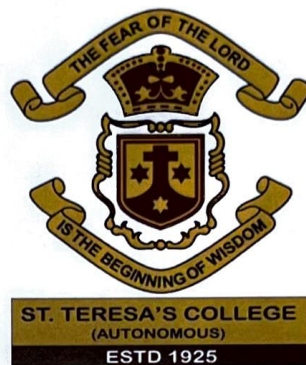


GOTHURUTH: A HAVEN OF PORTUGUESE CULTURAL HERITAGE

A project submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of a B.A. Degree
in History St. Teresa's College (Autonomous), Ernakulam
Affiliated to Mahatma Gandhi University Kottayam



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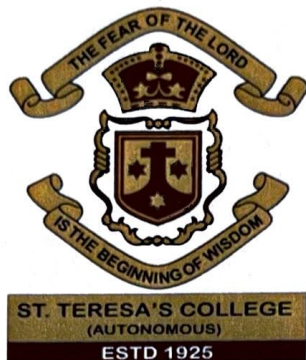
DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

ST. TERESA'S COLLEGE (AUTONOMOUS). ERNAKULAM

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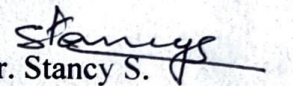
Verified by
22/3/24
Dr. Gracey K S.

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the project titled "Gothuruth: A Haven of Portuguese Cultural Heritage" 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 with 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.


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DECLARATION

We hereby declare that this project titled "Gothuruth: A Haven of Portuguese Cultural Heritage" is an original work done by us under the guidance of Dr. Stancy S, Head of the Department, 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

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Finally, we express our sincere thanks to our families, friends, and classmates for their unwavering support throughout the entire process of completing this project.

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CHAPTER- 1

INTRODUCTION

The conquest of Constantinople by the Seljuk Turks in 1453 not only an incident which marked the fall of Roman empire, it also reshaped global history. With this, the Seljuks got control of the Silk route, they imposed high taxes on European merchants, the virtual monopoly over pepper established by them which was bound to work against the Europeans.¹ Constantinople, which served as Europe's gateway to the east almost closed down. Therefore, for the Europeans to discover a new route to the east was an unavoidable need. This marked the voyages of discovery.

In search of a route to India, with the papal investiture, travelers of the western countries set their sails. Kings, Queens and Popes of Europe encouraged these travels by financially supporting adventurers. These expeditions were driven not only by economic motives but also by political and religious inspirations. In 1488, Bartolomeu Dias, tasked with discovering the route to the southern end of Africa and searching for Prester John, rounded the Cape of Good Hope². His findings established the sea route between Europe and Asia.

In 1498, when Vasco da Gama set his foot on Kerala, "in search of Christians and spices".³ Following the Portuguese, the Dutch, the English, and the French navigated their ships to India. Driven by a desire to maximize profits, akin to their endeavours in other parts of the world, these nations eventually sought to establish their dominance by exploiting existing rivalries among local rulers. While the British held sway for the longest duration, the impact and legacy left by the Portuguese should not be neglected, since they were the pioneers.

In 1503, the grateful Raja of Cochin granted permission to the Portuguese to erect a fort at Cochin (Fort Manuel) to safeguard the interests of their factory, which became the first

¹ Satish Chandra, History of Medieval India, Orient Black Swan, 2007, p.154

² Ibid.p.155

³ Oliver J. Thatcher, ed., The Library of Original Sources (Milwaukee: University Research Extension Co., 1907), Vol. V: 9th to 16th Centuries, pp. 26- 40, <http://www1.udel.edu/History-old/figal/Hist104/assets/pdf/readings/01dagama.pdf>
accessed on 11 February 2024

European fort to be built in India. Cochin became the headquarters of the Portuguese with Fransisco d' Almeida as the first Viceroy of Portuguese possessions in the east. The Portuguese domination of Cochin came to an end with the Dutch capture of 1663.

The long period of Portuguese contact led to some results in political, economic and social fields⁴. The cultural contact with the Portuguese gave rise to so many changes that some of them remain. Gothuruth, a village island near Chennamangalam, in Ernakulam district, is one of the remaining places which keep the age-old Portuguese culture alive, even today.

Situated on the banks of Periyar, Gothuruth is a small island, known for its backwaters and scenic beauty. Gothuruth is located in the Paravoor Taluk of Ernakulam district, surrounded by Chendamangalam to the south, including Madaplathuruth, Koottukadu, Vadakkumpuram, and Chattedam, and bordered by Thuruthippuram and Kottapuram to the north. To the west, it is adjacent to Moothukunnam and Chettikkad, while Pazhambilli Thuruth and Cheriya Pazhambilli Thuruth lie to the east.⁵ It encompasses wards 1, 2, 17, and 18 of the Chendamangalam panchayat.

The Periyar River bifurcates in the eastern part of Gothuruth and reunites in Kottapuram. Gothuruth is accessible via the Gothuruth Bridge (connecting it to National Highway 66) and Kuryappilli bridge. This compact island spans an average length of 2.5 km and a width of 1 km.⁶

Gothuruth is situated on the outskirts of historically significant locations, with Kottapuram Fort and the town of Kodungallor close to this island. Events occurring in these nearby places had a direct impact on Gothuruth, contributing to its historical significance.

When the Portuguese came to Cochin in the 16th C, they built a fort at Kottappuram, near Gothuruth. Portuguese appointed rural folk of this village in their fort and houses to undertake menial jobs. They might have served the Portuguese in providing fish and other commodities. This contact had a lasting impact on the culture of this tiny island.

Subsequently, with the influx of Christian migrants, the island blossomed into a centre of cultural vitality, particularly known for the vibrant art form of Chavittunadakam- which

⁴A. Sreedhara Menon, A Survey of Kerala History. D.C. Books, 1967, p.188

⁵ Fr. Roopesh Micheal, Nattakam: Gothuruthinte Charithram, Samskaram, St. Sebastian's Church, Gothuruth, 2023, p.41

⁶ Ibid.

was formed as a result of Portuguese contact. The culinary tradition, particularly the wine and fish curries, also reflects the enduring influence of Portuguese heritage. By delving into the history of Gothuruth, this study aims to explore its cultural significance, particularly focusing on its roots in Portuguese contact.

This project is divided into four chapters. The first chapter consists of an introduction to the project topic and describes the objectives and methodology used for the project. The second chapter is about the historical background of Gothuruth. The third chapter is about the Portuguese history of Gothuruth and the influences of the Portuguese culture there. The final chapter exhibits the findings and conclusions drawn from this project.

Review of literature

This paper seeks to enhance our comprehension of the cultural heritage of Gothuruth. We utilized resources such as books, memorials, government publications, newspaper articles, research findings, notable landmarks, and general knowledge to explore its history.

Books such as *A Survey of Kerala History* by A Sreedhara Menon, *History of Kerala* by K. P Padmanabha Menon and *Malabar Manual* by William Logan helped greatly to understand the Portuguese history of Kerala. Sreedhara Menon's work gave a general understanding of the impact of the Portuguese rule in Kerala. *Cochin State Manual* by C. Achyutha Menon became very useful in studying the Cochin history and the Portuguese rule in Cochin. *Nattakam: Gothuruthinte Charithram* by Father Roopesh Michael became a key to unravel the untold stories of Gothuruth. We got information regarding the Villarvattom family from *Adiverukal* by Dr. John Ochanthuruth and about Paliyam family from *Paliyam Charithram* by Radhadevi Moochilott. *Sebeena Raphy- 101 Varshangal* edited by Titus Gothuruth served as an important source in understanding the contribution of Sabeena Raphy to the revival of Chavittunadakam in Gothuruth.

Other than these books research papers like *The Villarvettam Royal Family* by V.C. George, Chavittunadakam literature and performance by Vincent George etc. were reviewed while writing this paper. Upon reviewing these works, it's clear that there's a lack of detailed information about the history and cultural heritage of Gothuruth. The name Gothuruth is commonly mentioned only as a place in various writings, with important historians not

exploring its significance. Our goal is to provide a clearer understanding of this topic, potentially inspiring future research.

Objectives

When we discuss the arrival of alien powers, we often focus on the negative impacts of their rule and contact. However, it's important to recognize the positive changes brought about by foreigners through cultural interactions. This project aims to uncover such stories.

Advent of Europeans has brought many cultural changes in India. Among those powers it was Portuguese who came first. They played a key role in introducing European products and institutions. Cochin is a significant area showcasing Portuguese cultural influence. While Gothuruth wasn't directly governed by the Portuguese, it still exhibits a noticeable Portuguese cultural impact, especially in Chavittunadakam. This research work tries to trace such evident cultural heritage of Gothuruth.

Therefore, the objectives include,

- To locate the history of Gothuruth and its surroundings
- Explore the rulers and ruling families that held sway over Gothuruth
- Investigate the rise of Christianity as a predominant religion on the island
- To trace the living evidence of Portuguese influence in Gothuruth
- To find out how Chavittunadakam becomes a part of culture and life of the people of Gothuruth
- To analyse the present socio-cultural landscape of Gothuruth

Methodology

This project uses historical, analytical and descriptive research methods. The analytical aspect involves examining the history of Gothuruth and the prevailing Portuguese influence in this island.

Depending on primary, secondary and tertiary sources, this project tries to unravel the age-old history and culture of Gothuruth. Primary sources include interviews with Jeejo John Puthezhath (journalist, Malayala Manorama), Joy Gothuruth (historian and writer) and Asan Thampi Payyappilli (Chavittunadaka Artist).

Field visits to the island were undertaken for authentic data. Secondary sources include books from libraries, e-books, newspaper articles, and magazine reports. Valuable information was also obtained from research theses and online websites.

Limitations

The tale of Gothuruth remains an overlooked melody within historical records, often appearing merely as a place name in various works. This little piece of land isn't talked about much by big historians, which makes it hard to find written information about it. Consequently, research on Gothuruth relies on the formulation of hypotheses and assumptions guided by practical reasoning. A substantial portion of information about the island is gleaned from interviews with historians, writers, and local residents, though it is acknowledged that such interviews may carry subjective perspectives. Additionally, works such as *Paliyam Charithram* by Radhadevi Moochilott and *Manakkal Kudumbacharithram* edited by Sebastian Manakkal also reflected subjective viewpoints. Every effort has been made to validate such data through cross-examination with other sources.

Similarly, the exploration of the enigma surrounding Villarvattom presented numerous challenges, including conflicting viewpoints and doubts regarding its historical authenticity. We also faced problems in obtaining important source books like *Chavittunadakam: Oru Charithra Padanam* by Sabeena Raphy. However, sincere efforts were made to rectify errors resulting from these limitations.

Chapter- 2

History Of Gothuruth

The island of Gothuruth is situated on the banks of Periyar river. This was near to the ideal location of the magnificent old port city of Muziris. For centuries, the port of Muziris served as a principal gateway to India. In the first century CE, Pliny refers to the ruler of the Kerala as Calobotras and mentioned, Muziris, the first emporium of trade in India as his capital. Muziris has been satisfactorily identified by Dr. Burnell with modern Cranganur or Kodungallur.⁷ Both Ptolemy's Geography and the Periplus of Erythrean Sea mentions this ancient port city with in the context of its geographical coordinates and trading significances.

The tale of Muziris unfolds around 3000 BC, as Babylonians, Assyrians, and Egyptians ventured to the Malabar Coast in quest of spices. Sangam literature describes Roman ships coming to Muziris laden with gold to be exchanged for pepper. There is also evidence for the mentioning that Muziris could be reached in 14 days' time from the Red Sea ports in Egyptian coast purely depending on the monsoon winds. Over time, Arabs and Phoenicians joined these Middle Eastern groups, and Muziris gradually became a prominent point on the global trade map. From then on, Muziris became a pivotal element in unravelling a significant portion of Kerala's ancient history and the ancient trade route. Major goods which exported and imported in Muziris were pepper, pearl, coral wine, gold, metals etc.

The Perumals governed the entire land with their capital at Thiruvanchikulam, situated in the vicinity of modern Cranganore. Arabs, Syrian Christians, Chinese and Jews were the major traders who formed mercantile corporations like Achuvanam, Manigramam in this period.

But all the glory of ancient Mahodayapuram came into decline in a flood in the 9th century. The flood is thought to have altered the topography of the region, affected the navigability of the river and made it challenging for ships to access the port. As a result, trade routes shifted to other locations like Kollam, contributing to the decline of Kodungallur as a significant trading center.

⁷K.P. Padmanabha Menon, History of Kerala: Written in the Form of notes on Visscher's Letters from Malabar ".1924, p.50

However, Kodungallur as a port was closed completely with the Great flood of 1341, when the profile of the water bodies in the Periyar river basin on the Malabar coast underwent a major transformation and Muziris dropped off the map due to the flood and earthquake. However, the remnants of the port land and its erstwhile glory still remain as remainders of quite an eventful past.

