

Translation and Transformation: Kadamattathu

Kathanar - A Legend in Transition

A Thesis Submitted to the University of Hyderabad in Partial Fulfilment for the

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Doctor of Philosophy

in Translation Studies

by

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Note on Documentation

As the term ‘Kadamattathu Kathanar’ is used in different font styles throughout the thesis, it may lead to ambiguity. Hence the researcher intends to state clearly in the beginning that according to the guidelines of *MLA Handbook* 8th edition, the name should be in quotation marks, italicised and normal font when it is used as part of a larger work; an independent work and character name respectively. Hence when the term ‘Kadamattathu Kathanar’ is used as a legend, it is enclosed in quotations; when it is used as a character, it follows normal font and when it is used as the title of serial or drama, it is italicised.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Legends carry memories of the past. They entail the collective memories of a community that are passed on from one generation to another in the form of oral narratives. As they are a combination of fact, imagination and fantasy, to the layman, they may sound like casual narratives that are not worth serious study. However, even though a legend resists its own definitions, two essential features that make it different from other folk narratives are its highly localised nature and association with history. It has the ability to appropriate history as it passes through each cultural context and skilfully intertwine it with fiction and fantasy. As the folklorist Raghavan Payyanad notes, when a fiction is narrated in the light of historical facts, even the element of fiction gains authenticity (193). It is also the reason why legends have more convincing power and acceptability than myths and folktales. Thus the study of legends can shed light on the cultural and historical imprints of an age. Earlier, they had been a subject of concern for a limited number of disciplines including anthropology, folklore, and psychology. However, as they are the cultural manifestations of each context through which they have evolved, they need to be approached and interpreted from a broader perspective. On account of the vastness of the subject, the primary focus of the intended research is narrowed down to one of the popular legends in Kerala- “Kadamattathu Kathanar” (Priest of Kadamattom). It centres on the life and activities of a Christian priest in Kerala who is believed to have possessed supernatural powers. It is a perfect example of heroic legendary as the hero Kadamattathu Kathanar tames the evil spirits and wins over his opponents with his great power of sorcery. Even though the legend involves fictional elements and supernatural beings such as

*Yakshi*¹ and *Chathan*², it bears the historical imprints of each age it passes through. As the historian Raghava Varier notes, it offers flashes of insight into the life of the native Christians before the arrival of the Portuguese missionaries in Kerala in the sixteenth century (xiii). Hence, a closer inspection of the specific legend can provide deep insights into the collective experiences, attitudes and values of a community at a particular point of time and can contribute immensely to the studies related to history and culture. Moreover, it has so many fascinating elements such as magic and horror that it has been subjected to multiple versions, interpretations and rewritings over time.

Started as an oral narrative, the legend of “Kadamattathu Kathanar” has passed through various genres, media and socio-cultural contexts. The oral text attained a fixed identity through the work *Aithihyamala* (Garland of Legends) by Kottarathil Sankunni in 1909. Then, it was re-represented and popularized by a professional theatre group, Kalanilayam Theatres in 1965. Later, it was made into a film namely *Kadamattathachan* (Priest of Kadamattom) in 1966 and 1984 directed by Reverend Father George Thariyan and N.P Suresh respectively. Then it made its way into the mini screen through the Malayalam TV serial *Kadamattathu Kathanar* broadcast on the private satellite channel, Asianet in 2004. As the serial version of the legend was a huge success, its similar versions were telecast on other private channels such as Jaihind TV and Surya TV in 2008 and 2011 respectively. Meanwhile, Kalanilayam Drama Vision³ also resumed staging their plays since 2003 and *Kadamattathu Kathanar* still continues to be an important part of its repertoire. It also made its appearance on the new media platforms such

¹ The concept of *Yakshi* is very vast and diverse. *Yakshi* is regarded as a female goddess in many traditions including Buddhism, Jainism and Hinduism. The *Yakshi* discussed in the legend under study reflects the folk notion of *Yakshi* as a supernatural evil spirit prevalent in the Malayalam tradition. It also carries the traces of *Yakshi* worship tradition in Kerala centuries ago. A more elaborate idea of the concept is given in the following chapter.

² It refers to an evil spirit associated with black magic. A more elaborate description is given in the following chapter.

³ Kalanilayam theatre group has modified their title a few times over time. The chronological order includes Kalanilayam Theatres, Kalanilayam Dramascope, Kalanilayam Drama Vision and Kalanilayam Stagecraft.

as Facebook and YouTube through the online posters of Kalanilayam Stagecraft and the teaser of the upcoming big budget movie *Kathanar: The Wild Sorcerer* directed by Rojin Thomas, various comedy skits, blogs, memes, documentaries and other videos. Thus, the legend breaks the boundaries, passes through several historical and cultural contexts and proves to have immense potentiality to get re-represented in new genres and media that covers oral versions, print, film, theatre, serial, and new media platforms. The primary texts preferred for the study include the oral versions collected from Kadamattom and Panayannarkavu (2016-2019); *Aithiyamala* (2012); the archival materials including posters, photographs and newspaper reports concerning Kalanilayam's theatrical representation of the legend under the same title *Kadamattathu Kathanar* (1965, 1974 and 2019); the movie *Kadamattathachan* (1984) directed and produced by N.P Suresh; the TV serial *Kadamattathu Kathanar* (2004-2005), directed by T.S Saji, produced by Subramaniam Karthikeyan and telecast on Asianet; and the teaser of the upcoming movie *Kathanar: The Wild Sorcerer* directed by Rojin Thomas and produced by Sree Gokulam Movies .

