pothu. There is an assumption that the place where the buffalo appeared in front of Chathan is today's Oachira temple.

But at the same time the story is quite different as the place of Akavoor Chathan is said to be in the banks of Periyar river, Vellarapilly, in the district of Ernakulam. And the story is different as it is about Madan Pothu and not a Kaala, as Oachira temple is mainly about the Kaala, the mount of Lord Shiva. The story of Akavoor Chathan is not that well known as well as the connection to the origin of the temple is not that valid. The story of Unnikkoran is much more known and believed, even said by the temple authorities.

There are numerous stories and convictions regarding how this place got the name Ochira. Some people believed that the place name came from the phrase Omkarachira Some accepted that the name is began from the name Oymanchira. According to mythology the name arrives from powerful believed the name derived from Uvachanchira as Uvachan means Lord Siva.

Param Bramham is the mythical God of Ochira temple and conspicuously the name of the location is understood by the religious persons founded on the furthest power. The interpretation: 'Om' is the representation of Parambrahmam the god of all gods. The phrase 'Chira' means part of the land. These two words blended together 'Om Chira' intended the 'land of Param brahman'. Om Chira became Ochira throughout the course of time. The factual origin of this name is that there was a large reservoir at the center of the large ground

¹⁴“Article on Oachira Temple from Temple Purohit website https://www.templepurohit.com/hindu-temple/oachira-parabrahma-temple/#google_vignette”

called Padanilam. This Chira was used by the soldiers in olden days for bathing and for delivering water to the horses utilized in the conflict exercises.

Chira might have been renowned in olden days as Onattuchira, as the location belonged to the Kayamkulam Raja who was also called the Odanattu Raja or easily Onattu Rajah. Therefore, it is acknowledged that the phrase Onattuchira was step-by-step acknowledged as the location name and as time passed by further, that word was corrupted into Ochira.¹⁵

During the reign of Marthanda Varma, the ruler of Venad, tried to build a temple in Oachira. But it was rejected as it was against their whole principle; a temple without idol worship nor covered structures. So, the king builds two Aalthara; platform around a Banyan tree, instead of a shrine.

The bull is of great importance there, not only because of the legend about its origin but also its relation to Nandi, also known as Nandideva, the vahana(mount) of Lord Shiva. He is also the guardian deity of Kailash, the abode of Lord Shiva. A lot of rituals, practices, and festivals of Oachira are related to Kaala like Oachira KaalaKettu or Kala vela and Ettukandam Urulicha.

There is an assumption that Buddhism was also practiced and encouraged in Oachira during earlier times. As there is no idol worshipping in Oachira and beliefs in the Universal consciousness, it is a great relation to Buddhism. It is presumed that years ago Oachira temple, near the Aalthara, used to be the center of Buddhist monasteries. the region of Ochira has a rich history of cultural exchange and interaction between various religious traditions, including Hinduism and Buddhism. Historically, Kerala has been a region where Buddhism had a significant presence during ancient times. There are several historical and archaeological sites in Kerala that are associated with Buddhism, indicating the influence of Buddhism in the region.

The town of Ochira itself has been a center of diverse cultural and religious interactions, and it is possible that there were interactions between Buddhism and the local traditions in Ochira. While the Ochira Parabrahma temple is a Hindu place of worship, the broader historical context of Ochira may reflect the interplay between different religious traditions, including Buddhism. It's important to recognize that while there may be historical connections or influences, the Ochira Parabrahma temple itself is a Hindu temple dedicated to Parabrahma, and its rituals and practices are rooted in Hinduism.

¹⁵ “Article by KeralaOnline.In website- <https://www.keralaonline.in/city-guide/ochira-temple>”

The main feature of the temple is its relation to Lord Parashurama and the Kaala. Another important feature is the worship of Lord Shiva.

Then it is the Gopuram at the entrance of the temple. The Fifty feet high Gopurams(tower), at the entrance of the temple, is one of the main attractions of Oachira. These towers, gopurams are carved with various sculptures concerning ancient Hindu traditions and art. The origin or when these gopurams were constructed is still unknown. West Nada, East Nada, Theerthakkulam or sacred pond, Ondikkavu, Mahalakshmi Temple, Ayyappa Temple and Ganapathi temple are the spots of worship at Ochira temple.¹⁶

OACHIRA TEMPLE IN RELATION TO NATURE

Oachira temple is unique as it does not have a traditional structure or deity. Instead, it is dedicated to the concept of Parabrahma, the formless supreme cosmic spirit in Hindu philosophy. The temple is structured as an open-air premises which is considered sacred, and it does not have a formal idol or sanctum sanctorum. The focus of worship at the Ochira Temple is on this formless, all-pervading divine energy rather than on specific deities or manifestations. Oachira temple is unique as it does not have a traditional structure or deity. Instead, it is dedicated to the concept of Parabrahma, the formless supreme cosmic spirit in Hindu philosophy. The temple is structured as an open-air premises which is considered sacred, and it does not have a formal idol or sanctum sanctorum. The focus of worship at the Ochira Temple is on this formless, all-pervading divine energy rather than on specific deities or manifestations. The temple's unique characteristic lies in its dedication to the worship of the formless divine energy known as Parabrahma. This concept represents the ultimate reality in Hindu philosophy, transcending specific forms or manifestations. The temple's emphasis on this abstract and universal concept sets it apart from many other Hindu temples, making it a place of spiritual significance for those seeking to connect with the formless essence of the divine.