The flood of 1341, not only led to the fall of Muziris port, but also the formation of new islands in Cochin like Vypin⁸. A series of islands emerged along the banks of the Periyar River, extending from Kochi to Kodungallur, and among them was the island of Gothuruth. The excess silt carried by the overflowing Periyar settled in the area, where the rocks acted as barriers, facilitating the formation of an alluvial plain. As per certain accounts, the island fell under the governance of the Vilarvattom dynasty. Following the decline of this dynasty, control of the island was transferred to the Paliyam family. Some historians contend that during the reign of the Paliyam rulers, the island was utilized for the purpose of cattle rearing. Consequently, the island became known as Gothuruth, emphasizing its association with cattle or cows.

However, this viewpoint faces skepticism from numerous historians. According to Jeejo John Puthezhath, a renowned journalist associated with Manorama, the name "Gothuruth" is believed to be a Sanskritized form of "Kothuruth," which originated from "Kothu,/Gothu" a Dalit farmer. This perspective gains credibility as Kothad, situated near Varappuzha, derived its name from a Dalit woman named Kotha. Some of the earliest writings also refer to this location as Kothuruth. Therefore, according to Joy Gothuruth, it is more plausible to consider that the place was initially known as Kothuruth and gradually evolved into Gothuruth over time.

Although, island was formed in the 14th century, we lack authentic sources to indicate the presence of human habitation from that period. The prevailing assumption is that the island became populated only during the 16th and 17th centuries. Those who migrated to the island cleared the grasslands and initiated coconut cultivation. They made the land habitable by filling the silt that comes in the flood. As the places filled up, many people migrated to work and live there.⁹

⁸C. Achyutha Menon, Cochin State Manual, Cochin Government Press, 1911, p.411

⁹ Fr. Roopesh Micheal, Nattakam: Gothuruthinte Charithram, Samskaram, St. Sebastian's Church, Gothuruth, 2023, p.42

Villarvattom

The only Muslim ruling house in Kerala is the Arakkal dynasty of the Sultanate of Kannur. All other ruling houses were Hindu. However, there once existed a Christian Royal Family called Villarvattom, probably the only such in the entire Indian subcontinent. The island of Gothuruth is said to be governed by this Christian Royal family.

Forgotten during modern times, the mention of the Villarvattam kingdom and its first King, are scattered in historical documents of the Portuguese, the Dutch, Italians and the British. Antonio Guvaya, the Portuguese historian, in his 'Jornodo' mentions the Christian king Beliarte of Kerala¹⁰. Nobody knows when exactly the St Thomas Christians managed to set up a kingdom, but the circumstances that led to it were quite clear – they were prosperous through trade had a mortal rivalry with Arab merchants and had to protect themselves from them and local Hindu princes. According to Rajan Gurukkal, the Villarvattam dynasty could have originated from a wealthy and powerful family of merchants.

One tale goes like this. The last Perumal abdicated the throne and went to Mecca, had his territories distributed among a chosen few of his military leaders and friends. Of the seventy-two Lords, or Madampis of Karappuram, which lay between Cochin and Porakatt, one was a Christian, and the rest were Hindus belonging to the Nair community.¹¹

The head of the family, known as Thoma Valiya Raja (the Great King Thomas), governed as the Naduvazhi of Villarivattom. The Villarvattom Estate was a vassal of the Chera kings. The capital of this kingdom was at Mahadevarpattanam in the island of Chennamangalam and later it was shifted to Udayamperoor when the Arab invaders attacked the island.

"Ibn Batuta, speaking of his journey by back-water in 1342 from Calicut to Quilon, says, "It (Quilon) is situated at the distance of ten days from Calicut. After five days I came to Kanjarkara which stands on the top of a hill, is inhabited by Jews, and governed by an Emir, who pays tribute to the King of Kawlam." This Emir was evidently the Villarvattat chief. The river here-abouts used to be known as Kanjirapuzha, and the palace of the chief, the site of

¹⁰ John Ochanthuruth, *Adiverukal*, KRLCC, 1992, p.45

¹¹ V. C. George, *The Villarvettam Royal Family*, Indian History Congress, 1958, p.597

which is still pointed out, was on the top of the hill at the eastern end of the island of Chennamangalam.”¹²

Over time, they became feudatories of the Perumpadapp family/ Cochin Royal family. The king of Villarvattom had a fortified royal palace name Kottayil Kovilakam in Villarvattomkunnu, near Chendamangalam.¹³ The remnants of the fort still survive here.

Christianity spread in the kingdom of Villarvattom (Udayamperoor) under the saintly Chaldean bishop Mar Sapor who occupied the Episcopal seat of Quilon.¹⁴ According to tradition, Mar Sapor succeeded in converting the Villarvattom dynasty. Thus originated the Christian royal family of Kerala known as Villarvattom.

We get to know about the existence of a Christian Royal house in the east from some of the Papal records. These include letters sent by Pope to the King Thomas of the Indies. Pope John XXII wrote a letter and gave it to a travelling Catalan Dominican missionary Fr. Jordanus Catalani in 1328¹⁵. The Pope even assumed that he had Papal rights over the so-called "Christian Emperor of Indies" and appointed Jordanus as the Bishop of Quilon (Kollam). However, due to the wars between Catholics and Muslims in the Middle East, it was almost impossible for any Catholic priest to travel to the East through lands held by Muslim powers. Consequently, Jordanus never reached Kerala.

Later, Pope Eugene IV wrote an Apostolic Charter on August 28, 1439, appointing Villarvattom king as the Emperor of India (assuming the absolute Papal right to ordinate a Christian King). The letter's opening words were as follows:

” To my most beloved son in Christ, Thomas, the Illustrious Emperor of the Indians.....There often has reached us a constant rumour that Your Serenity and also all who are the subjects of your Kingdom are true Christians.”¹⁶

¹² C. Achyutha Menon, Cochin State Manual, Cochin Government Press, 1911, p.96

¹³ Radhadevi Moochilott, Paliyam Charithram, Paliyam Eshwara Sevaka Trust, 2013

¹⁴ "Thoma of Villarvattom" in Wikipedia, Accessed on 15 January, 2024

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thoma_of_Villarvattom

¹⁵ John Ochanthuruth, Adiverukal, KRLCC, 1992, p.45

¹⁶ V. C. George, The Villarvettam Royal Family, Indian History Congress, 1958, p.600

This order sent through Albert Dicesiona, also never reached Kerala, so none of the Villarvattom rulers even had an idea that some Pope living in Rome was addressing them as "Emperor of India". The ruler was just a feudal lord of the area, not some sort of King or emperor as imagined by the Catholic Church.

According to legends, in 1410, Moopil Thoma (Senior Thomas), the elder member of the family, passed away without leaving any children. Subsequently, his brother, Yakoba (Jacob), assumed the role of Moopil Thoma. Yakoba was wedded to a woman from the Paliam family, who had been excommunicated from Hinduism. The Paliam family was the hereditary prime minister's lineage in Kochi and was related to the Villarvattom family. From this union, a daughter named Mariyam was born.

Mariyam's life took a significant turn when she met Prince Rama Varma of the Karoor branch of the Kochi royal house during a visit to her mother's house in Paliam. Prince Rama Varma, enamored by Mariyam, presented her with a mundu, adhering to the Hindu custom of Sambandham. However, this gesture clashed with Yakoba's beliefs, as his daughter was a Christian, and Sambandham rules were not applicable to them. To appease Yakoba, Rama Varma underwent baptism and adopted the name Ittimani, marrying Mariyam in accordance with Nasrani customs.

The news of Rama Varma's conversion shocked the Kochi royal house, prompting the King to order Ittimani's arrest. He was forcibly taken to Mattancherry and thrown into prison, where he eventually met his demise. Despite Ittimani's fate, Mariyam remained devoted to him and refrained from marrying again. Yakoba, who had no male heir in the succession line, passed away in 1460. Since Villarvattom didn't have a male heir, their overlords (the Kochi kings) integrated their estates into their kingdom. Other males were existing in the royal family of Villarivattom but they lacked power to do anything.

When Portuguese Catholics came to Kerala shores, the members of erstwhile Villarivattom family saw an opportunity to overthrow the Kochi kings. Immediately after the appearance of the Portuguese the Christians of Malabar went to them, making advances for support and protection, which were introduced by the presentation of the sceptre of their extinct royal house to Da Gama, whose efforts, as well as those of his successors, were directed to bring the native

church under the authority of the See of Rome.¹⁷ The Portuguese agreed on them conditions that they should abandon Syrian Christianity and convert to Catholicism. “They sent his majesty [king of Portugal] a rod tipped at both ends with silver, with three bells at the head of it, which had been the sceptre of their Christian Kings,” writes Michael Geddes in his 1694 translation of the Portuguese work “The History of the Church of Malabar”. There has been no trace of this scepter since then.

When Archbishop Alex de Menezes arrived in Cochin in 1599, he expressed his disappointment at the Catholic clergy's inability to convert any of the local Rajas to Christianity, despite the Portuguese having exerted influence over them for more than a century. His journey also took him to Udayamperur, Chennamangalam, and the Syrian seminary at Vapicotta.

While in route to Udayamperur, Archbishop Menezes faced mockery from some Nasranis who were evidently displeased with Portuguese involvement in their affairs. Incensed by this, he halted at the Cochin fort and visited the Cochin Raja in his palace at Calvetti, near the fort. During their meeting, Archbishop Menezes held the Raja accountable for the incident and engaged in discussions about religion, urging him to embrace Christianity.

To navigate this sensitive situation, the Cochin Raja redirected Archbishop Menezes to the vassal principality of Villarvattam, suggesting that efforts could be made to encourage their conversion to Christianity. The Jesuits at Chennamangalam later provided Archbishop Menezes with additional information about the Villarvattom family.

Archbishop Menezes conducted an audience with the Villarvattom Raj at the seminary and observed him to be exceptionally cultured and religiously inclined. At that time, the Raja expressed a strong interest in embracing Christianity. This inclination might have stemmed from two factors: the prevailing dominance of the Portuguese in the geopolitical landscape and a form of subtle discrimination faced by the Villarvattom family from other Hindu nobles and Kings. This discrimination seemed to be rooted in the fact that one of their ancestors had been a Christian nearly 900 years prior. In March 1599, just a few days after their initial meeting, the Raja underwent baptism at the Chennamangalam Seminary administered by Archbishop

¹⁷ William Logan, *Malabar Manual*, I. Madras: Government Press, 1887, p.205

Menezes himself. Following this ceremony, he was christened 'Thomas' and henceforth became known as Villarvattom Thoma Rajavu.

The family of Villarvattath was about to become extinct towards the close of the 16th century, when the last chief, instead of making an adoption from a Kshatriya family to continue the line, made his son the Paliath Acchan his heir¹⁸, with the sanction of the King of Cochin. On K.E 770 (C.E. 1595) Chendamangalam, Chattedam, Kothuruth, Kallor, Kuzhoee, Kadalvathuruth, Thrikkur, Karamallor, Nerikkodu, Mulavukadu, Nayarambalam, Pallipuram etc came under Paliath Achan.¹⁹ Soon after, Paliath Acchan ascended to become the overlord of Vypeen and assumed the role of Prime Minister to the Cochin Raja. Notably, however, Paliath Achan retained his Hindu Kshatriya identity and did not convert to Christianity. This marked the end of the dynasty.

Palam Family

Goturuth's first Janmi was Paliyathachan. He forced the people who had settled here to cultivate and allotted land for it.²⁰ The farmer cultivates it and pays the farmer a fixed yield of the crop. The rent was also fixed according to the size of the land. Punishments were given if the rent was not paid correctly or if the land was refused to be cultivated. Arrears were also levied when the lease came due. The first employment relationship in this country was based on birth status.

The Paliam family traces its origin to Vanneri. From Vanneri they came to Chendmangalam and gradually became the local chieftains. Villarvattam was one of the most powerful chieftains in that region. As mentioned earlier, according to Achyutha Menon, in 1599, the last Villarvattath Raja handed over his throne to Paliath Achan. One can still find an “Ormathara” in Paliam, which is believed to be that of the Villarvattam family.

Paliathachan is the name given to the oldest male member of the Paliam family. The 1st Paliyath Achan, during the initial years of his office, contributed greatly to the Cochin state. As a result, Raja made him chief of Vypin and later as the hereditary prime minister of the

¹⁸C. Achyutha Menon, Cochin State Manual, Cochin Government Press, 1911, p.96

¹⁹Radhadevi Moochilott, Paliyam Charithram, Paliyam Eshwara Sevaka Trust, 2013, p.18

²⁰ Fr. Roopesh Micheal, Nattakam: Gothuruthinte Charithram, Samskaram, St. Sebastian's Church, Gothuruth, 2023, p.51

Perumpadappu Swaroopam²¹. They continued in the post of hereditary prime ministers to the Raja of the kingdom of Cochin till 1809.