All the aforementioned re-representations of “Kadamattathu Kathanar” point to a specific quality of the legend— its translatability. Here, the researcher uses the term translatability not in the sense as the Translation Studies, especially during the 1940s and 1950s approached it- the fundamental issue of whether a text is translatable or not. Instead, the legend under study has many fascinating elements such as magic and horror that are appealing to the readers or audience of all the historical contexts it has passed through. Hence translatability is used in the sense that the legend gets translated multiple times and undergoes continuous renewal and transformation at various points of time. It has immense potentiality to get adapted to its contemporary living conditions and generate new variants.

The legend acquires multiple, intended, and unintended dimensions and significance in its course of journey through various historical contexts. Major shifts in worldviews and

thinking were reflected in these translations of the legend when it functioned across time and space. It is observed that the thematic as well as the formal properties of the text undergo changes in each of its translations. However, the study does not aim to offer a comparative analysis of different media. It intends to examine how the legend of “Kadamattathu Kathanar” adjusts to the changing demands and circumstances of a period and what kind of transformations it undergoes in the process. It also addresses two important questions: what are the historical imprints carried by the legend of “Kadamattathu Kathanar” and what do they communicate to us? And what are the specific characteristics of this legend that contribute to its translatability? As the study attempts to address these questions, it also demonstrates how Translation Studies with a folkloristic perspective can contribute to study the process of translation as a transformative act.

1.1. Significance of the Study

The legend of “Kadamattathu Kathanar” has great significance in the cultural context of Kerala as it is one of the rarest legends in Malayalam that is subjected to multiple representations at different points of time. The legend was so popular that it broke the boundaries of its region, attained immense fame and spread across Kerala. Moreover, the legendary hero, Kadamattathu Kathanar enjoys great devotional popularity that the church of Kadamattom receives steady flow of pilgrims round the year. It must be noted that the church does not attribute the status of sainthood to Kathanar. However, he is revered by his devotees from various religious backgrounds including the Muslims and Hindus due to his fame for miraculous capabilities (Nair 79). Even though the church forbids the people from engaging in any kind of superstitious customs and practices, many devotees still light candles and offer cock sacrifice at the *Pathala Kinar*⁴, through which Kathanar is believed to have disappeared

⁴ It is the underground portal or well through which Kathanar is believed to have disappeared. It is situated near the Poyyedom chapel next to the church of Kadamattom.

in the end. Thus the legend proves to have great cultural significance and contemporary relevance. It is highly popular that it does not wither under the impact of urban life. Instead, it has immense ability to adjust itself to the changing socio-cultural environment and generate new variants. Even though the previous literature has dealt with the legend as part of a larger work, no previous study has analysed the diverse variants of the legend in particular and examined its transformation from the perspective of both Translation Studies and Folklore.

1.2. Legends - A Background Study

Before moving on to the conceptualization of legend in the context of Kerala, it is crucial to have an understanding of the previous studies related to the legends. An investigation of all the previous approaches made by the scholars and experts in the field to define its nature is vital to illuminate one's understanding of the genre. However, as most of these studies are based on the legends of the West, they offer a European perception of the legend

Even though the legend came to be identified and started evolving as a new genre with the advent of the field of folklore, it has been prevalent in various cultures across the world since time immemorial. However, with regard to the etymology of the word, the original sense of the term 'legend' is quite different from the way it is perceived today. It was closely associated with the medieval hagiography⁵. According to the studies undertaken by Linda Degh, the word derives its origin from the Latin word *legere* which means 'to read' and it referred to a piece of reading or book that dealt with the lives of the saints arranged in the order of the Christian calendar which was read in the church during the feast days of the saints. As it was hagiographical in nature, its origin can be traced back to the times of the Apostles. However, it lost its canonical status after the division of the Church and the establishment of

⁵ It refers to the writing of the lives of the saints or venerated persons.

diverse denominations. This led to the proliferation of religious legends as they played a crucial role in promoting religious education.

As legends grew longer and taller at a rapid pace, towards the end of the Middle Ages, the term legend developed a new meaning - “inauthentic information” (“Legend” 2: 485). Soergel points out one of the important reasons behind this new interpretation of the term. He observes that during the period of Reformation⁶, many Counter-Reformation programmes were introduced by the clerical elites in order to restore the enthusiasm for Roman Church and propagation of legends were one of the strategies adopted by them to renew the reports of miracles performed by the saints. Legend-making about shrines were also common in this period in order to link the saints to specific religious sites and this initiative gained the legends greater importance (126-129). Studies by Trevor Johnson, Philip Soergel and Marc Forster underline the fact that countless legends were created and promoted as part of massive propaganda campaigns to highlight the miraculous stories of local cults and defend local shrines from Protestant intervention. For instance, the sainthood of Diego de Alcala, a fifteenth century Franciscan⁷ friar and the stories of his miracles evoked so much discussions and controversies in the highly charged atmosphere of the Counter-Reformation period as it involved the personal and political interests of the king of Spain and the then Pope Sixus V (Villalon 691). Thus legends started losing their credibility and began to be perceived as untrue stories. However, later, the church itself made a sharp distinction between authoritative scriptures and legends as many of them were undocumented narratives (Ditmas 245). Hence the term began to gain a wider connotation and became controversial in nature in the light of the religious debates towards the end of the Middle Ages. Gradually, the legends continued to

⁶ Reformation refers to the religious revolution that took place in the Western Christianity in sixteenth century Europe. The main objective of the movement was to reform the Roman Catholic Church and establish Protestant Churches. The main proponents of the movement were Martin Luther and King Henry VIII.