¹⁶ “Article from Ishta Devata website- <https://www.ishtadevata.com/temple/oachira-temple-kollam-kollam/>”

One of the most important aspects of the temple is its relation to nature. The temple complex is spread over a large area and is surrounded by natural elements such as trees, ponds, and open spaces. There are mainly two ponds in the temple which is preserved and taken care of. The temple is situated in a unique and spiritually significant place that harmoniously blends with the natural beauty of its surroundings. Nestled amidst lush greenery, tranquil backwaters, and swaying coconut palms, the temple provides a serene and peaceful setting for spiritual contemplation and worship. The temple has an open structure with close relation to nature and its environment.

The temple's tradition is to worship the Banyan Trees, the Altharas. The devotees worship the various deities under these Altharas. Each Althara is centered around the worship of one particular god, temple is said to be founded by Lord Parabrahma and the presiding deity being Lord Shiva. These Banyan Trees are preserved and protected by building fortification around it. The presence of this sacred grove reflects the temple's commitment to environmental conservation and its emphasis on the sanctity of nature.

The natural surroundings of the temple further enhance its spiritual ambiance. The tranquil backwaters, verdant paddy fields, and gentle hills create an atmosphere of tranquillity and serenity, conducive to meditation and introspection. Visitors to the temple can experience a sense of oneness with nature, as they immerse themselves in the beauty and tranquillity of the surroundings while contemplating the formless divine energy that the temple venerates. The worship of the Kaala's in the temple speaks for its relation to nature. The Kaala represents Lord Parabrahma, who is considered the universal consciousness, which has a connection to the universe and its nature. The festivals and rituals of the temple is centered around nature and its environment, quite different from other temples. Festivals like Oachira Kali is one of such tradition whose rituals are centered around the temple surrounding. The martial art mock fight which is the main highlight of Oachira Kaali is conducted in the Padanilam, a paddy field adjacent to the temple.

Another such tradition is the Ettukandam Urulicha, it is the ritual where decorated bulls are taken out on a procession around the two banyan trees in the Temple premise with Nadaswaram. Nerchakala is another custom followed there. As cited in the Kerala District Gazetteers: Quilon Supplement - 'Nerchakalas (bulls received as-offering) are received here from all parts of the state. The amount realised through the sale of these bulls constitutes one

of the major items of income of this temple.’¹⁷

The Ochira Temple stands as a testament to the harmonious coexistence of spirituality and nature. Its dedication to the formless divine energy and its serene natural surroundings creates an environment that is both spiritually uplifting and aesthetically pleasing. For those seeking a place of spiritual solace amidst the tranquillity of nature, the Ochira Temple offers a unique and enriching experience.

The Ochira Temple's close connection to nature and its environment reflects the broader philosophy of Hinduism, which emphasizes the interconnectedness of all living beings and the importance of living in harmony with nature. The temple serves as a reminder of the need to protect and preserve the natural world, and it promotes environmental awareness and conservation efforts among its devotees.

¹⁷“C K Kareem, Kerala District Gazetteers: Quilon Supplement, Trivandrum, Government Press-Publisher, pg. no:36”

CHAPTER 3

RITUALS AND FESTIVALS

Festivals:

Oachira temple is well known for its festivals attracting thousands of pilgrimages yearly. The festivals are dedicated to the deity Parabrahma, symbolizing the unity of different communities and castes. These festivals also attract visitors from all over, contributing to the local economy and promoting tourism. Overall, they play a vital role in preserving and showcasing the region's rich heritage. The main festivals of the temple are, OachiraKali, Panthrandu Vilakku, Erupethettam Onam, and Oachira KaalaKettu.

OACHIRA KALI

Oachira temple is known for this festival which attracts thousands of pilgrims each year. Oachira Kali is an annual festival, celebrated each year on the first and second date of Mithunam, the Malayala masam(month), according to the Malayalam calendar. That is during the middle of June, according to the English calendar. During the festival, participants form groups and engage in mock battles, showcasing their skills in traditional martial arts like Kalaripayattu. The atmosphere is electrifying, with drums beating, colorful costumes, and energetic performances. It's a thrilling spectacle that attracts both locals and tourists alike.

It is a mock fight between two groups of people conducted in Padanilam. Oachira Kali is considered an essential and ancient form of martial art and is believed to have been created by Arjuna in the Mahabharata. Oachira Kali involves two teams of men armed with wooden sticks and shields who engage in mock battles. Oachira Kali is believed to represent the cosmic struggle between good and evil, and it serves as a reminder for us to always choose the path of righteousness. Oachira Kali is celebrated with great vigor and enthusiasm by the devotees of Oachira Parabrahma Temple.¹⁸

¹⁸“Article about Oachira temple published on the website- https://www.theecbnews.com/oachira-temple-is-one-of-the-oldest-temples-in-india/#google_vignette”

It was more popularized during the reign of Kayamkulam Raja. During the month of Mithunam, the Raja of Kayamkulam and the Raja of Kollam participate in this fight. It is said that for Kayamkulam, Marthanda Varma, the ruler of Travancore, and the ruler of Kayamkulam battled against each other. So, there is an assumption that Oachira Kali is conducted each year to commemorate this historic battle. Citing from the Malabar Quarterly Review mentioned in the book History of Kerala Vol IV.