Paliath Achans were second only to Raja in power and wealth in the central Cochin area during that period. A common saying in Cochin is “Kochiyil pathi paliam” means that half of Cochin belonged to the Paliam family. In 1681 Kochi Raja conferred upon him, the title of “Sarvadyakshan”. The Paliath Achans played crucial roles in the history of the Cochin region, actively participating in battles against colonial rulers such as the British, Portuguese, and Dutch.

Komiachan 1st resisted Portuguese attempts to assert control over the Cochin family, aligning himself with the Dutch and signing a treaty in Colombo. He played a key role in the capture of the Kodungallor fort, and as a gesture of appreciation, the Dutch rebuilt the Paliam Kovilakam and presented it to him.

In the period of 1809-1810, the then Paliathachan- Paliath Govindanachan allied with Velutampi Dalawa to resist the British on Travancore soil. Faced with a threat to his family from the British, Paliathachan was compelled to surrender and sided with the British. Following the rebellion, he was deported to Madras and held prisoner for twelve years. Paliath Govindanachan was the last Paliathachan to hold the position of prime minister in the Kingdom of Cochin.

However, Gothuruth kept under the sway of Paliam family. After independence in 1949, the family applied to the government, of the then Travancore-Cochin, to divide Paliam family. Accordingly, the division took place in 1956. At the time of the division, Gothuruth belonged to Chandrika Kunjamma. It is noted that officials of Paliam had come to collect the land tax even at that time. With the implementation of the 1971 Land Reforms Act, ownership ceased. In summary, from 1595 to 1971, Paliam were the landlords of Gothuruth.

As mentioned earlier, there was a belief that Gothuruth served as the cattle fields of the Paliyam family, named after the "thuruth" (island) of “gokkal” (cattle). However, this hypothesis has been questioned, as records indicating the transfer of Villarvattom properties to Paliyam also mention Gothuruth, even before it became associated with the Paliyam family.²² Hence, it is

²¹ C. Achyutha Menon, Cochin State Manual, Cochin Government Press, 1911, pp.96-97

²² Fr. Roopesh Micheal, Nattakam: Gothuruthinte Charithram, Samskaram, St. Sebastian's Church, Gothuruth, 2023, pp.52- 53

more reasonable to accept Jeejo John Puthezhath's assumption that Gothuruth was the "thuruth" of "Kothu/Gothu," possibly the leader of Dalit farmers.

Christians of Gothuruth

The earliest inhabitants of Gothuruth carry a history marked by migration. The people of Gothuruth are essentially migrants. They include both the labour diaspora and the victim diaspora.²³

The commonly held belief is that the island of Gothuruth was initially inhabited by dalit communities and Hindus²⁴, likely involved in agricultural activities. Several earlier families of this island were Hindus, and certain local place names (like Nadepadam- Early Jewish settlers are also believed to have inhabited the island, with locations like Joothapparambu reflecting this history. Legend has it that the Manakkal family, arriving during Sakthan Tampuran's rule, acquired land from a Karutha Juthan.

Certain scholars suggest that Christians were also among the early residents. According to Varappuzha Archdiocese Sathapthi Samaranika, a holy cross was established as early as 1659 in Gothuruth. However, it wasn't until the late 18th and early 19th centuries that a substantial Christian population migrated to this island.

In 1504, Portuguese captured Cranganore town from Zamorin²⁵. The Cranganore town was fortified by Portuguese and the Raja of Cranganore shook off his allegiance to Calicut and accepted Portuguese protection. The city became one of the major centres of commercial interest. In 1523 Kottappuram Fort was built by the Portuguese. From that period onwards there were attempts to establish habitation in Gothuruth.

During the battle with Zamorin, the Christinas of Cranganore visits Paliyath Achan, who then granted them the right to inhabit Gothuruth. Nevertheless, they continued to constitute a minority until the 17th and 18th centuries.

While the Cochin kingdom flourished under the rule of Saktan Tampuran (1790-1805), certain communities faced persecution. The Raja was very harsh in his treatment of Konkans and

²³ Ibid.p.63

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ A. Sreedhara Menon, A Survey of Kerala History. D.C. Books, 1967, p.180

Latin Christians²⁶. The Latin Christians, who had experienced certain privileges during the Portuguese and Dutch periods, faced extensive harassment from the ruler, who employed various means to mistreat them. Numerous Latin Christians had their land and properties confiscated, leading to their expulsion from the kingdom. In response to these injustices, some of these families sought refuge in the north like Gothuruth, this may include both Konkannis and Christians.

The Manakkal family was one of them, who were based in Permannoor. They chose to relocate from their native land during the rule of Sakthan Tampuran. Of the three branches that dispersed, one settled in Gothuruth and established matrimonial connections with the Thattakath family and settled down there.²⁷

The Mysorean interlude was an event that dramatically changed the demographic picture of Kerala. In 1790, breaching the Nedumkotta or Travancore Lines, Tipu's army proceeded to Cranganore and captured the fort.²⁸ These military expeditions led to another en-masse migration, which also led to the establishment of further settlements in Gothuruth. Valiyaveedan and Kalathil families are said to be some among them.

In 1808, Paliath Acchan and Velu Thampi initiated a revolt against the British, marked by their attack on the British Residence in Cochin. At midnight on 18th December, six hundred men commanded by Acchan and two of the Velu Thampi's officers entered Cochin, surrounded the Resident's house and opened a smart fire of musketry²⁹. However, Macaulay, the British resident and his friend Kunjikirishna Menon escaped in a British ship³⁰. Alleging that a Latin Christian had assisted Macaulay, widespread persecution targeted the community during Velu Thampi's rule. This tragic event, historically referred to as Vettikola³¹, resulted in the mass killing of people from Kochi to Kollam along the coastal region. Many families sought refuge in the north during this period, and Gothuruth was among the regions where some of them sought sanctuary. The Onathu family in Gothuruth is believed to be such a family.

²⁶ Ibid. p.242

²⁷ Sebastian Manakkal, Manakkal Kudumbacharithram, Manakkal Kudumbacharithram Publishing Committee, 2016, p.6

²⁸ A. Sreedhara Menon, A Survey of Kerala History. D.C. Books, 1967, p.248

²⁹ C. Achyutha Menon, Cochin State Manual, Cochin Government Press, 1911, p.144

³⁰ A. Sreedhara Menon, A Survey of Kerala History. D.C. Books, 1967, p.264

³¹ Fr. Roopesh Micheal, Nattakam: Gothuruthinte Charithram, Samskaram, St. Sebastian's Church, Gothuruth, 2023, p.65

Therefore, the domination of Christians in Gothuruth started only in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. Today, 97% of the people are Christians on the island (with some belonging to the Pentecost sect). There are also Hindus including Ezhava and Dalit communities who account for the rest 3%.³² The Dalit enlightenment program started in the 1940s, and in 1952, the Harijan Sevak Sangh was set up, still running today. However, a unit of SNDP was formed only on March 3, 2018. The Muthukunnam Sankara Narayana Kshethram is close to this island.

The Church

Gothuruth Island is home to two churches, namely St. Sebastian's Church and Holy Cross Church. These two sanctuaries play a pivotal role in providing spiritual solace to the community. During the initial period, the Christians on this island were limited in number and did not possess a church. For their religious needs, they had to depend on the Thuruthippuram Church³³, which held the distinction of being the oldest diocese under the Varapoly archdiocese.

Nevertheless, in the latter part of the 18th century, as the Christian population grew, Gothuruth established its own church. There is even a legend surrounding the foundation of this church. According to the tale, a whale was stranded in the Chathedath River, sparking a dispute between Thuruthippuram and Gothuruth over its ownership³⁴. Ultimately, Gothuruth emerged victorious in claiming the whale. This situation generated tension between the two factions, and the villagers of Thuruthippuram went so far as to caution the residents of Gothuruth that they would seek revenge the following Sunday when the latter would come for Holy Mass in Thuruthippuram church. Fueled by their anger, the people of Gothuruth resolved to build their church, and the very next day, they founded a small church, which later became St. Sebastian's Church³⁵. From that day onwards it began to function as a quasi-parish. During those early years, due to the absence of priests in Gothuruth, villagers had to travel to nearby islands to fetch priests.

³² Ibid. p.42

³³ Ibid. p.70

³⁴ Ibid. p.71

³⁵ The first name of Gothuruth parish was "St. Mary's". Then in the late 19th century and early 20th century, these locals accepted the intercession of St. Sebastian who protects the believers from infectious diseases to save them from infectious diseases like smallpox.

In 1870, a more substantial church was established. An oak marking 1868 has been founded in the old church and it is still preserved in the church itself. The church was decided to be built by taking the Chendamangalam Holy Cross church as a model. However, they only considered the inner measurements of the church. As the older churches typically had a width exceeding 4 feet, the new church in Gothuruth ended up being smaller in size compared to its model. Adjacent to the Church was built a rectory which was under the Thuruthippuram church. In 1870, the church housed Mathai Kaathanar, Father Panjikkaran, and another priest, as documented in the records of that time. It was in 1879 that Gothuruth became an independent parish. Father D' Ross or Rosario was the first vicar. At this phase, Moothukunnam, Chendamangalam, Madaplaavu etc. were part of this parish. But later, due to demographic changes new parishes were established in these regions.

The school was established in 1878. Father Joseph Naronja Nelikkunnasari (1903-07) contributed substantially for the development of the parish and the school. He encouraged children to go outside the island and take English education.

The initiation of the English school in Gothuruth is credited to Fr. Emmanuel D'costa (1911 – 1934). Father Mickel Nilavareth, who served as the vicar from 1919 to 1934, can be recognized as the key figure behind the transformation of Gothuruth into a modern community. Father can be correctly called Architect of Modern Gothuruth.³⁶ He played a pivotal role in this modernization process by inviting the Raja of Cochin Sri Mulam Thirunal Rama Varma to Gothuruth and presenting him with a letter of request. In the letter, he sought support for various initiatives such as the construction of roads, funding for a high school, and the establishment of a health centre. It was during his period that the construction of the rectory was also completed. The school high school in 1923, under him. For fueling the industrialization process Father Michael started St. Joseph Industrial Company. Consequently, the Church and its patrons played a significant role in laying the groundwork for the modernization of Gothuruth.

In the 18th and 19th centuries, the church bell held significance beyond its religious function, acting as a guide in the daily lives of people. The Gothuruth church also possessed a similar bell, which had been brought from Bochum, Germany, by Father John Pinto Madathil. The construction of the bell tower was finished in 1910. Subsequently, in 1970, the bell tower

³⁶ Fr. Roopesh Micheal, Nattakam: Gothuruthinte Charithram, Samskaram, St. Sebastian's Church, Gothuruth, 2023, p.123

underwent reconstruction. The rectory construction commenced in 1913 and spanned seven years before reaching completion. This is the residence of priests, placed near to the church. Presently, the edifice is undergoing transformation into a museum as part of the Muzris Heritage Project.

The church had an existing cemetery situated close to the school. However, in the great flood of 99 the entire region was flooded and following that Archbishop Angel Mary³⁷ visited the area and recommended relocating the cemetery away from the school. As a result, in 1932, a new cemetery was established.

In 1949, the church was again reconstructed. It took more than 11 years to complete the construction. This church built in the shape of a holy cross was modelled after the Basilica of Our Lady of Dolours, Thrissur. The new church was opened to the devotees on April 7 1960. This achievement was particularly noteworthy given the absence of modern technologies at that time, highlighting the dedicated efforts of individuals who worked tirelessly to create such a magnificent structure.

Kadalvathuruth Holy Cross Church became the second parish in Gothuruth. Records show the presence of a chapel as early as 1901-02. Over time, the community felt the need for a church. In 1935, when Archbishop Father Attipperu visited the island, the devotees submitted a request letter, asking him to help in organizing Holy Mass on Sundays. Consequently, on September 16, 1936, the first Holy Mass took place under the guidance of Kaleppally Achan. Subsequent efforts were made to establish a separate parish. Finally, in 1994, a priest in charge was appointed, and in 2011, a new parish was officially created.

Other than these two churches, there are many chapels on the island the most prominent being Vadakkethuruth Kappela, which was believed to be established in the 1940s. Also, efforts are taken to find new churches in some other parts of the island to cater for the religious and spiritual needs of the community.

The school and the sports

Aforementioned, the history of St. Sebastian's Higher Secondary School dates back to 1878 when it was established by Christian monks with the motto "Sarvarkkum Aksharam." Initially,

³⁷ Ibid.p.91

it began with a primary section featuring two wings, St. George and St. Mary's, for boys and girls, respectively. By 1920, it evolved into a UP school, and in 1923, it further progressed to become a Higher Secondary School.