⁷ It refers to a member of the Roman Catholic religious order founded by St. Francis Assisi in 1209.

praise the supernatural deeds of the local cults and these legends were not only concerned with the stories of the saints, but also with known or fictional historical heroes or heroines with extraordinary qualities.

Although Counter-Reformation period instigated the proliferation of various religious legends, legends praising the heroic deeds had existed in different phases of evolution of the society. The heroic legendary tradition can be traced to pre-historic times as the demands of wars and other traits of heroes urged humanity to glorify them orally or through other sources. Linda Degh identifies heroic legend as “a long epic poem composed of traditional motifs and performed orally in song, accompanied by a musical instrument.” (“Legend” 2: 485). It combines myth and folktales with elements of history in myriad ways. The famous old English epic poem *Beowulf* offers a perfect example for a heroic legendary character. Although *Beowulf* is an epic poem written by an anonymous author in English, its setting is completely Scandinavian and derives its origin from the Danish legendary tradition. The hero Beowulf has all the traits of heroic culture as he is a strong warrior who defeats the monster Grendel, its mother and a dragon (Hudson x-xii). This ‘dragon-killer’ motif can be traced in many medieval legends related to saints and culture heroes⁸. The famous legend of Saint George and the Dragon is one such legend that involves killing of the dragon and saving the princess and the origin of this tradition can be traced to fifteenth century pageantries. Talking about legend genres, Degh identifies folk legend as “a short, oral prose narrative, created by the people and transmitted orally from generation to generation, it has been characterized as a story that treats its unusual, extranormal, metaphysical or supernatural topics from the vantage point of the real world of its tellers and audiences” (“Legend” 2: 485). It combines traditional elements with heroic and religious legends. Because of its supernatural associations, it dealt with the adventures on earth and other worlds; and fights with demons and evil spirits; and befitted itself

⁸ It refers to a mythological hero specific to a group that embodies the ideals of a society.

into the specific cultural environments (485). Thus they were not only the voice of the religion, but also the voice of the folk. The banning of legend recitals at shrines of the saints by the catholic hierarchy by the sixteenth century could also be one of the reasons for the pouring of Christian miracles into the folk tradition (Degh, “Folk Narratives” 76-77).

The legends gradually became repositories of traditional wisdom and constituted one of the oral forms that Andre Jolles states as “simple, spontaneous products originating in the spoken language, as opposed to complex, consciously created literary forms” (qtd. in Degh, “Folk Narratives” 53). However, they became the focus of scholarly interest only in the nineteenth century. The factors that contributed to the evolution of folklore as an academic discipline or a new subject of enquiry is worth interrogation. It may be observed that multiple factors such as industrialisation, print revolution, nationalism, colonialism, translation and cultural literacy -- all these facets of European modernity played a crucial role in setting the context for the evolution of various folk genres including the legends.

With the industrial revolution and the introduction of printing press, many direct or indirect references of the folk traditions have made casual appearances in print. As Blackburn mentions, “that print did not produce new books, only more old books” (1). Although the print revolution marked a gradual shift from listening culture to reading culture, the literacy rates were not high in most of the European countries. Blackburn notes that in order to overcome this difficulty among the readers, many publishers chose popular entertaining narratives like ballads, legends and folktales for printing and these books carried illustrations and images in abundance for easier comprehension. For instance, *The Golden Legend*, a hagiographical collection compiled by Blessed Jacobus de Varagine in 1275 was published in many European languages and they gained huge popularity in the fifteenth century (9). Moreover, Dorson’s study notes that cheap pamphlets, jestbooks and booklets which contained entertaining stories circulated by chapmen in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were mostly based on

folklore. The antiquarian scholars like John Ashton and George Laurence Gomme made an effort to collect these casual or accidental productions and republished them in the scholarly editions that appeared in the nineteenth century. After examining the chapbook legends of the English hero Tom Hickathrift, Gomme observed that the verbal and sub-literary variants of the legend were closely interlinked (qtd.in Dorson 466). Newspapers and magazines also carried folk materials in abundance. It can be inferred that the folk materials lodge in print basically in three ways- an accidental occurrence in newspapers, weeklies, magazines, comic books and so on; as part of a conscious effort by the folklorists or translators to collect, document and preserve them; and when a creative writer makes use of folk stuffs and develops it into a different structure for artistic purposes. Hence, a substantial amount of folk materials including folk tales, legends, myths, proverbs, beliefs and so on were diffused through print.