“Only Nair’s could take part in it; of course, it is not open to women. It is now conducted on the first and the second days of Mithunam (June— July). For seven days beginning with the first, it is popularly believed that there will be incessant rain. On the first day the fight is conducted from 8 a. m. to 11 a. m. and on the second from 12 to 3 p. m. The appearance of a kite hovering in the air summons the players to arms. But in these ‘degenerate days’, no such divine approval is shown. Each player is well dressed in the native fashion and armed with the apology of a sword and a shield. The combatants do not fight in pairs, but in sets. The parties advance towards each other; they perform a number of movements, forwards and backwards, commencing with a single individual on each side. The movements are first slow, but they become quicker and quicker. These resemble the movements of assault and retreat in regular warfare. The kite appears again and this time it is the signal for the tournament to stop. The same programme is repeated on the second day. Stones were thrown from slings to the detriment of public peace.”¹⁹

Before the start of the Oachira Kali, the presiding deity in the temple, Lord Shiva is taken out in a procession on the Vrishabha Vahana. The warriors that are participating in the ritual follow the procession. The procession ends on the field where the mock fight and the display of Kalaripayattu take place.²⁰

The people or participants of Oachira Kali, this battle will participate this war game, kali,

¹⁹“History of Kerala by K. P. Padmanabha Menon cited from the Malabar Quarterly Review Vol IV 1937”

²⁰“Article about Oachira Kali published on Hindu blog website, Oachira Kali in Kerala – Oachira Temple Festival Near Kayamkulam, website-<https://www.hindu-blog.com/2010/06/oachira-kali.html>”

accompanying their Kali aashan, the war leaders, take place in the temple ground, the Padanilam. According to the traditions they stand in the east and west side of the ground. With the blessing of Lord Parabrahma, the warriors enter the Ettukandam, the exact meaning being eight fields, but according to the Hindu mythology it represents the eight directions of the universe, known as the Guardians of the Directions. The war game was conducted in the ettukandam, where the warriors battled in knee depth water.

Many people from various places visited Oachira to witness this. Later the system of using actual swords and weapons were stopped, changing the battle into much more peaceful mock fight between two parties by the Travancore govt and changed this to a festival. The winners will be honoured with rewards for their victory. Along with this festival, various fairs and shops were also held by merchants from Kochi and Travancore. Cattle shows was also held during the earlier times. A lot of people travel from far distance came to Oachira to watch this battle or mock fight. This festival is still celebrated with great vigour even now attracting thousands of people each year.

The festival is significant for its historical and cultural importance, as it is believed to have originated from the martial traditions of the region. Ochira Kali serves as a living testament to the martial heritage of Kerala and is an important part of the local identity and folklore. Overall, Ochira Kali is a vibrant and dynamic festival that celebrates martial arts, folk culture, and community spirit, making it a truly unique and captivating event in the cultural landscape of Kerala.

ERUPATHETTAM ONAM

Erupethettam Onam is annual cattle festival celebrated in Oachira temple. This festival falls in Malayalam month, Kanni Maasam. That is during the month of September-October. Erupethettam means twenty-eight, Onam is an annual harvest festival celebrated all over Kerala. So, literally it means the twenty-eighth day Onam Festival. The Onam festival falls in Chingam, month according to Malayalam calendar, that is during the month of August-September. The Erupethettam Onam is celebrated twenty-eight days after Onam, that is after Thiruvonam. It is considered as the festival of bulls, celebration of cattle's and agriculture. Thousands of

people visit Oachira temple and gather around the Oachira Padanilam to witness the spectacles and various activities performed in regards to the festival. Various stalls and other cultural performances are held during this festival.

During Erupethettam Onam, the temple grounds come alive with vibrant cultural performances, traditional rituals, and various forms of entertainment. The festival typically features colourful processions, folk dances, music, and other artistic expressions that showcase Kerala's rich cultural heritage. These festivities create a lively and joyous atmosphere, filling the temple premises with the spirit of celebration.

The most important tradition of this festival is the Kala Kettu procession. The Kala Kettu, also known as Kaala Vela and Kettu Kazhcha, is a procession of large structures of bulls framed by wood, hays and clothing materials, which is kept on a giant wheeled platform, which is known as Ranam, wooden carriages which are pulled by people. The structures are huge, some up to the height of fifty-two feet. And these structured as called as Eduppu Kaala. Usually this procession is at noon, held at the Oachira Padanilam, where thousands of people would be present to witness this.

These Eduppu Kala represents the Lord Nandhi, the bull, Lord Shiva's vehicle. It is quite significant festival as the bull is an importance figure of Oachira Temple. These huge figures are twin structures, that is there will be two bulls in one Ranam. In earlier times Kayamkulam, was known as Onattukara, which has sub-divisions known as Karas. These Eduppu Kalas are presented by each of these Karas.

During the festival people representing the 52 karas (land sub- divisions) under the 'Onattukara' area bring these huge effigies to the temple premises in a procession with the accompaniment of rhythmic drums and music. These decorated bulls that adorn the temple premises are in fact a ritualistic offering by the devotees to their beloved Lord in the form of a magnificent visual display called Kettukazhcha.²¹ The origin of this festival is unknown, this has been celebrated for many years now annually with great vigour and enthusiasm by the locals as well as by others. This festival also helps the local shops with better sales and more support for the temple.

²¹“Article about Oachira Kalakettu on official Kerala Tourism website, Ochira Kalakettu – A Spectacle to Behold, <https://www.keralatourism.org/kerala-article/2018/ochira-kalakettu/842> ”

PANTHRADU VILAKKU

Vrishchikolsavam or Panthrandu Vilakku is an annual fest held in Oachira temple during the month of Vrishchikam (Vrischigom), a month according to the Malayalam calendar. That is during the month of November every year. On the starting of November, the month Vrishchikam is started with lightning the lamps in and around the temple premises, for continuous twelve days. It is believed that lighting these lamps brings blessings, prosperity, and good fortune to the devotees. The festival also promotes unity and equality among people, as it is open to everyone regardless of caste and creed.