Initially comprising 16 divisions at the primary level, the school now has five divisions, including LKG and UKG. In 1957, the primary section underwent bifurcation by the government. The first headmaster of this new section was V.V. George Master, who was followed by N.J. Michael and M.J. Treesa (known as Dhummini Teacher who was Sabeena Rafi's sister).

The Platinum Jubilee in 1998 marked a significant moment when the Kerala government decided to grant HSS status to high schools. The school management applied for this transition, forming an action council chaired by Church Vicar Ft. Thomas Padasheri, with George Bastin as the convener. Consequently, Higher Secondary divisions in Humanities and Science commenced in 1998.

During this period, the school faced challenges in recruiting students, requiring authorities to visit homes to persuade parents. Over time, the student population increased, leading to the addition of three more divisions. Notably, alumni include A. L. Jacob, MLA, and Agriculture Minister in Kerala, K.R. Vijayan, and Thomas Baby, a Vice Chancellor in the USA.

An educational initiative by Ft. Michael Niravirath aimed at economically backward Higher Secondary students was established in the school, offering scholarships and 50% fee coverage. The initiative, still operational, now provides scholarships and awards to outstanding students.

In sports, St. Sebastian's students excel, particularly in volleyball and hockey, earning numerous accolades at the district and state levels. The school also boasts achievements in Kalosavam, securing prizes in Chavittunadakam. Additionally, there is a St. Sebastian Volleyball Academy associated with the school, contributing to its sports legacy.

Gothuruth's sporting activities are intricately linked to its geographical features, with water bodies serving as the backdrop for the primary activity of boating, particularly popular among local farmers. Due to space limitations, sports like volleyball and tug-of-war have gained prominence in the area, notably flourishing after the establishment of the local high school. In 1927-28, the school achieved a significant triumph by winning the top prize in a tug-of-war competition held in the Kochi region.

The pivotal role in sports development in Gothuruth is played by the Olympia Sports Club, established in 1980. Under its leadership, the club has organized various district and state-level volleyball competitions, contributing substantially to the region's sports growth. Collaborating with the high school, the Olympia club conducts volleyball camps during holidays. Remarkably, from 1987 to 1998, Gothuruth High School clinched consecutive victories in the Aluva Education District and Revenue District Volleyball Championships.

In 1938, the Catholic Young Men's Sports Club, later renamed S.A.C. (Sports and Arts Club) in 1962, was established. The club's primary focus, under its leadership, is the Gothuruth Vallamkali, a boat race held on the Periyar River tributary, between Gothuruth Kalava, Thurut Palli, and the Muthakunnam Temple. Starting from Kottapuram, this boating competition concludes in front of the Kalavathuruth Church. The Gothuruth Vallamkali, initiated in 1938, continued until 1969, featuring traditional "Irutkuthi" boat racing. In 2010, a notable Chundan boat exhibition competition took place.

Chapter- 3

Remnants of Portuguese Influence in Gothuruth

The Advent of the Portuguese

“Vasco da Gama landed at Calicut in 1498, with Gujarati pilots on board.”³⁸ This event is marked as a turning point in the history of the world itself. It has socio-cultural-political-economic impacts on the entire world, of which Gothuruth was also a part.

Part of the so-called Voyages of Discovery, da Gama set out for a sail to the east, just like many others, but emerged victorious in it. Although, “the goods brought by Gama were computed at sixty times the cost of the entire expedition”³⁹ he couldn’t build a friendly relationship with the ruler of Calicut- Zamorin. He had to fish in the troubled water by making the foe of Zamorin his friend- the Kolathiri of Cannanore. However, his successor, Pedro Alvarez Cabral, was entrusted with a diplomatic mission by the King of Portuguese, in his initial attempts were successful as “the Portuguese got the right to erect a fort at Calicut.”⁴⁰ However, soon due to the conflicts with Arab merchants, Cabral packed bags and overnight set sail to Cochin.

On reaching on Christmas Eve in December 1500, the Portuguese captain was warmly received by the Cochin Raja. The Portuguese were given all facilities for trade at Cochin. The Raja also entered into an informal treaty with the Portuguese permitting them to build a factory at Cochin. On the whole Cabral’s expeditions were a triumph for the Portuguese in so far as it won for them an ally in the Cochin Raja and fine harbour from where they could safeguard the commercial and political interests on the Kerala coast. “Thus began the connection of Europeans with Cochin, which has lasted for over four centuries.”⁴¹

The Cochin Raja received Portuguese not because he was so kind towards them. But, “the Raja of Cochin who was smarting under the yoke of the Zamorin saw in the arrival of the Portuguese on the coast a golden opportunity to get foreign assistance against his traditional enemy and

³⁸ Satish Chandra, History of Medieval India, Orient Black Swan, 2007, p.156

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ A. Sreedhara Menon, A Survey of Kerala History. D.C. Books, 1967, p.178

⁴¹ C. Achyutha Menon, Cochin State Manual, Cochin Government Press, 1911, p.89

build up his political strength.”⁴² However, this tactic led to open wars between Calicut and Cochin. On the departure of da Gama after his second arrival, the Calicut army marched against Cochin.⁴³ In the fierce fighting that followed the ablest three princes of the royal family were killed (other losses being much beyond quantification). Although the Portuguese were on Cochin's side, they couldn't win over Zamorin's power. It is to be mentioned here that the Portuguese commercial endeavour got some roots in Indian soil mainly because of the losses and sacrifices taken up by the king of Cochin and his loyal subjects of native Cochin.

In September 1503, a Portuguese naval squadron under Fransisco d' Albuquerque arrived at Cochin⁴⁴, to avenge Zamorin. Cochin, facing a crisis, extended a warm welcome to the foreign arrivals. With the reinforcement of Portuguese troops, the Calicut army was compelled to retreat. Despite Francisco de Albuquerque restoring the king to the throne and launching a fierce attack on Edappally, the strategic base for the Zamorin's operations, the state of war persisted. However, the grateful Raja of Cochin granted permission to the Portuguese to erect a fort at Cochin (Fort Manuel) to safeguard the interests of their factory, which became the first European fort to be built in India.

As the economic embargo failed to produce significant advantages, Zamorin's army devised a plan to assault Cochin by crossing the water ferry from Kumbalam to Palluruthi. However, this attempt was thwarted by the timely intervention of Duarte Pacheco, the Portuguese captain. The setback in Cochin was swiftly followed by another in Cranganore. In 1504, the Portuguese successfully seized Cranganore from Calicut and fortified their position. The Raja of Cranganore distanced themselves from their allegiance to the Zamorin, instead acknowledging the suzerainty of the Portuguese. This marked the Portuguese victory in the initial conflict in Kerala, solidifying their commercial interests in Quilon, Cochin, and Cannanore.

The decision was made by the Portuguese king to designate a comprehensive Viceroy responsible for safeguarding their Eastern possessions. Francisco de Almeida, the inaugural Viceroy of Portuguese Eastern Possessions, arrived in Cochin in the year 1505. Almeida, arriving with clear instructions to establish the headquarters of Portuguese India in Cochin, erected a robust fortress in place of the previous wooden structure. This fortified zone in the Portuguese colony became the initial centre for the governmental activities of the Lusitanians.

⁴² A. Sreedhara Menon, A Survey of Kerala History. D.C. Books, 1967, p.176

⁴³ Ibid. p.179

⁴⁴ Ibid. p.180

Cochin served as the early capital for the Portuguese in India, eventually being succeeded by Goa.

The Zamorin was alarmed by the strengthening of the Portuguese possessions on the Kerala Coast. In 1506, a fleet of 200 vessels manned by Turks and Arabs was put into action against the Portuguese. However, Almeida's son Lawrence intercepted the Zamorin's fleet and was able to inflict heavy damage on the force. In the meantime, the Zamorin was able to take the Kolathiri into confidence and convinced them of the sinister motives of the Portuguese. One of the issues was the bad treatment that the Muslim merchants of Cannanore had to face. Thus, Cannanore and Calicut decided to put up a common fight against the Portuguese.

In 1509, the Portuguese successfully repelled and defeated the joint forces of the Zamorin and the Egyptians. Consequently, Almeida departed from India in 1509, having regained control of Indian waters. Unfortunately, during the initial years of the sixteenth century, the Portuguese appeared to face challenges in three key domains.

Frequently, they had to seek assistance from the local population in Cochin. Primarily, it was the Nampoothiri Brahmins, associated with the kingdom of Cochin, who supported them as intelligence operatives. The Nairs and the St. Thomas Christians from Cochin and neighbouring territories played a crucial role in the military efforts on behalf of the Portuguese.

Later, under Afonso de Albuquerque, the Portuguese in turn promised to help Zamorin in his wars against Cochin and Cannanore. This treaty was not liked by the Cochin raja and he wrote a protest letter to the king of Portugal. Meantime Portuguese headquarters in India was shifted from Cochin to Goa and this aggrieved the Cochin raja⁴⁵. However, Cochin remained a trustworthy ally of the Portuguese until Cochin was captured by the Dutch in 1663.

This prolonged interaction brought about profound and ingrained changes in the political, social, economic, and cultural domains of Kerala society. Politically they kept a check on Zamorin's expansionist policy and reduced Cochin to a mere vassal. Their advent marked the opening up of new networks of trade as well as the closing of old ones, especially with the Arab merchants. The Portuguese brought in new aspects like language, cuisine, and

⁴⁵ Ibid. p.182

architectural styles, blending smoothly with local traditions. Increasing trade led to the introduction of European fashions and luxuries in Kerala.

The Portuguese contact influenced the architectural styles- the Bungalow concept was introduced and church architecture also changed. The Dutch palace was initially constructed by them. Santa Cruz Basilica and St. Francis Church at Fort Kochi were also examples of Portuguese architecture.

The initiation of Ecological Imperialism in Kerala can be traced back to the Portuguese. Driven by an insatiable demand for pepper and other spices, the Portuguese expedited the shift towards cultivating cash crops for export, often at the expense of food crops.

In 1508, the Portuguese introduced tobacco to the Deccan plateau, marking one of their earliest contributions. They also brought the papaya, originating from the Spanish Indies. Among their introductions were cashew nuts, maize, and peanuts from Africa, as well as mandioca, the source of tapioca. Additionally, sweet potatoes and red chillies found their way into the region through Portuguese influence.

Beyond crops, the Portuguese played a role in popularizing medicinal and decorative plants. They notably promoted Kerala spices like pepper, cardamom, cinnamon, and ginger in European markets, further shaping the ecological and agricultural landscape of Kerala. Extensive efforts were made to encourage the scientific cultivation of pepper and ginger, resulting in widespread adoption by the general populace. Simultaneously, there was a notable transformation in the cultivation practices of coconut, shifting from domestic use to commercial purposes.

The promotion of an enhanced variety of coconut seeds gained popularity, while coir emerged as a significant export commodity. Cities such as Cochin, Calicut, and Chaliyam experienced heightened prominence, whereas Quilon and Cranganore witnessed a decline in significance.

Cochin, in particular, garnered acclaim, drawing comparisons with some of the finest cities in Europe. This marked a period of substantial agricultural and economic shifts, shaping the landscape of cultivation and trade in the region.

Local kings adopted Portuguese warfare techniques and weapons, incorporating the construction of forts and prioritizing artillery as a crucial component of their armies. This shift led to a decline in the traditional warrior class, the Nairs, as their roles diminished.

The employment landscape changed, with Christians and Muslims finding new opportunities in artillery, while cavalry gained prominence. The Portuguese presence also strained the caste structure, with untouchables being drawn to Christianity, encouraged and financially supported upon conversion.

To strengthen their influence in Kochi, the Portuguese implemented a diplomatic strategy known as 'Politica dos Casamentos,' allowing Portuguese men to marry Kochi women. This initiative gave rise to a new ethnic group known as Luso-Indians, born from the union of Kochiites with Portuguese ancestry.

Considering the lengthy voyages to Kerala, often taking 6 to 12 months, unmarried sailors were common. Governor Alfonso de Albuquerque addressed this by allowing these unmarried men (Soldados) to marry native women, creating a group known as Casados. The offspring of this mixed heritage were termed Mestizos, leading to a growing population of Soldados, Casados, and Mestizos.

Portuguese interactions in Kerala left a profound impact on education. The establishment of theological seminaries and colleges in Cochin, Cranganore, Ankamali, and Vaipinkotta played a pivotal role in training Christian priests. This initiative also facilitated the dissemination of Latin and Portuguese knowledge among the local population, with some rulers, like the Raja of Cochin, becoming proficient in these languages.

The Portuguese presence marked the initiation of Indological studies and research by European scholars. Notably, Francis Xavier, a Jesuit missionary, created a grammar and vocabulary manual for learning the language of Malabar, stating that "Malabar" is as easily learned as "Latin." St. Francis also translated the Catechism into Malayalam.