Similarly, in the sixteenth century, European writers provided exotic accounts of the customs and cultural alterity of the natives in the colonies and these accounts of the Asian communities instigated curiosity and interest in the Western European audience to a great extent. Moreover, many orientalist literature and translations of folk materials conjured up the images of the East in a fascinating manner. The tales of *Panchatantra* were known in Europe even before the direct translations of such oriental works in the eighteenth century. For instance, Theodore Benfey's study on *Panchatantra* tales in 1859 provides enough proof for the diffusion of Indian folktales from Asia to Europe and how they influenced the European thinking (although it was criticized by the later scholars) (Handoo 2-5). The French Orientalist Antoine Galland introduced *Arabian Nights*, a collection of Middle Eastern folk tales to the Western audience through his French translation, *Les mille et une nuits (Thousand and One Nights, 1704-17)* which was later translated into English, German, Italian, Dutch, and Russian before the turn of the century.

More significantly, the rise of Romanticism in the eighteenth century also instigated a revival of interest in the past. Although it was basically an aesthetic movement in the beginning, it began to interact with the politics of the states in Europe after 1800. Its fascination with the past and reliance on self-assertion and individuality changed the nature of nationalism in a tremendous manner. Romantic nationalism in Europe, specifically in Germany inspired by the ideas of Rousseau and Johann Gottfried von Herder played a significant role in linking folklore and nation (Wilson 110). The pioneers of folkloristics, Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm (Grimm Brothers) from Germany were among the first to identify the significant features of the legend in depth for the first time and laid the foundation for the later thoughts in this field. In their introduction to the collection, *Deutsche Sagen* (1816), Grimm Brothers began defining the legend by pinpointing its characteristic features in contrast to the folktale or *marchen*. According to their findings, the legend is more historic and less poetic in comparison to tale. Moreover, unlike a tale, it sticks to a specific locale and a name which has been preserved through history. Although it's adherence to a local habitation restricts the course of the legend, this aspect makes it more homely. Due to this reason, it has less flexibility than a tale which finds its home anywhere. The Grimm Brothers compare the legend to dialects of a language where one can repeatedly find the strangest words and imageries which have lived through ancient times. On the contrary, the tale carries an entire piece of ancient poetry from the past to the present without any pause (qtd. in "Legend" 487). Degh observes that following the line of Grimm Brothers, many other scholars like Max Luthi also attempted to differentiate between a tale and a legend. He identified tale as a pure fantasy which is expected to delight or entertain people whereas the legend as a piece of information that addresses significant existential questions. Although the former enthralls the audience, it doesn't produce any after effect after it is over. However, the legend "is a subjective hesitant account that appeals to the personal concerns of average people and reports things that are breath-taking, baffling, horrendous,

uncanny, shocking, bizarre, grotesque, or even funny but that could happen to anyone while doing everyday chores”(487). Once the narration is over, it raises important moral and philosophical concerns.

After the Grimm Brothers, many folklore schools found immense interest in legends and the scholars and experts in the field started collecting, categorising and analysing more than thousands of legends across different times and spaces. However, their definitions could not offer much in comparison to the definitions put forth by Grimm Brothers. They also found it hard to describe the legend and continued to define it in comparison to a fairy tale. Degh recognises certain additional attributes of the legend pointed out by the later generation of legend scholars and experts. The following are some of their insights -- “it is didactic (Theodor Benfey), it is the archive of the prehistory of a people (Reinhold Kohler), it is a “dramatized superstition” (Karl Wehrmann), it belongs to the “naïve uncritical learning of the folk in relating an extraordinary experience or event believed to be true” (Friedrich Ranke).” (“Legend” 73).

It is interesting to note that the above definitions failed to touch upon the form, meaning and function of the legend. They approached legend from a literary perspective with a complete disregard for the social context and performance. However, deeper dimensions of the legend began to surface in its later stages. In the oldest definitions, a legend was merely an oral prose narrative that was objective in nature. It was only at a later stage it was perceived to be subjective in nature that it had intimate connection with the lives of people. The major components of the legend are always grounded in one’s early experiences of childhood. In a given community, it can even appear as a rumour and then gets transformed into a multi-episodic story over time. Leopold Schmidt’s observations of the legend are relevant in regard to this structural inconsistency or formlessness of the legend. He observes that the legend carries only the content and no particular form and it varies in accordance with the nature of

the message it delivers (qtd. in “Legend” 73). It is observed that it need not be narrated in entirety from the beginning to the end. To be more precise, it is always taken for granted that the vital components of the legend are known in the given cultural environment and the narration does not require a full-length explanation. Hence it always follows a fragmentary and unfinished form. Degh notes that a tale carries its message in an artistically well-crafted framework whereas a legend leaves its message open-ended, ambiguous, uncertain or unfinished (“Folk Narrative” 488).

It is observed that “the purpose of telling a legend is to report, inform, explain, teach, advise, warn, help or enlighten” (487). In this way, it tries to address some of the existential concerns of man. The legend passes the traditional knowledge and learning to the younger generation as well as to the uninitiated. It is the narrative content of the legend that carries this educational essence. As the purpose of the legend is primarily rooted in one’s own cultural environment, it can be inferred that the legend is highly sensitive and context specific. Matthias Zender states that one’s understanding of this genre can be deepened only if it is perceived through the living conditions, beliefs and ideology of the people in a particular locale; similarly, Max Luthi proposes that as a tale focuses on the adventures of a glorious hero, a legend centres on the encounters of an ordinary man in a passive manner (qtd. in “Folk Narrative” 73).