The lighting of the twelve lamps is associated with various legends and stories from Hindu mythology and is believed to be a form of worship and offering to the presiding deity of the temple. The ritual is performed with great devotion and is accompanied by prayers, hymns, and other religious observances.

The exact historical origins of the 12th Lamp Festival are not precisely documented, but it is believed to have been celebrated for centuries. The festival likely has its roots in ancient Hindu practices and has been passed down through generations as a sacred tradition. Over time, it has evolved into a grand event that holds immense spiritual and cultural significance for the local community and beyond.

The Oachira Panthrandu Vilakku is a time when the temple comes alive with spiritual fervour and is often accompanied by various cultural and traditional performances, including music, dance, and other forms of artistic expression. It is a time of celebration and reverence, attracting devotees and visitors who come to witness and participate in the sacred rituals and festivities. The lighting of lamps, both inside the temple and around its premises, is a central part of the festival. The sight of thousands of flickering oil lamps creates a breathtaking spectacle that is deeply symbolic in Hindu tradition.

Pilgrims drawn from all parts of the state, some of them with their families set up small hutments with palm leaves on the Padanilam and observe fast, remaining in these huts for days together in meditation. The rich and the poor alike forget their differences for the time being and spend the days in these huts in meditation. Among the devotees coming for worship on these days, a good majority are ladies. During these days, Oachira will practically look like a small town.

It is during this period that the Hindu religious convention, attended by great theologians and learned speakers, is held here.²²

Overall, the Oachira Panthrandu Vilakku is an important religious and cultural event that showcases the rich traditions and spiritual heritage of the Oachira Parabrahma Temple. The 12th Lamp Festival of the Oachira Temple is a time of spiritual significance, cultural celebration, and communal harmony. It not only strengthens the bond between the devotees and their faith but also showcases the rich traditions and customs that have been preserved for generations. The festival is a vibrant expression of religious devotion and cultural identity, making it a cherished event for all who participates.

Rituals and Practices:

Parabrahma Temple is known for its aspect of not have any practice of idol worship. he temple is known for its inclusive nature, welcoming people from all religions and beliefs to participate in its rituals and festivals. This openness and unique approach to worship make the Oachira temple a significant cultural and spiritual landmark in Kerala. Regardless, there are a few unique rituals practiced there. The most important ritual is the Ettukandam Urulichcha. It is a Procession held around two Altharas of the temple with decorated bulls and Nadaswaram, it is a double reed wind traditional classical instrument, and can be offered by any devotees. It is one of the most important rituals practiced there.

The ritual of offering sculptures for the better health of the devotee is another unique tradition of Oachira temple. Sculptures of legs and hands are made with mud or wood and it is placed in the foot of these banyan trees, playing for a betterment of the person whom it is prayed for. The ritual is made when an ailment or an injury occurs to a person, then the sculpture is made according to where the trauma is situated. The offerings are made for the cure of these ailments of this person.

²²“C K Kareem, Kerala District Gazetteers: Quilon Supplement, Trivandrum, Government Press-Publisher, pg. no:36”

Nerchakalas (bulls received as-offering) are received here from all parts of the state. The amount realised through the sale of these bulls constitutes one of the major items of income of this temple.²³

Another significant practice followed there is the Kudil Kettu. When a person is distressed, injured or not well, people build huts in the temple ground and stay there. The Kudil or the hut will be created by the person and stays in that hut for about seven days or so and pray for their betterment. It is a practice followed from a long time; the origin of this tradition is unknown. It is usually seen during the time of Kettukazhcha and other important festivals. The duration can vary, but it is common for some devotees to stay in these huts for several days, often up to a week, as part of their religious observance and devotion. The custom of living in huts during this festival is a deeply rooted tradition and is believed to be a way for devotees to demonstrate their commitment and dedication to the deity. It is also seen as a form of penance and spiritual purification.

In the context of injuries, the beliefs and practices at the Ochira temple may be influenced by the broader Hindu religious and cultural traditions prevalent in Kerala. In Hinduism, there are various rituals and prayers associated with healing and protection from harm. Devotees may seek blessings and divine intervention to aid in recovery from injuries or to prevent accidents. It's important to note that specific beliefs and practices related to injuries at the Ochira temple may vary among individuals and families. Some people may seek spiritual solace through prayers and offerings, while others may turn to traditional healing practices or seek the guidance of temple priests.

Overall, the Ochira temple, with its distinctive customs and open-air worship, may provide a setting for devotees to seek spiritual support and healing in the face of injuries or accidents.

²³“C K Kareem, Kerala District Gazetteers: Quilon Supplement, Trivandrum, Government Press-Publisher, pg. no:36”

The practice of living in huts during this festival is a deeply rooted tradition and is believed to be a way for devotees to demonstrate their commitment and dedication to the deity. It is also seen as a form of penance and spiritual purification.

Another distinctive tradition of the temple is the offering of mud as the Prasadam. The literal meaning of Prasadam is sacred food, it is the religious offering in Hinduism. It is considered as gracious gift, since Prasadam is regarded as being blessed by the divine being. It is the only temple which give mud as an offering. The mud is considered holy, it is believed that the mud consists of medicinal values. It is even said that if a person is injured, he can apply this holy mud on the wounds or the ailments and can be cured. There is no factual evidence regarding this practise nor it is yet discovered how or when this ritual came into existence. The practice of providing Annadanam in the temple is one of the most important traditions of the temple. Annadanam is the practice of providing free meals to everyone regardless of once

caste, gender, religion or social status, the free meal is provided to all equally. The practice of Annadanam is done in a structure or a building called Ootupura. Everyday Annadanam is provided. Around 9:00am Kanji, the rice porridge will be provided, and at noon meals will be provided. This can also be an offering done by people as a Vazhipadu, known as Nercha Sadhya. Devotees have food from here when they visit the temple, and others, as it is open to everyone. The practice of Annadanam is mentioned in the Kerala District Gazetteers: Quilon Supplement, i.e.