Observers like Duarte Barbosa and Gaspar Correa left valuable accounts of the Kerala coast, showcasing the positive outcomes of Portuguese contact. The Portuguese introduced the art form 'Chavittunatakam' and initiated musical dance drama by the Latin Christians. They also introduced printing in Kerala, with the establishment of a Syrian press by Jesuits in Vaipinkotta in 1602, primarily printing Christian religious material.

Portuguese contributions to Indian languages included introducing words such as 'Firingi' for 'Foreigner,' 'Lelam' for 'Auction,' 'Kurishu' for 'Cross,' and 'Varantha' for 'Verandas.' A Portuguese dialect is still spoken in some parts of Cochin. Additionally, they introduced tobacco cultivation and smoking.

Being staunch Catholics, they felt compelled to spread Catholicism and papal authority in pagan regions. This led to forceful conversions, prompting communities like the Gowda Sarawathis and Konkanis from Goa to migrate to Kerala in the 16th century. They established colonies in places like Cranganore, Chennamangalam, Cochin, Ernakulam, Shertallai, and Alleppey.

In dealing with Hindus, the Portuguese respected the religious sentiments of native Hindu rulers and chieftains to gain their favor. However, attempts were made to convert local rulers of Cochin, Prakkad, and Vettat. Some Portuguese governors went as far as plundering and destroying temples, such as the Tevalakara temple in Quilon and the Palluruthi temple in Cochin. Despite the Raja of Cochin patronizing Jews, the Portuguese subjected them to harassment, leading to the partial destruction of the Synagogue of the White Jews in Mattancherry. Muslims also faced severe persecution, as documented by Sheikh Zainuddin in Tuhafat-ul-Mujahiddin, citing large-scale conversions to Christianity and the destruction of mosques.

St. Thomas Christians, following the Syriac liturgy, were the native Christians. The Portuguese aimed to Latinize the church under papal control. In seminaries, Syrian youths were trained as Latin priests, as in Cranganore. The Diocese of Cochin was established in 1557 for Latin Christians, originally Syrian Christians and converts from Hinduism.

St. Francis Xavier and other Jesuit missionaries evangelized in South Kerala. The Synod of Diamper in 1599 aimed to end the Nestorian or Antiochean connection, bringing Syrian Christians under Roman Catholic supremacy. Presided over by Archbishop Alexis de Menezis of Goa, the synod replaced Syriac liturgy with Latin liturgy, confiscated and burnt old Syriac books, and established Roman Pontiff over the Latin church.

However, the victory of the synod was short-lived due to a long quarrel between Portuguese authorities and Syrian Christians. Resentment arose over the appointment of European Latin bishops to the Syrian diocese of Angamali. Syrians demanded a bishop of their own rite and

sought to reconnect with the Babylonian church. In 1653, when a Syrian bishop named Ahathalla was detained by the Portuguese, the Syrian Christians revolted. They stormed the gates of the Portuguese headquarters in Cochin and assembled at the Coonan Cross in Mattancherri, swearing not to obey the Latin Archbishop or the Jesuits. This event became known as the Coonan Cross Oath.

They proceeded to Alangad and consecrated Archdeacon Thomas as their Metropolitan, leading to the creation of two groups – Pazhyakur (Romo Syrians) and Puthenkur (Jacobite Syrians). Out of 2 lakh Syrian Christians, only 400 continued to owe allegiance to the Latin Archbishop, so the Latinization of the Syrian Church was only partial.

The Portuguese period also witnessed a revival of the Bhakti movement. Given the political violence, social decadence, and economic depression of the time, there was complete moral degradation, prompting a craving for a new message of hope and good cheer. New leaders emerged, emphasizing Bhakti, such as Thunchat Ezhuthachan, considered the father of the Malayalam language, who wrote devotional works like *Adhyatma Ramayanam* and *Mahabharatham*. Puntanam Namboothiri, a great devotee of Lord Krishna, wrote works like *Njanappana* and *Srikrishnakarnamritam*.

Some kings also promoted this movement. Zamorin Manaveda (1655-1658), a devotee of Vishnu, wrote *Krishna Giti* in Sanskrit. Puratam Thirunal Devanarayana, ruler of Chempakaserry (1566-1622), was associated with the Bhakti movement and consecrated the idol of Krishna at Ambalapuzha temple. Vilwamangalam Swamiyar, associated with the temples of Guruvayur and Ambalapuzha, also belonged to this period.

Kottapuram Fort and the Portuguese

Built in 1523, the Kottapuram Fort or Cranganore Fort was one of the significant defensive walls of the Portuguese in Kerala. ‘Kottapuram is located on the banks of river Periyar. Kotta in Malayalam means fort. Puram means outside. Hence the present name is the name of the village which has a small portion of the ruins of the ancient fort of Cranganur.’⁴⁶ The fort was

⁴⁶ Jenee Peter, Pre-industrial iron technology at Kottapuram Fort, Kerala, 2014, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/317175248_Pre-industrial_iron_technology_at_Kottapuram_Fort_Kerala Accessed on 19 January

built under the guidance of Pedro Alvares Cabral and came under the leadership of Urbano Fialho Ferreira upon its completion.

Encircled by the river on three sides, the fort features both a river-facing and a town-facing side. The broader expanse on the riverside implies that the fort was likely more oriented towards naval and commercial activities rather than serving as a focal point for the administration. The fortress, where bastions equipped with cannons were situated, contained military barracks, residences, and places of worship.

‘It was located in a strategic position, on the mouth of the river Periyar before it joins the Arabian Sea. Hence, it was easy to control the ships and boats that pass through the river to the interior of Malabar and vice versa, from this fort itself.’⁴⁷ The Kottappuram Fort played a crucial role in various wars between the Zamorin and the rulers of Kochi.

The area around the fort grew into a town, with a church and several traditional European-built houses nearby. According to Joy Gothuruth, there was a sizable city with a large population that thrived in this location, possibly serving as a cultural hub. An extensive library, housing thousands of manuscripts from various parts of the world, was once present. Portuguese missionaries, who journeyed from distant lands, played a significant role in preserving and accumulating these manuscripts. The fort likely drew people from nearby islands, potentially engaging in labour for Portuguese constructions. In the opinion of Jeejo John Puthezhath, given that Gothuruth had a population during that era, these individuals might have also contributed to the work in that area. They might have engaged in fishing activities, producing arrack etc.

In 1662, the Dutch initiated a combined land and sea assault, including the construction of a tunnel near the fort. Despite their attempts, they were thwarted by Portuguese artillery. Refusing the Dutch's truce request, Fialho, the fort's commander, intensified the defense.

The situation changed when Paliyattachan betrayed the Portuguese, strategically abandoning the fort and aiding the Dutch in breaching it. On January 15, 1662, the Dutch resumed their offensive, breaking through the fort's defences with artillery. As the Dutch seized control of

⁴⁷ ⁴⁷ Kottappuram Fort, Department of Archaeology,
<https://www.archaeology.kerala.gov.in/monuments/kottappuram-fort/31>
Accessed on January 20

crucial sections, the Portuguese retreated to boats and found refuge at the Ambazhakkad seminary.

During the siege, Fialho, 200 Portuguese soldiers, and around 100 Nair soldiers perished. With the fort in Dutch hands, they not only captured it but also destroyed it, converting the site into a defensive outpost for their trade ships. The fort was demolished in 1663, with its capture by the Dutch. With this, the cultural centre there was also destroyed. The Dutch had set fire to the library burning all the age-old manuscripts.

However, the history of Kottapuram didn't end with that. During the Mysorean interlude, to defend Tipu, Raja Kesava Das, Diwan of Travancore had built what was known to be Travancore Lines- Nedumkotta.⁴⁸ At this juncture, Kesava Das bought the fort from the Dutch and made it a part of the Nedumkotta. Although Tipu was able to breach Nedumkotta, he couldn't advance further due to the breakout of the Third Anglo-Mysore War.

In 1909, the Department of Archaeology of Travancore erected a memorial pillar inside the fort and decided to preserve the fort as public property as it was in a ruined state at that time.⁴⁹

Kottapuram fort was not only a defensive wall. It helped in the revival and development of culture in the Kondugallor region. Gothuruth which comes in the periphery of the old Muzris also undergone that process according to Joy Gothuruth.

Chavittunadakam

Gothuruth, Thuruthipuram, Pallipuram, which are the epitome of coconut abundance on the Periyar banks were the areas that have a strong passion for Chavittunadakam. There were many troops in these areas and many famous Chavittunadakam Kalaris and expert asanas. There are also stories to be told here of how many prominent houses and families were bankrupted by funding and performing Chavittunadakam. In short, the people were ready to endure any pain, expense and hardship for the sake of the art form, because Chavittunadakam is the only art form they acquainted with.

⁴⁸A. Sreedhara Menon, A Survey of Kerala History. D.C. Books, 1967, p.245

⁴⁹ Kottappuram Fort, Department of Archaeology,
<https://www.archaeology.kerala.gov.in/monuments/kottappuram-fort/31>
Accessed on January 20

With the arrival of the Portuguese, the Christian missionaries started working in Kerala with the aim of spreading Christianity and reforming and purifying the Christian religion. Evangelization among Latin Christians led to the rise of a new form of art called-Chavittunadakam. It was among the fishing communities in the coastal regions of Ernakulam that this art form flourished. As the Marthoma Christians converted to Roman Catholicism after the Synod of Diamper, Chavittunadakam began to spread inland from the coasts and ports⁵⁰.

Chavittunadakam is an indicator of the cultural changes that took place in Kerala with the arrival of the Portuguese. It is also an inevitable and positive product of occupation that has evolved from mercantile to subtle cultural hegemony. This art form also marks the worldview of the Christian people, which was drastically modernized by the Portuguese influence. Therefore, the history of Chavittunadakam is the history of a community and a region.⁵¹

Numerous legends surround the origin of Chavittunadakam. According to S.K. Vasanthan, it was conceived with the purpose of mitigating Hindu cultural influence in Christianity. Despite converting to Christianity under Portuguese missionaries, many individuals retained elements of Hindu culture. Thus, Portuguese missionaries tried to reduce this influence by creating an Indian version of European opera based truly on Christian mythology. He notes down that, during the 17th century there was practice of preaching bhajans in front of the Coonan Cross Church in Mattancheri, on the Sunday evenings by the local Christians. Some even used to sing Kathakali songs. Chinnathampipilla/ Chinnathampi Annavi⁵², a Tamil scholar poet and Catholic from Tenkasi living in Kochi, decided to change this tradition. In consultation with priests, he composed a new play called 'Brasina' and taught it to his disciples, presenting the story of Sukritini named Brasina. The skit was successful, attracting many to this new movement. According to Sabeena Raphy, Chinnathambi can be a Christian missionary, because at that time many of foreign missionaries who came to India had adopted Indian Sanyasi cult and Indian names.

Thus, Chavittunadakam was created in the style of Portuguese opera. It shares similarities with European opera traditions. The operas focused on Christian warriors successfully preaching

⁵⁰ "Chavittu Natakam", Official Web Portal - Government of Kerala, <https://kerala.gov.in/subsubdetail/MTM4MTYwNTM4LjEy/OTQwMzMzMjYMTcuOTY=>

⁵¹ Vincent George, Chavittunatakam literature and performance, 2011, <http://hdl.handle.net/10603/138434>

⁵² There are many stories about this character. It is said that the once Annavi was singing in front of a Holy Cross in Mattancheri and the cross bent over him. This cross came to be Known as Coonan Cross.

the scriptures. The Portuguese felt the need to continue spreading the Bible despite challenging political and social conditions.

Sreedhara Menon says that, Chavittunadakam evolved in the late 17th and 18th centuries as a Christian alternative to the Hindu Kathakali with a view of presenting Biblical themes to Christian audiences.⁵³

The linguistic background of Tamil-Sanskrit mixing in Kerala and the hybrid cultural environment of the invasion played a major role in shaping the Chavittunadakam. Many of the rites and terms of Sanskrit dramas have been adopted in Chavittunadakam. 'Naandi' is the deity worship performed by actors before the start of Sanskrit dramas. The same can be seen in Chavittunadakam in the form of 'Venpa.' There was a character in Chavittunadakam called 'Kattayekkaran' equivalent to Vidushaka in Sanskrit dramas, who provides a brief overview of the performance.