It is observed that the narrative style of a legend is quite fascinating. In fact, it follows no refined or polished style and the manner is conversational and fragmentary. The oral legend is likely to be performed by people from all walks of life at any formal or informal spaces at any time in a spontaneous manner. A strange incident happening in the locality, a casual remark or question concerning a local hero, a mysterious sight of something and so on can instigate the launching of a legend. (74). It can begin and end in as abrupt ways as possible. It need not be narrated by just one person, other proponents may also add information as the story unravels which eventually turns it into a communal version. Thus the narration becomes conversational

as the participants express their opinions through approvals, disapprovals, additions and other modifications. One of the prominent features of the legend is that it has the capacity to prompt debates as it always challenges the nature of human destiny (74).

The narrative construction of the legend is quite fascinating. It has been observed that in the oral culture, the legend tends to be in a warm, flexible and interactive lifeworld. As someone initiates the topic of a common interest, the most informed person in the group sets the frame for discussion. The proponents of the legend make sure that the event is substantiated with enough evidences to make it sound very convincing. It is always presented in such a way that it looks like it had happened to them or someone else (75). The teller gives meticulous accounts of the eye witness, place, time and circumstances. However, in the end, the legend leaves the question whether it is true or not. Degh's observations throw light upon this aspect of the legend. She notes that there are two factors that render credibility to the legend- firstly, a verifiable fact supported by physical evidence and secondly, an illusion which is believed to be true. In other words, the acceptance of the legend is completely based upon the way its narration is structured. The art lies in the skilful and precise formulation of convincing statements (74). In this way, it can be inferred that although the legend follows a fragmentary style, it has an identifiable structure. In order to bring credibility to the story, the narrator generally introduces the story with an evidence such as a specific place, time period and so on. He or she then describes the event and in most cases takes it for granted that some of the components or traditional knowledge of the legend are shared by the audience. By presenting it as if it had happened to him or her or someone else, the narrator does a painstaking job to gain the trust of the audience. The concluding part reaffirms the essential information or advice and the source. It has been noticed that the discussions in legend studies started throwing light upon these possibilities of the narrative process of the legend rather than the unresolved

questions in the end. It is observed that the participants show deep interest in exploring the universal questions in the world and expressing their views on them.

Legends have been closely associated with rumour. Both of these narratives centre on a single event and is often described as a true event. Anyone who engages in studying legends is likely to get confused between the legend and rumour. Ernest Bernhein examined the similarities of both the narrative forms and stated that “legend is simply a survival of rumor” (Tangherlini 375). However, the boundary between legend and rumour began to blur when William Jansen put forth the terms- short term legends (legends which have a short life) and long term legends (legends which stay for a long time), to describe the life and disappearance of some of the narratives. The only prevailing distinction between these forms is that while a legend appears as a narrative, a rumour appears as a brief statement (375).

Although many legend scholars were engaged in revising the previous definitions of legend, it was still a relatively neglected field in comparison to its related field of folktales due to its lack of literary and aesthetic appeal. However, a newly awakened interest in legend scholarship was observed in the 1950s and 60s after the congresses of International Society for Folk Narrative Research and the series of Sheffield conferences. It signalled the development of an international legend catalogue and the adoption of new approaches to legend study that included disciplines like anthropology and psychology. One category worth mentioning in this regard is Reidar Christianssen’s Index of Migratory Legends that appeared in 1958. It was an extension of the type index of folk tales of Europe and America developed by Antti Aarne of Finland and Professor Stith Thompson of Indiana. As Briggs notes, they classified the folktales into three main basic categories- 1) Animal Stories 2) the Ordinary Folk Tale and 3) Jokes and Anecdotes. However the subdivisions of these categories were too complicated. Section 1 included “Wild Animals, Wild and Domestic Animals, Man and Wild Animals, Domestic Animals, Birds, Fish, Other Animals and Objects”. Section two was subdivided into “A. Tales

of Magic (that are divided into Supernatural Adversaries, Supernatural Husband, Wife or Relative, Superhuman Tasks, Supernatural Helpers, Magic Objects, Supernatural Power or Knowledge and Other Tales of the Super-natural); B) Religious Tales; C) Novelle and D) Tales of the Stupid Ogre". Section three is divided into "Jokes and Anecdotes, Numskull Stories, Stories about Married Couples, A Woman, A Man, The Clever Man, Lucky Accidents, , Jokes about Parsons, Tales of Lying (and Absurdities), Formula Tales and Unclassified Tales" (Briggs 302). These tales merged into each other and there was no space to accommodate the newly discovered ones. It is to fill this gap that Reider Christiansen extends the Arne-Thompson numbers from 3000 on and developed further type outlines. Briggs observes that the major difference between the Migratory Legends and those categorised in Arne-Thompson list is that the legend is believed to be true and is rooted in a folk belief whereas the folk tale is a piece of fiction meant for entertainment. The Migratory Legend Index was divided into eight categories: "The Black Book of Magic, Witches and Witchcraft, Legends of the Human Soul, Ghosts and Revenants, Spirits of Rivers, Lakes and the Sea, Trolls and Giants and The Fairies, Domestic Spirits, Local Legends of Places, Events and Persons" (Briggs 303). It has been observed that among the diverse categories of legends, The Migratory Legends is the only category that centres on finished legend types. Moreover, as it does not find its home in a specific location, it is more widespread, fictionalised and frozen in comparison to other legends. Another distinction made by the ethnologist Carl Wilhem von Sydow in 1934 was *memorate*/*fabulate*. As *memorate* constituted personal experiences of one's own, *fabulate* implied the personal accounts which undergo a change through oral transmissions (qtd. in Degh, "Legend" 490).