‘Another one is the distribution of kanji (rice-gruel) to the poor and hungry. On these occasions when kanji is distributed beggars will flock in thousands between the two temples. Yet another important item of offering received here is the various articles distributed to these beggars as alms. This will include articles like salt, betel leaves, rice, pappadam etc.’²⁴

Oachira Temple is known for its inclusive and open atmosphere. The temple premises are open to all, and it is not uncommon for homeless people or those in need to seek refuge or assistance at the temple. The temple's philosophy of inclusivity and compassion aligns with the broader Hindu tradition of seva (selfless service) and caring for those in need. The inclusive nature of

²⁴“C K Kareem, Kerala District Gazetteers: Quilon Supplement, Trivandrum, Government Press-Publisher, pg. no:36”

the Ochira temple is deeply rooted in its philosophy. The temple does not discriminate based on caste, creed, or social status, and people from all walks of life are welcome to visit and participate in its activities. This open approach has made the temple a place where people in need can seek refuge and assistance without facing judgment or discrimination. Devotees and volunteers at the Ochira temple may offer food, shelter, or other forms of assistance to homeless individuals who come to the temple seeking help. Additionally, the temple may organize charitable activities such as free meal distributions or other forms of support for the less fortunate.

The temple's dedication to the concept of Parabrahma, the supreme cosmic spirit, may inspire devotees to practice compassion and service towards others, including those who are homeless or in need. This reflects the broader Hindu principle of dharma, which emphasizes moral and ethical responsibilities, including caring for the less fortunate. The Ochira temple's ethos of inclusivity and service aligns with the broader Hindu tradition of caring for the less fortunate and practicing compassion towards all beings. It serves as a reminder of the universal values of kindness, empathy, and support for those who are marginalized or in need. Now there are various shelters who take on these homeless people and donations are made by the temple to these trusts and shelter.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

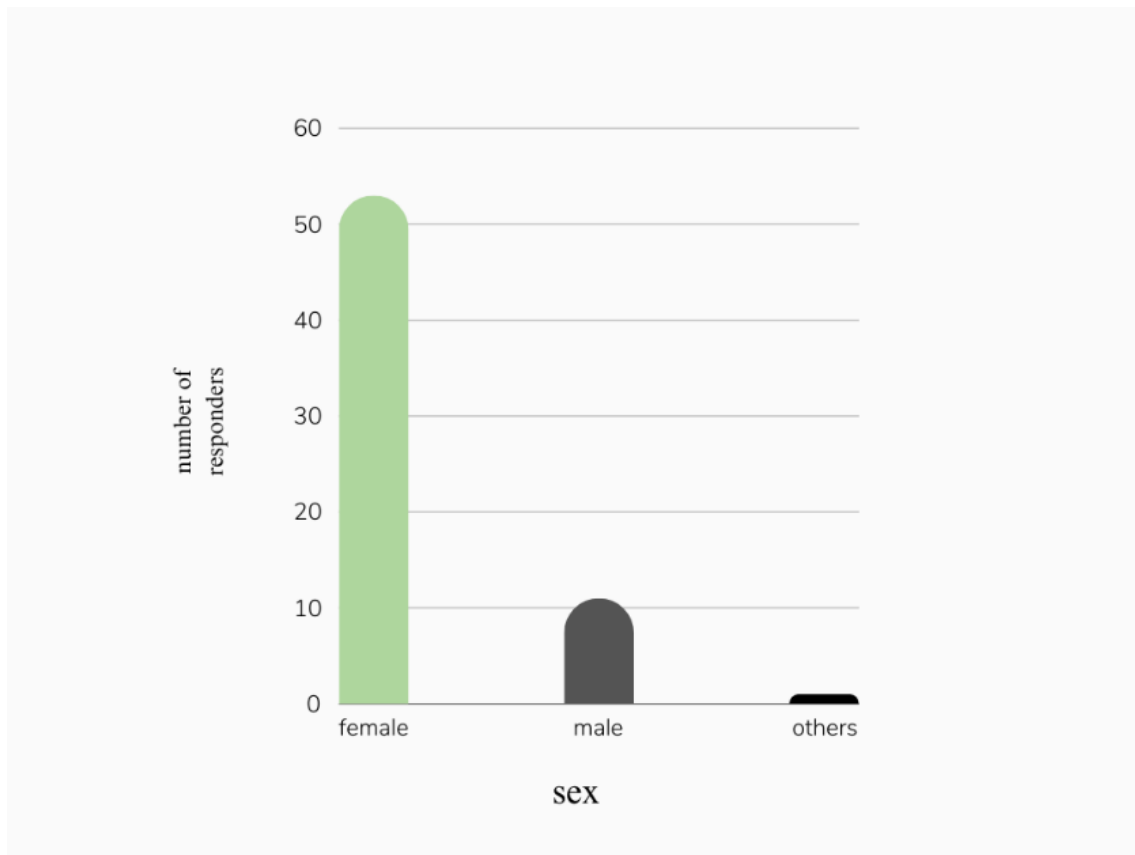
The analysis and the interpretation of the data's collected were done thoroughly to form an relevant conclusion.

TABLE 1: Responds based of sex.