In the earlier days kalarippayattu- Kerala form of martial art was an inevitable part of Chavittunadakam. In the early days, people were admitted to the theatre only after formal training in the Kalari. However, in the later period Kalari became necessary only for certain characters like hunters, warriors etc. Today it is not an essential aspect of Chavittunadakam. Sabeena Raphy mentions that Pallipuram Padamadan Kochu Variyat was a Payattu expert who trained the actors scientifically for two years for performing the complete history of Karelsmankatha in Gothuruth in 1892. In Gothuruth's history, there's a fascinating incident known as the Sara Case. Sara, a widowed Jewish woman, was attacked by a rival group. The Chavittunadakam artists of Gothuruth came to her aid and used their fake weapons, like spears and swords from their performances, to defeat the rival gang and save Sara. Although a case was filed against the villagers, the court spared them.

The system of Kalari was very prominent among the Christians of Kerala. Villarvattam Rajdhani, centre of military training and service are part of the primitive culture of Kerala Christians. Christian families have established Kalaries and carried out weapons training for generations.⁵⁴

⁵³ A. Sreedhara Menon, A Survey of Kerala History. D.C. Books, 1967, p.345

⁵⁴ Vincent George, Chavittunatakam literature and performance, 2011, <http://hdl.handle.net/10603/138434>

Based on Chuvadis (literature of Chavittunadakam) written in different languages like Chendamizhu, Malayalam, Tamil etc Chavittunadakam is performed on open stages, like European Opera. *Karelsman Charitham*, believed to be authored by Chinnathampi Annavi is the oldest Chuvadis. It narrates the story of King Charlemagne and his 12 paris or warriors and their adventures. This was written in Chendamizhu. *Brijina Charitham*, *Sathyaplan*, *Veerakumara Charitham*, *Daveed Vijayam*, etc. are other major Chuvadis in Chavittunadakam. For generations the Chuvadis were part of oral literature and only recently that these verses got written down.

The chief characteristic of Chavittunadakam is that actors in it stamp on the wooden stage with their feet to the accompaniment of songs and drums.⁵⁵ These stages were traditionally called 'Thattu'. It was made by laying planks in such a way that they make a sound when stepped on. The roof is 16 inches wide and 50-60 inches long. A lamp should be hung in the arena. A Nilavilakk (chandelier) was also used. A large cross is also placed nearby, next to which the chair and the musicians stand facing the audience⁵⁶. The performers in Chavittunadakam wear shiny European costumes⁵⁷. Like Veshangal (Costumes) in Kathakali steps in Chavittunadakam varies according to the type of the character. Costumes will also change according to the nature of the character. Unlike Kathakali, in Chavittunadakam, actors both sing and dance. Initially, only men, including those playing female roles, practiced this art, but today many women also participate. Literally Chavittu Nadakam means 'Stamping Drama'.⁵⁸ It was satirically called Thattupolippan after the loud and unpleasant noise so produced by the actors.⁵⁹

Steps are very important in Chavittunadakam. The fundamental steps of the dance are categorized into irattippukal (couplets), kalashangal (culminations), idakalashangal (interludes), and kavithangal (rhymes). Stutiyogar, Kattyekkarana, Todaya penkal, Rajaparttu/Rajavu, Manthri etc. are the important characters in Chavittunadakam. Instruments

⁵⁵ A. Sreedhara Menon, A Survey of Kerala History. D.C. Books, 1967, p.354

⁵⁶ "Chavittu Natakam", Official Web Portal - Government of Kerala, accessed on 14 January <https://kerala.gov.in/subsubdetail/MTM4MTYwNTM4LjEy/OTQwMzM4MTcuOTY=>

⁵⁷ Chavittu Nadakam, Wikipedia, 24 January 2024 https://en.turkcewiki.org/wiki/Chavittu_Nadakam

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ A. Sreedhara Menon, A Survey of Kerala History. D.C. Books, 1967, p.354

such as Chenda, Patathamper, Maddalam and Ilathalam are used in Chavittunadakam. In recent times, musical instruments like tabala, fiddle, flute and bulbul have also been used.⁶⁰

Gothuruth and Chavittunadakam

Gothuruth village stands out for its exclusive Chavittunadakam tradition, setting it apart from other villages in Kerala. Recognized as the Chavittunadakam village, Gothuruth has been a hub for numerous Chavittunadaka troupes, playing a crucial role in safeguarding and perpetuating this cultural art form. People's names in Gothuruth were associated with Chavittunadakam.

Chavittunadakam became a part of Gothuruth either because Christian families who moved to the village brought it with them⁶¹, or it was influenced directly by the Portuguese from the nearby Kottapuram region. Regardless of the reason, Chavittunadakam has been a significant art form in Gothuruth for a long time. There were many troops and Annavis in this tiny strip of land.

During special occasions like Christmas and Easter, a new stage was set up in the church courtyard with the help of villagers, supervised by the major family heads. In the past, Chavittunadakam performances took place at night with the assistance of lamps. The first act, known as "1st keli," would begin around 6 pm. Asan and his disciples would attend the Holy Mass. Similar to the preparations for a wedding, families were busy arranging things and cooking food.

By 8 pm, the second Keli would commence. Families, carrying traditional 'chhottu' lamps, would proceed to the church with mats in their hands. In the rectory, they would arrange the mats to create their sitting places and patiently wait for the drama to begin. The third act, known as "third keli," would start around 9 pm, marking the beginning of the drama. Similar to traditional Kathakali performances, it took several days to complete one drama, typically spanning ten to twelve days to tell a complete story. In the 19th century, the Varapuzha archdiocese prohibited night-time performances. The reasoning behind this ban was that the night plays led to a decline in attendance for the Holy Mass the following day, affecting the number of people participating. In 1879, Father Mellano, the Vicar Apostolic of the Varapuzha

⁶⁰"Chavittu Natakam", Official Web Portal - Government of Kerala, accessed on 14 January <https://kerala.gov.in/subsubdetail/MTM4MTYwNTM4LjEy/OTQwMzM4MTcuOTY=>

⁶¹ Fr. Roopesh Micheal, Nattakam: Gothuruthinte Charithram, Samskaram, St. Sebastian's Church, Gothuruth, 2023, p.159

Vicarage at that time, issued this order. But there are records that people used to study and perform plays during the day due to his extreme interest in Chavittunadakam. There is evidence that the villagers, in defiance of this order, performed Chavittunadakam at night in certain occasion, which led to the imposition of punishments like attending Holy mass with a cross. However, this prohibition order adversely affected the artform. Sabeena Raphy mentions that for a long time Chavittunadakam was absent in Gothuruth due to this order.

Some of the following Vicar Apostolic also continues the practice. It was only in 1934, during the office of Father Joseph Attipetti, that this provision was removed. As a result, in 1936 Krishnathacharitham was played in Gothuruth.⁶² and later 1937, Sathyapalakan was performed under Kattippambal Varu Asan.

Sabeena Raphy and Chavittunadakam

When delving into the history of Gothuruth, one cannot overlook the prominent figure, Sabeena Raphy. Even today, any Chavittunadaka artist mentions her name with utmost respect. Among the villagers, she is affectionately referred to as "Sabeena teacher." She is recognized for rejuvenating the essence of Chavittunadakam and transforming Gothuruth into a focal point for this art form. Her dedicated efforts played a pivotal role in elevating the popularity and acceptance of Chavittunadakam.

In the past, Chavittunadakam was supported and managed by influential families in the village. The heads of these families determined the details of the drama, including casting decisions. The asans or masters had minimal involvement. However, thanks to Sabeena Raphy's efforts, the Yuvajana Nadana Kala Samithi of Gothuruth was formed in 1954. Ouzo Manakil served as the inaugural president of Yuvajana Nadana Kala Samithi, while Sabeena Raphy took on the role of secretary. This initiative liberated Chavittunadakam from the control of feudal lords.

From the 1950s, Sabeena Raphy was actively involved in Chavittunadakam. She worked to reorganize the Chavittunadakam groups, bringing together key actors like Kadakath Francis (a skilled actor and singer) and Parakkattu Chekkamasan Asan. Sabeena Raphy invited them to choose a master or Annavi, and Kadakath Francis Asan, known for his acting and singing, was

⁶² Ibid. p.160

selected as the chief Asan. Under his guidance, kalaries were established, and after his passing, Kattipparambil Paulose Asan, a disciple of Kattipparambil Varu Asan, took over.

In 1956, Sabeena Raphy wrote an essay on Chavittunadakam for Sahithya Parishath Magazine. Valathol Narayana Menon wrote an appreciation letter to Sabeena for this essay. Following this in 1957, under Yuvajana Nadana Kala Samithi, Veerakumaran Chavittunadakam was performed at the Sahithya Parishath Mahasammelanam in Kottayam. Sabeena Raphy worked to condense the lengthy drama into a half-hour program, garnering more recognition for the art form. Vallathol Narayana Memon served as the president of Sahithya Parishath, and G. Sankara Kurup was the magazine editor at this period. However, in 1931 itself Chavittunadakam was performed in the Sahithya Parishath held at Ernakulam. But the performance didn't gain a broader audience or more acceptance, and the name of the drama was mistakenly recorded in the Sahithya Parishath records. Despite this, essays were written on Chavittunadakam after the performance.

The positive response and encouragement received from the Parishath performance motivated the team to continue promoting this art form. Thanks to their efforts, they had opportunities to perform at Akasavani Trivandrum and Kozhikode centers, as well as in various locations such as Aluva, Kochi, FACT, and more.⁶³

In the folk-art competition of Ernakulam district Gothuruth Yuvajana Nadana Kala Samithi performed Chavittunadakam and won first prize in 1958. In 1959, Gothuruth Yuvajanatana Kalasangham represented Ernakulam district in the folk-art competition held in Thiruvananthapuram on the occasion of Republic Day and became the first prize winner in the competition. K.J. Lonankutty Konath who acted Emperor Karelsman, K.J. Frances Konath who played the Turk Emperor and Maneek Manakil who played Roldona gave brilliant performances.⁶⁴

Following this, they were invited to represent Kerala on Republic Day in Delhi the next year in 1960. They were trained by Paul Asan himself. In 1960, it was a group of twenty-five members from who went to Delhi to perform a dance on the Republic Day Parade, including Sabeena Raphy.

⁶³ Gothuruth, Tytus, Sabeena Raphy 101 Varshangal, 2023, p.35

⁶⁴ Fr. Roopesh Micheal, Nattakam: Gothuruthinte Charithram, Samskaram, St. Sebastian's Church, Gothuruth, 2023, p.161

At the end of a month's stay in Delhi, when the Gothuruth team participated in a performance of folk arts at the National Theatre, the then Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, took the cap of Manik Manakal, who played the role of Roldon, and placed it on his head. This incident left a lasting impression on the villagers of Gothuruth, becoming a cherished memory.

After this Paulose Asan took the leadership to organise kalaris in Thuruthipuram and Gothuruth, Meanwhile, Venganath Ouzo Asan tried to organise another Kalari specially for children in Vadakkekadavu region and for the first time he casted women to play female characters.

After Sabeena Teacher, Georgekutty Asan played a major role in reviving the art of Chavittunadakam with systematic direction. Asan was born in Gothuruth to Konath Juza and Anna. He has taught famous plays like Karalsman, Sathyapalakan, Veerakumaran, and Janova. Georgekutty Asan has performed dance plays at various places including Delhi National Stadium. Also, many programs have been conducted in Doordarshan and radio stations under the leadership of Asan.

One of Georgekutty Asan's notable disciples was Thambi Payyapilli, who joined the troupe at the age of 15. Starting as a soldier in the performances, Thambi Asan has become a prominent figure in Gothuruth Chavittunadakam today. Currently serving as the chairperson of Yuvajana Chattunadaka Kala Samiti, he actively trains children, particularly girls, for the Kerala School Youth Festival. Thambi Asan has also authored several Chuvadis and received numerous awards, including the Kerala Sangheetha Nadaka Academy Award, Kerala Folklore Award, Fellowship, K.R.L.C.C. Puraskkaram, KCBC (POC) Best Actor and Director Award, Mumbai Keli Award, and National Drama Festival Award.⁶⁵

The Yuvajana Chattunadaka Kala Samiti, currently the oldest Nada Kasangham in Gothuruth, holds a prominent position in the cultural scene. Thambi Payyappilli leads this committee, and their repertoire includes plays like Karelsman, Yakobinte Makkal, Satyapalakan, Anchalika, Katturani, Saint Chavara Kurya Kos Achan, Vamanavataram, Tipusultan, and Veluthampi Dalawa. In 1998, the committee was officially registered, and by 1999, it became affiliated with the Kerala Sangeetha Nadaka Academy. Further recognition followed in 2002 when it gained affiliation with the Folklore Academy, solidifying its standing in the cultural landscape

⁶⁵ Ibid. p.164

of Gothuruth. Currently, the committee is actively working on a new play, Hamlet of Julius Caesar.

Joseph Salim Asan manages the Kerala Chavittunataka Academy, which succeeded the Kairali Kalalayam, a previous Chavittunataka troupe that used to operate in the same capacity. In the past, Ouzo Patamadan served as the chief Asan for this committee, but its activities came to a halt. Following this, Joseph Salim Asan assumed leadership and established the Kerala Chavittunadaka Academy.