One of the drawbacks of the Arne-Thompson index of folk tales was that it relied heavily upon European sources and there was a tendency to generalise the nature of legends on the basis of their analysis. As the legend scholars who followed the line of Arne-Thompson

index were likely to make the same mistake, a committee under the chairmanship of Reidar Christiansen was appointed for the compilation of as many legend catalogues as possible. Although it did not meet the requirements of the study, it paved the way for two conferences called by President Kurt Ranke: at Antwerp, 1962 and at Budapest, 1963. Degh points out the four tentative classifications of the legend put forth by the International Society for Folk Narrative Research at Budapest in 1963: a) Etiological and Eschatological legends- They deal with the stories concerning the creation and origin of plants, animals and things; b) Historical Legends and Legends of the History of Civilization- These narratives deal with historical events which impacted upon the life of local communities, segments of national histories and historical personalities which involves social and national heroes; c) Supernatural Beings and Forces or Mythical Legends- These narratives revolve around human encounters with the supernatural world, supernatural powers and knowledge; d) Religious legends or Myths of Gods and Heroes- They are primarily Christian legends which is the only form which has literary origins and are a recent addition to the classification of folk legendry.

However, the above classifications proved to limit the scope of the legend studies as many legends from different categories blended into each other. For instance, some of the legends were both supernatural as well as historical at the same time. Furthermore, these kinds of classifications relied greatly on content with complete disregard for social context and performance. Structural inconsistency was another factor that plunged the researchers into crisis. However, it played a vital role in indexing the products for archiving. As part of developing an international legend catalogue, every country was focussing its effort on developing and improving its representative deposits of legendary texts.

One of the unique aspects that sets the legend apart from folktales is its close association with folk belief. Rohrich states that “The reality of the legend, exemplified by its ideas, beliefs and events vouched for as “true” contrasts sharply with the idealized folk tale “reality,” or

Marchenwirklichkiet” (qtd. in Hand 441). Hence, they are always told very earnestly and received with deep seriousness. It is due to this strong element of conviction that the legends are more home like and closer to reality. Legend scholars like Kunzig, Simonsuuri, Tillhagen, Degh, Jech and Hand find that folk belief is something which is fundamental to the legend and its impact upon the listeners. Tillhagen states that the legend cannot survive independently as it is part of a folk belief and Degh observes that such inherent beliefs keep the legends alive (qtd. in Hand 441). In some parts of the world like Hungary and Czechoslovakia, such folk legends were termed as ‘belief stories’, ‘belief legends’ or ‘belief tales’ (441) by folklorists such as Honti and Ortutay. It is interesting to note how Linda Degh who had contributed to the concept of ‘belief legend’ in her earlier studies, *Folktales and Society* (1989) changed her position in her research paper “What is a belief Legend?” in 1996. The extended field work in rural and urban Europe and the United States made her rethink her views on this categorisation of legends. She found that there was no need of a distinct category as “belief legends” as belief is an integral part of all legends or in other words legends contextualise and interpret belief (44).

Other alternative terms put forth by the Sheffield seminarians after 1960s were ‘contemporary’, ‘modern’ or ‘urban’ legends. These terms evoked discussions and debates in the scholarly field as they were in contradiction with the traditional attributes of the legends. Scholars like Dan Ben-Amos had always regarded ‘rurality’ as one of the primary qualities of folklore as countryside and spaces of wilderness were often the breeding grounds of folk narratives. But the new terms undermined these qualities of folklore. According to Paul Smith, contemporary legends constitute a “short traditional narrative, or *digest* of a narrative, that has no definitive text, formulaic openings and closings, or artistically developed form; alternatively described as modern, urban, or belief legends” (493). Unlike the traditional legends, contemporary legends are non-supernatural, secular and mundane in nature as they deal with

real life situations. Although their themes are centred on ordinary events such as accidents, surprises, contaminated food and so on, they are always presented as true events with a twist. They are disseminated through mass media such as newspaper, magazines, radio, television, telephone, websites, email, fax and print sources. French folklorists including Paul Sebillot in 1880s were engaged in exploring whether the legend was restricted to rural culture or if it also dealt with the educated classes. It was after Richard M Dorson's seminal work *American Folklore* (1959) that 'city legends' emerged as a new field of interest for folklorists. He cites the example of 'Death Car' legend that draws the origin in a real Ford car based incident in a small Michigan town in United States in 1938. A man had committed suicide inside the car and his body rotted inside the car for months. The man named Clifford Cross who bought the car tried myriad ways to get the terrible smell out of the car in vain. Although the incident had taken place in 1938, people in the town had been talking about it even after the 1950s. Dorson finds such narratives as instances of modern folklore. Although he began calling such narratives as 'city legends' in the beginning, later, 'Urban belief tales' or 'modern legends' and by 1968, they came to known as 'urban Legends' (qtd.in Ellis, 496).