SEX	NO: OF RESPONDENTS
Male	11
Female	53
Others	0
Total	64

The table one shows the response got from the survey that was circulated. It is to the understand the number of male and female responses to the survey. The Figure 1 below will show the graph of the above-mentioned table. The table includes the number of Male responses, that is 11. The number of female responses, that is 56 and the others that is 0. The total number of responses is 64.

FIGURE 1: Responses to the survey circulated.



The above shown figure is the graphical representation or the graph of the Female, Male and other responses to the survey conducted. The Female responses being the highest, that is 53, Male 11 ad others 0, the total responses being 64.

TABLE 2: Public knowledge about Oachira Temple.

PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE	NO: OF RESPONSES	PERCENTAGE OF RESPONSES
No: of people who know about Oachira Temple	46	71.9%
No: of people who know about Oachira Temple	18	28.1%
Total	64	100%

The table represents the number of people who have heard about Oachira Temple. Out of 64 responses, 46 people have heard about the temple, where as the other 18 responses are the number of people who do not know about Oachira Temple. For the better understanding about this, a pie chart is presented below.

FIGURE 2: Public knowledge about Oachira Temple.

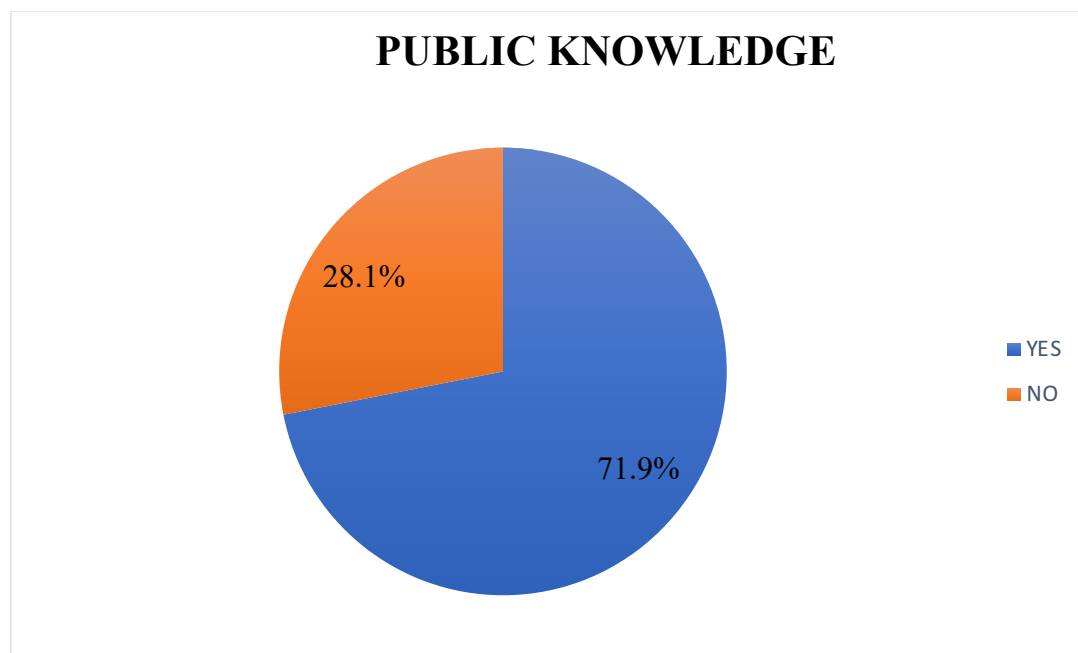


TABLE 3: Public visit to Oachira Temple.

VISIT TO OACHIRA TEMPLE	NO: OF RESPONSES	PERCENTAGE OF RESPONSES
People who have visited Oachira Temple	21	32.8%
People who have not yet visited Oachira Temple	53	67.2%
Total	64	100%

The table represents the number of people who have visited Oachira temple. Out of 64 responses, 21 individuals have visited the temple, remaining 53 individuals have not yet visited Oachira Temple. For the better understanding of this, a pie chart is presented below.

FIGURE 3: Public visit to Oachira Temple.

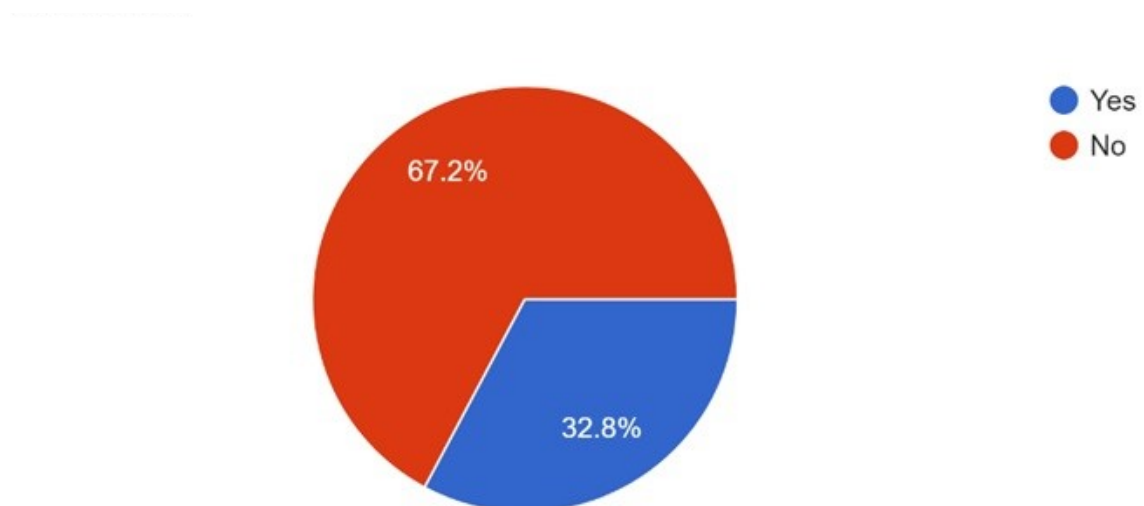


TABLE 4: Purpose of visit to Oachira Temple.