Joseph Salim Asan, in recent times, played a pivotal role in teaching and performing the play 'Parimarude Maranam.' He has been actively involved in coaching numerous plays, with one of the most notable being the popular and acclaimed 'Sabarimala Dharmashasta.' Today, the Kerala Chavittunataka Academy has evolved into a significant theater venue, fostering performances that encompass both biblical stories and Hindu mythology.

This 50-member troupe committee, led by Joseph Salim Asan, has successfully staged numerous performances throughout Kerala. Notably, eight of its members are talented girls who contribute to the vibrancy and diversity of the troupe's productions.⁶⁶ The academy, under the leadership of Joseph Salim Asan, continues to play a crucial role in preserving and promoting the rich cultural heritage of Chavittunadaka in the region.

In 1984, Gothuruth People's Arts Club was formed. Antony Katakath is Asan of this Chavittunadaka Samithi. For the first time in Kerala to see the solo lead performance in Chavittunadakam was under this troop. On 28 December 2012 Gothuruth Kadalavathhuruth S.A.C organized 'Chavadi Festi' in which Antony Katakath played the role of Roxyline Durandakumaran in the drama Veerawaal. Sabeena Raphy Folklore Centre, headed by Anirudhan Asan is also an important committee in organising Chavittunadakam.

In 2009 MA Baby, Education Minister of Achuthanandan Govt included Chavittunadakam as an exhibition competition. The 53rd School Youth Festival in the academic year 2012-13, when Muhammed Abdurab was the education minister in the Oommen Chandy government, first included tramp drama as a competitive event.⁶⁷

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Tytus Gothuruth, Sabeena Raphy 101 Varshangal, 2023, p.224

Today Chavittunadakam is an important event in Kalolsavam. Thambi Asan himself teaches many students especially girls from different parts of Kerala for the Kalolsavam every year. Thambi Asan says that every year the number of students keep increasing. With the inclusion of a dance competition in the school festival, there was a need for plays that could be completed in twenty minutes. Thambi Asan and Sabu Pulikkathara are experts in writing such Chuvadis.

Chuvadi Fest, an artistic and cultural movement that gained international acclaim for promoting the art of Chavittunadakam, held its inaugural event from the 26th to the 30th of December 2012 at the courtyard of Kadalvathuruth Church. The festival showcased performances by various troupes from Alappuzha to Kodungalur and has consistently received cooperation and support from the Kochi Muziris Biennale. Keli Ramachandran, the theater curator of the Biennale, played a crucial role in the success of Chuvadi Fest, significantly elevating its cultural impact on an international scale.

During the first Chuvati fest, the idea of erecting a statue of Chinnathambi Annavi, considered the founder of Chavittunadakam, took shape. This proposal, initiated by the renowned painter and writer Bonnie Thomas, garnered support from the Kochi Biennale Organizing Committee and K.V. Thomas MP. The construction of the statue was entrusted to the skilled sculptor Anto George, a native of Thrissur. Designed to withstand floods, the statue reaches a depth of twelve feet, making it the only statue of Chinnathambi Annavi.

The venue for Chuvadi Fest is the S.A.C. at the Holy Cross Church in Kadalvathuruth. To enhance the festival experience, a permanent stage was constructed with the support of Cochin Shipyard's Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) funds, amounting to a total expenditure of 25 lakh rupees. The inauguration of this venue was graced by the presence of Malayalam film actor Mammooty.⁶⁸

Chuvadi Fest continues annually, playing a pivotal role in preserving Chavittunadakam and contributing to its worldwide recognition.

Gothuruth is part of the Muziris Heritage Project initiated by the state government. The Chavittunadakam Exhibition Center at Gothurath was inaugurated by Kerala Chief Minister

⁶⁸Fr. Roopesh Micheal, Nattakam: Gothuruthinte Charithram, Samskaram, St. Sebastian's Church, Gothuruth, 2023, p.166

Oommen Chandy. The transformation of the century-old Gothuruth rectory into a Chavittunadakam Museum has been successfully accomplished.

Gothuruth Chavittunadakavedi stands out for its ability to adapt and evolve over time. Through plays such as Swami Ayyappan, Tippusultan, Kannaki, Veluthambidalawa, Mahabali, and Maha Bharatam, Gothuruth Chavittunadakam has expanded its influence across different communities and regions.

One of the important things about Chavittunadakam today is the increasing participation of women. Nita Stalin and Suni Varghese are two important female figures in Chavittunadakam. For the first time these two women have trained 53 women in dance steps and brought them to the arena. They organized and staged a scene from Karelsman Charitham. It is worth mentioning that all 53 artistes were brought together in one scene. In the aftermath of the 2018 flood, the Chavittunadakam troupe faced a significant setback, losing all their costumes and accessories. The considerable expense incurred in replacing these items strained their finances. Many of the Chavittunadakam performers were daily wage workers. Consequently, the 2019 pandemic exacerbated their financial challenges as lockdown measures led to the cancellation of all Chavittunadakam shows, along with a halt in their primary sources of income. For the subsequent one and a half years, they experienced a complete cessation of earnings. However, with the economic resurgence after the lockdown, the troupe gradually restored its financial stability by securing bookings similar to those before the pandemic.

Other aspects of Portuguese Influence

Gothuruth has gained renown for its rich culinary traditions, a heritage that may have been shaped by the presence of the historic Kottapuram fort situated nearby. Being an island, the residents of Gothuruth naturally engaged in fishing activities, and it is speculated that during the age of the Portuguese, they played a vital role in providing fish and other provisions to the officials of Kottapuram fort. This historical contact likely served as a catalyst for the locals to acquire diverse cooking skills, leading to the widespread production of high-quality arrack in nearly every household. Unfortunately, government intervention in the 1990s marked a turning point, resulting in the decline of arrack production and a shift in the culinary landscape.

The culinary prowess of Gothuruth villagers extended to their mastery in preparing an impressive array of fish curries. Sardines held a prominent place in their culinary repertoire,

with the villagers showcasing their creativity by crafting no less than 40 different varieties of fish curries. This diversity wasn't limited to sardines alone; other fish such as Pearl spot, Tilapia, Asian Sea Bass, and Prawns were also skillfully utilized to create mouthwatering and distinctive fish curries. Gothuruth's culinary legacy is deeply intertwined with its past and fuelled by the creativity of its inhabitants.

Analysis and Interpretation

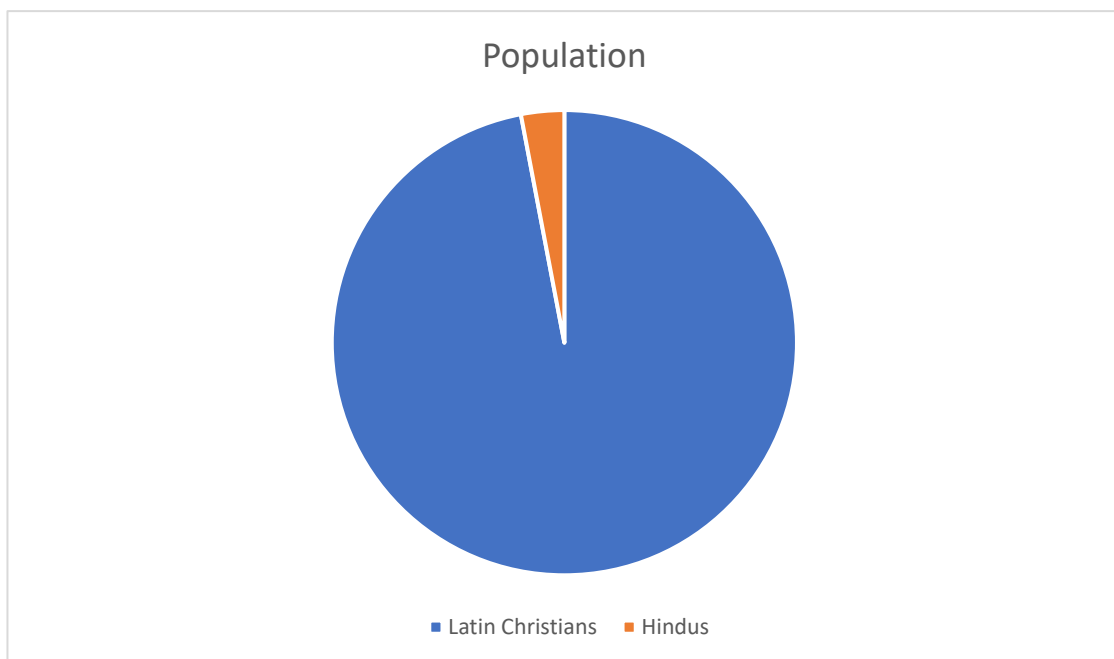
Gothuruth, a village island with a population of mostly Latin Catholics, originated after the 1341 floods in the Periyar River. Initially under the Vilarvattom dynasty, it later came to the hands of Paliyam rulers. In the 16th century, the Portuguese built a fort at Kottappuram near Gothuruth. It is assumed that the residents of Gothuruth served the Portuguese officials in the fort. Portuguese influence brought significant changes in the locals' lives, impacting their food habits, beliefs, and art. The religious persecution and the concurrent battles led to the migration of Latin Christians to this island. Presently, approximately 97% of its inhabitants adhere to Christianity. Gothuruth holds a significant cultural heritage, notably in Chavittunadakam, a classical art form introduced by the Portuguese. It is speculated that the migrating Christian population brought this art form with them to the region. Today, Gothuruth stands as one of the few islands preserving this unique art form.

This paper, aims to get a better understand the cultural heritage of Gothuruth, is based on the information gathered from various primary and secondary sources. The aim of the analysis is to condense the concluded observations to provide responses to the research inquiries. The purpose of interpretation is to explore a wider significance of these responses by associating them with existing knowledge.

Gothuruth- in a nutshell

Panchayath	Chendamangalam
Village	Chendamangalam
Taluk	Paravur
Ward	1,2,17,18 wards of Chendamangalam Panchayath

Area	225 hectors
Population	7500
Boundaries	<p>North- Thuruthippuram and Kottapuram</p> <p>South- Chendamangalam, Madaplathuruth and Thekkethuruth</p> <p>West- Moothukunnam</p> <p>East- Pazhambilli Thuruth and Cheriya Pazhambilli Thuruth</p>



Chapter- 4

Conclusion

In Malayalam we say ‘Mullappombodi ettukidakkum kallinumudoru sworabhyam’- which means that something under the sway of another similarly embodies the same characteristic. When we unravel the history of Gothuruth, this becomes truer. Gothuruth may not have been historically significant on its own, but the influence of nearby places like Kottapuram Fort, Kodungallor, and Paliyam makes it noteworthy, like a hidden gem.

Although emerged in the 14th century, the heritage of region can be traced back to several centuries before- to the history of the ancient Muziris. The story of Muziris begins approximately in 3000 BC, when civilizations such as the Babylonians, Assyrians, and Egyptians embarked on journeys to the Malabar Coast in search of valuable spices. However, the floods in the later centuries demolished the age-old harbour.

The flood of 1341 had redrawn the entire map of Cochin. Several islands got formed and the Periyar itself change its course. Gothuruth was one among the myriad islands which came into form. It's assumed that Gothuruth was governed by the Villarvattom dynasty. In a royal decree from 1595, the Villarvattath raja relinquished his throne to Paliath Achan, listing the regions that would fall under Paliath Achan's authority. Gothuruth was among the areas mentioned in this declaration. Villarvattom is a blend of myth and reality, and its status as the sole Christian royal power is debated.

There's a common belief that Gothuruth served as cattle rearing fields for the Paliam family. However, some scholars today question this idea, proposing new assumptions to explain the origin of the name Gothuruth. Despite this, it's historically documented that the Paliam rulers were the first Janmis (landlords) of Gothuruth. The conflicts between the Zamorin and Cochin Raja, along with religious persecution under Sakthan Thampuran, Veluthampi Dalawa (the Vettikola), and the Mysorean invasion, contributed to the migration of Christians to this island. Place names suggest that Hindu communities may have existed here before Christians, possibly alongside Jews and Dalits.

The arrival of the Portuguese brought significant cultural confrontations that deeply impacted Kerala's socio-cultural landscape. They laid the foundation for public education, the press, seminaries, and introduced new commodities such as wine, bakery items, and plants like cashew, papaya, tobacco, red chillies, tapioca (part of the Columbian exchange). Intercourse between the Portuguese and natives resulted in the creation of a community, many of whom eventually became a significant part of the Anglo-Indian population. Their influence is also resulted in architecture. The Portuguese made notable contributions to Indian languages by introducing words like Mesha, Kasera, Varantha, etc. In some parts of Cochin, a Portuguese dialect is still spoken today. The religion also underwent a lot of changes like the Synod of Diamper, Coonan Cross Oath and the revival of Hinduism. Indeed, many of the changes brought about during the Portuguese period, such as linguistic influences and the introduction of certain plants, continue to have a lasting impact today.