So far, the background study of this chapter explored the concept of legend from a European perspective. It is observed that most of the studies concerning legends are carried out in the light of the Western norms as a great deal of studies in folklore has been carried out primarily in the West. Although the intellectual trends in Europe had created parallel waves in the East, folklore was not given considerable attention by many scholars and writers due to its primitive and unmodern nature in the pre-colonial era. During the period of colonial modernity, many writers, journalists and scholars had shown interest in the collection and categorisation of Indian folklore, but they were not enthusiastic about theorising folklore that is specific to Indian culture. However, the contemporary Indian folklorists including Jawaharlal Handoo,

Kailash Patnaik, Raghavan Payyanad, Nandini Sahu and others have attempted to examine folklore from the Indian perspective.

Before moving to the Kerala context, a brief overview of the folklore in India is necessary to deepen our understanding of the nature of folklore in the Indian context. This section may not touch upon all the folklore texts in India, rather, it attempts to grasp the nature and depth of the Indian folk tradition. The folklore of India is so vast and diverse that it is widely spread all over South and Southeast Asia. It is this vastness of the Indian subcontinent that embodies over hundred living languages, their respective dialects, speech varieties, diverse writing systems and oral traditions that makes the Indian folk tradition distinct from that of the Europe. Ancient Indian epics like *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana* cannot be regarded as mere texts, they represent a whole tradition which had existed around twenty-five hundred years ago. K. Satchidanandan, in his work “Breaking the Boundaries: The Folk, the Classical and the Modern” mentions the diverse versions of *Ramayana* that cut across regions like “Bhili, Santhali, Agaria etc. besides Annamalese, Balinese, Cambodian, Malayasian, Thai, Khotanese, Laotian, Sinhalese, Tibetan and Chinese” (278). Muslim versions like *Mappila Ramayana* and Buddhist and Jain versions of the epic also exist. Such pan-Indian distribution of this text reminds us of the terms ‘Great Tradition’ and ‘Little Tradition’ introduced by the American Anthropologist Robert Redfield. According to him, “‘Great Tradition’, said to be carried by Sanskrit, is seen as pan-Indian, prestigious, ancient, and authorized by texts. The ‘Little Tradition,’ or really the ‘Little Traditions’ in the plural are seen as local, mostly oral and carried by the illiterate” (qtd. in Ramanujan xviii). In this regard, ancient Indian epics like *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana* by Veda Vyasa and Valmiki respectively are regarded as part of this Great Tradition owing to their Sanskrit origin, authorship, pan-Indian distribution and being ancient in nature. However, this concept had been criticized by many scholars as it failed to consider oral traditions and cultural performances also as texts. Moreover, it must be noted

that all the above mentioned written, classical texts, including the Puranas, which are regarded as Sanskrit texts and have been attributed authorship were once part of the vibrant oral tradition in India. For instance, epics like *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* have been regarded as the “codifications, retellings and elaborations of folklore and legends, say, around the Surya, Kuru, Puru and Naga clans” (Satchidanandan 279). Such various layers of these texts cannot be neglected when one attempts to classify them as Great Tradition and Little Tradition. As both classic and folk traditions are constantly engaged in a continuous and dialogic process, such categorisation is always problematic.

The story telling tradition in India is so vast and old. It is a repository of stories like *Panchatantra*, *Jataka Tales*, *Brihadkatha*, *Brihadhkathamajari*, *Kathasaritsagara*, *Hidhopadesha*, and many more apart from the Vedas, Puranas and epics. *Panchatantra*, regarded as the oldest surviving collection of animal fables is a rich source of ancient Indian narratives, which has penetrated deeply into diverse folk traditions and literatures across the world. Therefore one can observe similarities and connections between *Kathasarithsagara*, another medieval collection of Indian stories, *Panchatantra*, *The Arabian Nights* and Aesop’s fables in many ways. They have also been sources for great European literary works such as Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales*, Boccaccio’s *Decameron tales*, and many of Shakespeare’s plays. For instance, the motif or theme in Shakespeare’s *King Lear* can be observed in many South Indian folktales. “The Princess Who Loved Her Father Like Salt” that appears in Maive Stokes’ *Indian Fairy Tales* (1880) has a similar theme of that of *King Lear* (Prasad, 254). Moreover, much before Shakespeare had written the play *All’s Well That Ends Well*, the themes had appeared in the eleventh century Indian story collection, *Kathasarithsagara*. Although Shakespeare might not have made use of the sources directly, these motifs share a sense of kinship as many of his Italian sources are connected to *The Arabian Nights* and *Kathasarithsagara*. German philologist Theodor Benfey, in his introduction to the translation

of *Panchatantra* (1859) have opined that Indian folktales were the sources to many later Indian and European story collection including that of Grimm's Stories (Handoo 2-5). However, this view was disregarded by many as he mainly relied on the literary sources for his study and gave little importance to the sources in oral tradition.

As India is the seat of an ancient civilization, applying European norms and concepts to Indian story telling tradition is a narrow approach. A. K. Ramanujan was one of the first folklorists to explore the nature of Indian civilization in this direction. He put forth a theory of Indian civilization as "context specific, pluralistic and reflexive" (Satchidanandan 285). Instead of perceiving folklore as Little Tradition, he views it as an active facilitator in the production of cultural meaning. Because of this unique nature of the cultural tradition of India, and the continuous dialogic processes between the folk, classic, Sanskrit, bhakti and the modern, any attempt to fit the Indian folktales and legends into the European categorisation must be discredited (285). Hence, while approaching the legends and folktales of India, one must attempt to comprehend and acknowledge the plurality and overlapping nature of its diverse traditions.