PURPOSE OF VISIT	NUMBER OF RESPONSES	PERCENTAGE OF RESPONSES
Religious visit	15	37.5%
Tourist visit	12	30%
Research	13	32,5%
Total	40	100%

The above-mentioned table shows the data of the purpose of individuals visit to Ochira Temple. Toal 40 responses were given. Out of which, 15 individuals visited the temple for religious purpose, 12 individuals visit for tourism purpose and the remaining individuals visit for research propose. A pie chart is presented bellow for the better understanding of the content.

FIGURE 4: Purpose of visit to Oachira Temple.

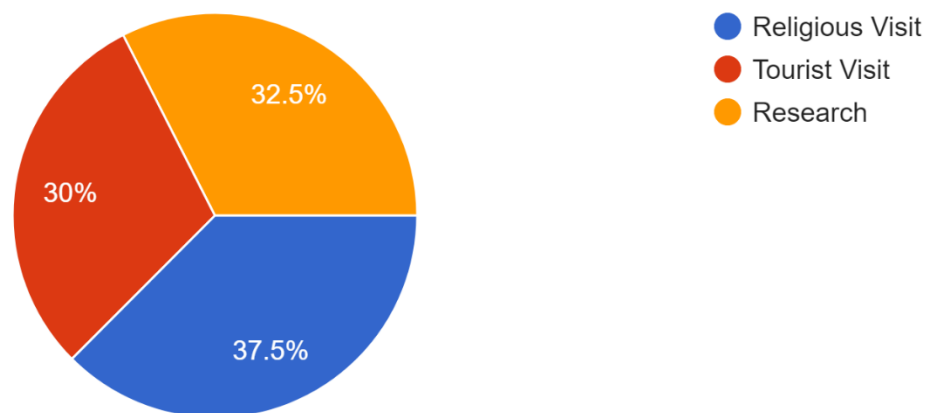


TABLE 5: Public knowledge about history of Oachira Temple.

PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE	NUMBER OF RESPONSES	PERCENTAGE OF RESPONSES
No: of individuals who know about the history of the temple.	18	28.1%
No: of people who don't know about the history of the temple	46	71.9%
Total	64	100%

The above presented table shows the data about the public knowledge of individuals about the history of Oachira Temple. With a total response of 64, out of which, 18 individuals are aware about the history of the temple. And the remaining 46 individuals does not know about the history of Oachira Temple. The below presented pie chart is for the better understanding about the responses give.

FIGURE 5: Public knowledge about the history of Oachira Temple.

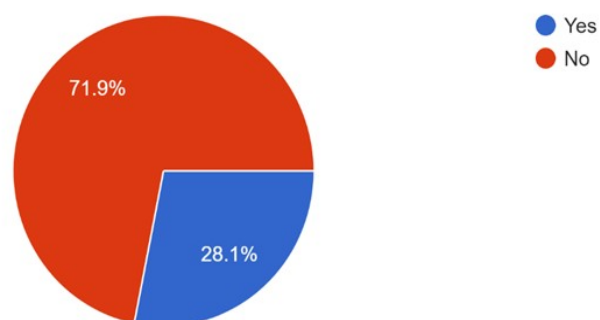


TABLE 6: Sources of knowledge about the history of Oachira Temple.

SOURCES	NUMBER OF RESPONSES	PERCENTAGE OF RESPONSES
Books	5	13.5%
Websites	5	13.5%
Newspapers	2	5.5%
Oral history	10	27%
Others	15	40.5%
Total	37	100%

The table shows the detailed information about the various sources from which the respondents got the information about the history of Oachira Temple. Total 37 responses were there, out of which 5 sources were books, 5 sources from websites, 2 source from newspapers, 10 sources from oral history and the remaining 15 from other sources. The below presented pie chart is for the better understanding about the content.

FIGURE 6: Sources of knowledge about the history of Oachira Temple.

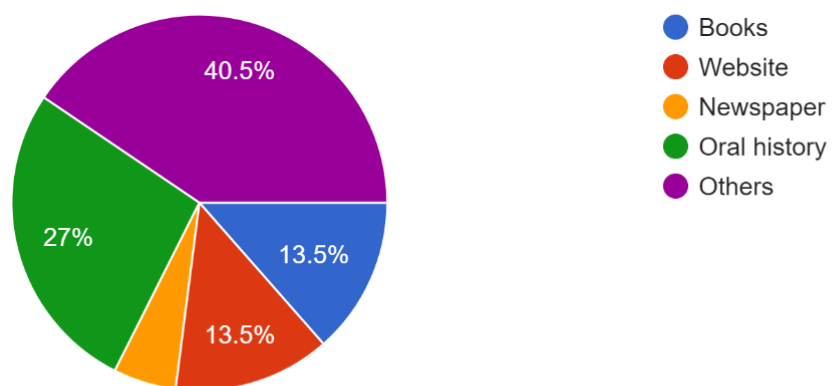


TABLE 7: Public knowledge about the festivals of Oachira Temple.