The Kottapuram fort, built by the Portuguese in 1528, had an important role in building the history of Gothuruth. Joy Gothuruth suggests that, the existence of fort made Kottapuram region a bustling city with a substantial population. A large library, containing numerous manuscripts from around the world, used to exist. Portuguese missionaries, coming from distant places, were crucial in collecting and preserving these manuscripts. The fort probably attracted people from nearby islands who might have worked on Portuguese buildings. According to Jeejo John Puthethath, since Gothuruth had a population at that time, these people might have also helped with work in the area. They might have been involved in fishing and arrack production, among other activities. This is still evident in the culinary culture of Gothuruth.

However, the more significant aspect of Portuguese culture is the art form of Chavittunadakam. Gothuruth itself is known as the village of Chavittunadakam. We are not sure whether the Portuguese missionaries had taken direct role in promotion of Chavittunadakam in Gothuruth.

Legends says that this cultural form was established by the Portuguese missionaries, who were worried about the pagan culture and practices among the native Christians, in order to revive the spirit of original Christian faith. Chinna Thampi Annavi- a mythical figure is believed to be the founder of this artform. He is believed to have authored Karelsman Charitham- the 1st major Chuvadi in Chavittunadakam. Although founded among the fishing communities of the

coastal region, the inland migration of Christians made this art famous in other regions of Cochin also.

Gothuruth might have been one of such area. Although the exact origins of Chavittunadakam in Gothuruth remain unclear, the island played a significant role in reviving and promoting this art form. The cultural essence of Chavittunadakam runs deep within the people of Gothuruth, a fact exemplified by the renowned Sara Case, which serves as a testament to the profound impact this art form has had on them. Neighbouring areas like Thuruthipuram also had Chavittunadakam troops, most of which disappeared due to the economic burden they have to pay. Despite facing obstacles from the church and feudal class, the Christian population of Gothuruth, led by stalwarts like Sabeena Raphy, played a crucial role in promoting Chavittunadakam.

Sabeena Raphy's dedicated efforts were pivotal in elevating the popularity and acceptance of Chavittunadakam. She reorganized Chavittunadakam groups, bringing together key actors like Kadakath Francis and Parakkattu Chekkamasan Asan. Sabeena Raphy's essay on Chavittunadakam in 1956 garnered recognition, with an appreciation letter from Valathol Narayana Menon. Under her leadership, the Yuvajana Nadana Kala Samithi of Gothuruth, formed in 1954, represented Kerala in the Republic Day parade of 1960 in New Delhi. Her work "Chavittunadakam: Oru Charithra Padanam" remains one of the best studies on Chavittunadakam.

Notable figures like Georgekutty Asan and Thambi Payyapilli contributed significantly to its revival and promotion. Various troupes and committees, like the Yuvajana Chattunadaka Kala Samiti and Kerala Chavittunataka Academy, have played significant roles in preserving and promoting Chavittunadakam.

Recent developments, such as the inclusion of drama in the School Kalolsavam, the Chuvadi Fest, the erection of Chinna Thampi Annavi's statue, the Muziris Heritage Project, and the construction of stages, have further popularized this art form. Additionally, increasing participation of women and the creation of more secular dramas like "Veluthampi Dalawa," "Mahabali," and "Kannaki" reflect recent trends in Chavittunadakam. After the difficulties of the Pandemic and the floods the Chavittunadakam artists is now reviving their spirits and

Other than Chavittunadakam Gothuruth is also famous for Boat racing, Volleyball, Tug of war etc. In this tiny piece of land, with 97% of Christian population there are two churches - St. Sebastian's and Holy Cross - along with several chapels. The church has played a crucial role in laying the foundation of modernization in Gothuruth. Priests like Fr. Joseph Naronja Nelikkunnaseri and Fr. Emmanuel D'costa deserve special mention in this context. Additionally, Fr. Mickel Nilavareth, referred to as the Architect of Modern Gothuruth by Joy Gothuruth, is an indispensable figure. These priests took the initiative in establishing schools and building roads and bridges, thereby significantly transforming Gothuruth. The churches, with their bell towers, cemeteries, and transformative reconstruction, stand as enduring symbols of devotion and perseverance. As the community continues to seek new ways to meet its religious and spiritual needs, the churches and chapels remain integral to the fabric of life on Gothuruth Island.

In conclusion, Gothuruth stands as a testament to the historical interplay between global events and local dynamics. Situated on the banks of Periyar, this small island, with its backwaters and scenic beauty, has been shaped by the historical significance of nearby locations such as Kottapuram Fort and Kodungallor. The island's connection to Portuguese history is profound, dating back to the 16th century, and its cultural legacy endures, preserving age-old Portuguese influences. As explored in this project's chapters, Gothuruth's evolution reflects a complex tapestry of socio-economic, cultural and religious transformations, offering valuable insights into the enduring impact of historical encounters on local communities.

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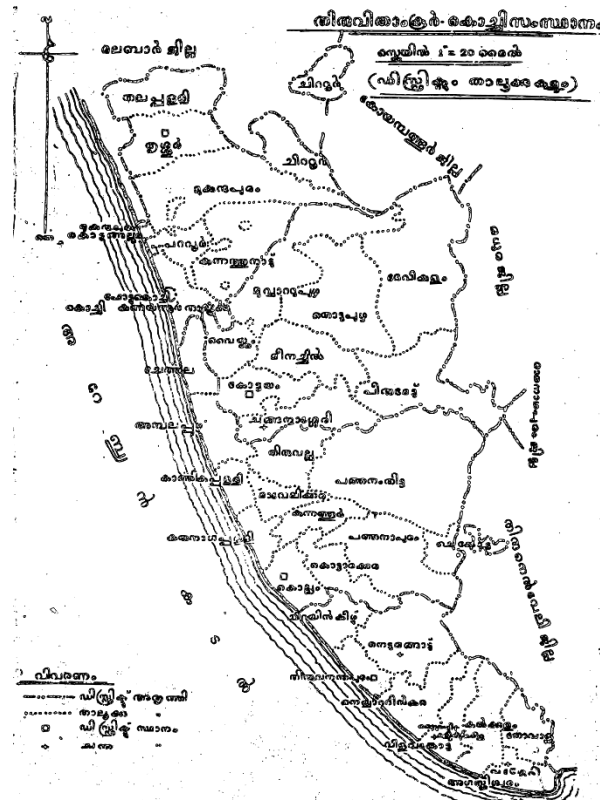
Appendix-1- Questionnaire

1. How did Gothuruth originate?
2. Why did Gothuruth become a predominantly Christian area?
3. How did the name Gothuruth develop?
4. Can you discuss the royal families that held sway over Gothuruth?
5. How did Portuguese culture penetrate into Gothuruth?
6. Can you narrate the history of St. Sebastian's Church?
7. What are the current signs of Portuguese influence?
8. How did Gothuruth transform into a Chavittunadakam village?
9. What contributions did Sabeena Raphy make to Chavittunadakam?
10. Who were the notable masters/Asans of Chavittunadakam?
11. What were the famous Chavittunadakam performances in the past and present?
12. Did the 2018 flood and COVID-19 impact the art of Chavittunadakam?
13. What is the current condition of Chavittunadakam in Gothuruth?
14. What are the new trends in Chavittunadakam?
15. What about the representation of women in Chavittunadakam?
16. How do the younger generation respond to Chavittunadakam?

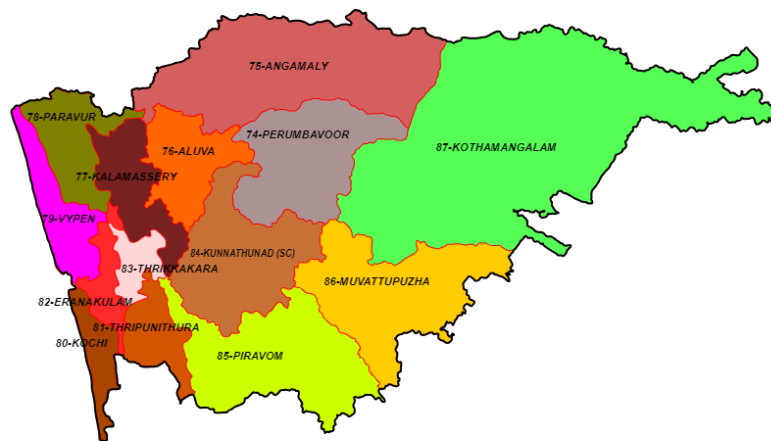
Appendix-2- Maps



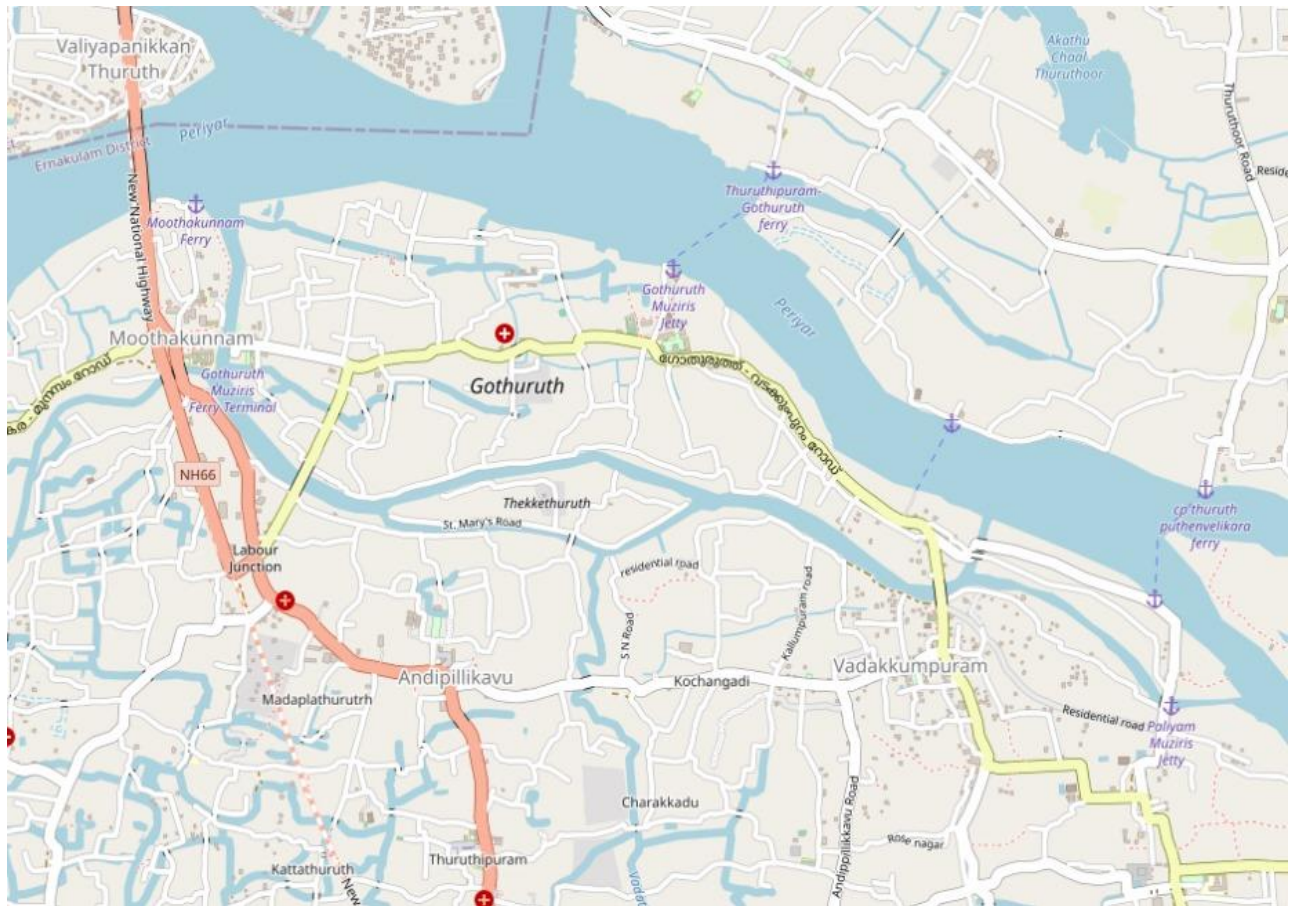
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Gothuruth

Appendix- 2- Pictures



Paliyam Palace



Paliyam Nalukett



St. Sebastian's Church and its bell tower



Rectory



St. Sebastian's School, Gothuruth



Chavittunadakam Stage, Gothuruth