FESTIVALS	NUMBER OF RESPONSES	PERCENTAGE OF RESPONSES
Oachira kali	5	11.1%
Kaala Kettu	11	17.5%
Irupathettam Onam	10	15.9%
None of the above	35	55.5
Total	63	100%

The above mentioned table is about the public knowledge about the festivals of Oachira Temple. There was a tota of 63 responses, out of which 5 individuals know about Oachira Kaali festival, 11 people know about the Kaala Kettu festival, 10 people know about Irupathettam Onam and remaining 35 individuals don't know about the metioned festivals of Oachira temple. For the better understanding about the content, a pie chart is presented below.

FIGURE 7: Public knowledge about the festivals of Oachira Temple.

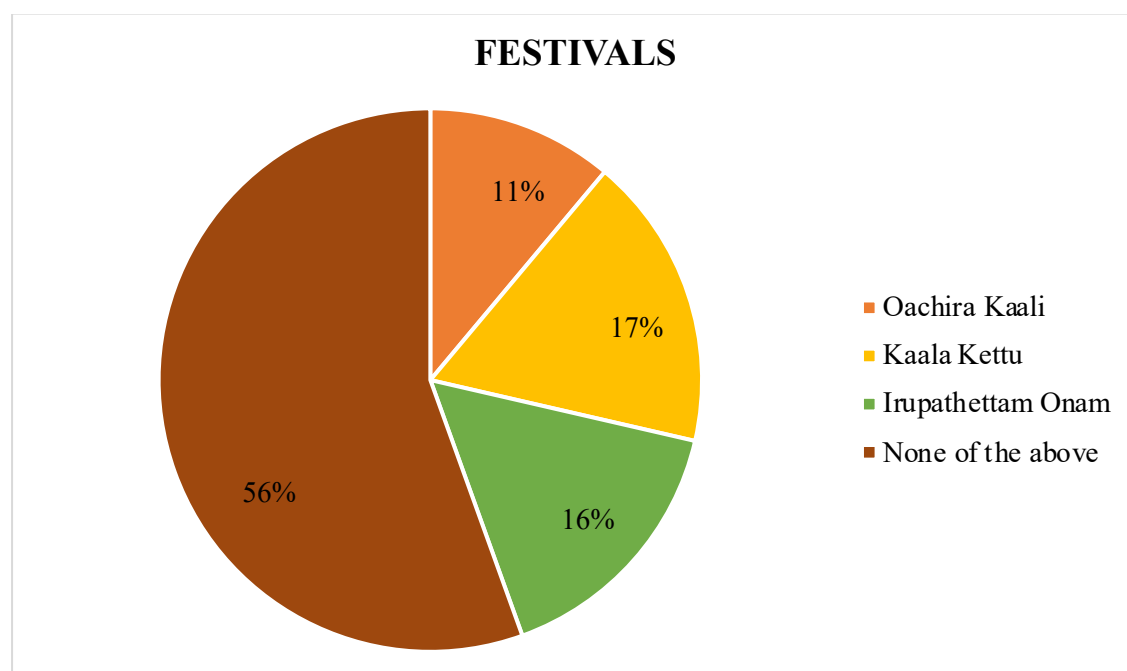


TABLE 8: Public knowledge about presiding deity of Oachira Temple.

PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE	NUMBER OF RESPONSES	PERCENTAGE OF RESPONSES
Individuals who know about the presiding deity of the temple.	24	37.5%
Individuals who don't know about the presiding deity of the temple.	40	62.5%
Total	64	100%

The above presented table shows the public awareness about the presiding deity of Oachira temple. With a total of 64 responses, 24 individuals know who is the presiding deity is, and the remaining 40 doesn't know who is the presiding deity of Oachira Temple. The pie chart presented below is for the better understanding about this.

FIGURE 8: Public knowledge about presiding deity of Oachira Temple.

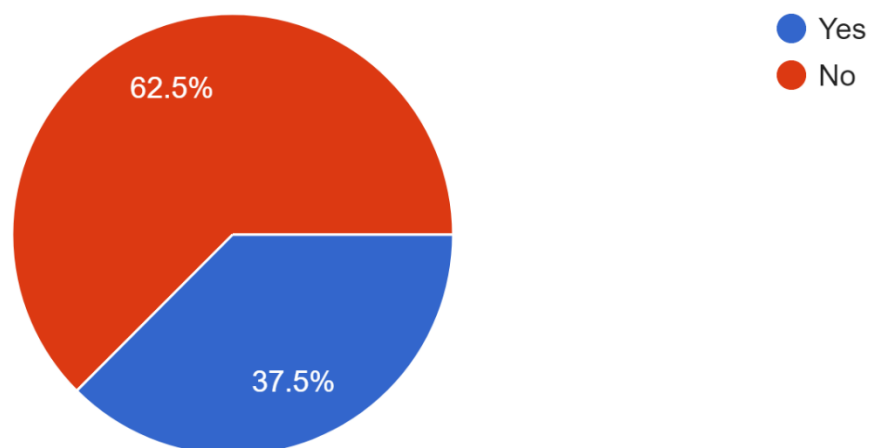


TABLE 9: Public recommendation about the importance of knowing the historical values of ochira temple for coming generation.

PUBLIC RECOMMENDATIONS	NUMBER OF RESPONSES	PERCENTAGE OF RESPONSES
Individuals who agreed that the coming generation should be aware of the historical value of the temple.	55	91.7%
Individuals who does not agreed that the coming generation should be aware of the historical value of the temple.	5	8.3%
Total	60	100%

A total of 60 responses were there regarding the importance of knowing the historical values of the temple. Out of which, 55 responses were individuals agreeing that it is important for the coming generation to aware about the historical value of the temple. The remaining responded that it is not important. The below presented pie chart is for the better understanding about the responses give.

FIGURE 9: Public recommendation about the importance of knowing the historical values of ochira temple for coming generation.