1.3. The Perception of Legend in *Aithihyamala*

The legend of "Kadamattathu Kathanar" made its first appearance in print in the Malayalam literary magazine *Bhashaposhini* in 1909 as part of the modernist mission of collecting and compiling the legends of Kerala by Kottarathil Sankunni. The work which consisted of 126 legends was published in eight volumes in the years 1909, 1914, 1925, 1926, 1927, 1929, 1932, and 1934 respectively. These 126 stories came to be perceived as legends as they made their first literary appearance under the title, *Aithihyamala* which is often translated as 'garland of legends'. Even the two English translations of the text by Sreekumari Ramachandran and Leela James appeared under the titles *Aithihyamala: The Great Legends of Kerala* and *The Collected Aithihyamala: 'The Garland of Legends' from Kerala* in 2010 and

2015 respectively. A.B Raghunathan Nair in his work *Kottarathil Sankunni: Jeevithavum Krithikalum* (Kottarathil Sankunni: Life and Works) says that *aithiham* can be roughly equated to the term ‘legend’ (127). Thus it is assumed by various translators and scholars that the word *aithiham* is the corresponding term for the concept of legend in the Malayalam context. Although the legend is used as a convenient term in many translations, whether the European perception of legend and *aithiham* bear the same idea is worth investigation. According to *Shabdatharavali* (A Star Cluster of Words), which is considered as the most authentic Malayalam dictionary in the twentieth century, *aithiham* means that which is “traditionally and orally transmitted” (“parambaryamayai paranjuvarunnathu”; my trans.; 432), “stories orally passed on from old generations” (“pazhamakkar paranjuporunna katha”; my trans.; 432) and ‘Tradition’; “whatever happened in ‘ithiha’ is called legend” (“ithihathil sambhavichathu aithiham”; my trans.; 432) and ‘ithiha’ is divided into two parts- ‘ithi’= ‘ingane’ (like this) and ‘ha’= ‘prasidham’ (famous) (432). However, in the European tradition, even though the legends had existed since time immemorial, the etymology and original sense of the term legend is quite different as it was hagiographical in nature. Thus a brief examination of the text is crucial to understand the nature and perception of *aithiham* as envisaged by Kottarathil Sankunni.

The nationalist context that led to the birth of *Aithihamala* and how it became a product of colonial modernity are mentioned in detail in the following chapter as they are part of its argument. Sankunni had travelled across different parts of Kerala as part of attending various literary conferences. Whenever he visited a new place, he was deeply curious to explore the legends, myths and heroic stories; people and way of living; and topography of the respective local habitation. Hence *Aithihamala* touches upon all these indigenous aspects as it deals with legends related to magic, *Yakshi*, supernatural powers, rituals, customs, martial arts, elephants, temples, literary scholars, poets, festivals, kings, ayurveda and many more. For instance, the

legend of “Chembakassery Raja” (King of Chembakassery) deals with the life of the King Chembakassery and the origin of the place name ‘Kudamaloor’; the legend of “Mahabhashyam” (Great Commentary) deals with intelligence and scholarship; the legend of “Thalakulathoor Bhattathiri and Pazhur Padippura” (Thalakulathoor Bhattathiri and Pazhur Gateway) deals with astrology; the legend of “Vilwamangalathu Swamiar” touches upon temples, customs and festivals, the legend of “Kidangur Kandangoran” deals with the special abilities of an elephant, “Kozhikkottangadi” (The Market of Kozhikode) revolves around the goddess Lakshmi; the legend of “Kadamattathu Kathanar” deals with sorcery, *Yakshi* and *Chathan*; and so on.

It must be noted that most of the narratives in *Aithihamala* revolve around a local habitation and are presented by Sankunni in a very convincing manner which is a common aspect of *aithiham*. In order to make the readers believe that the story is true, an *aithiham* always intertwines fiction, fantasy and history. For instance, in the legend of “Kadamattathu Kathanar”, Kathanar crossing the river on a plaintain leaf bears fictional elements; Kathanar’s encounter with *Yakshi* bears supernatural elements and the traces of native Christianity points to historical elements. However, it is difficult to trace the historicity of *aithiham* as it is subjected to modification when it passes through different historical and cultural contexts. As Sankunni published these legends in the beginning of the twentieth century, some of the elements of the colonial period may also be observed in them. For instance, the legend of “Kottayathu Rajavu” (The King of Kottayam) talks about the Malighan Grant availed by the royal family of the King of Kottayam from the British government. Similarly, the uses of the terms like British Malabar and British Malayalam by Sankunni in legends of “Poonthanathu Namboori”, and “Thalakkulathur Bhattathiriyum Pazhur Padippurayum” are indicative of the era when the Malabar region was under the direct British rule. In the legend of “Oru Europeante Swamibhakti” (A European’s Adoration of Swami), it is interesting to note that the story

centres on the British Colonel Munro who served as the Diwan of Travancore and his deep reverence for Sri Padmanabha Swami. By describing Munro's deep veneration for Padmanabha Swami, Sankunni justifies our own tradition and values. He also points to the flexibility and acceptability of our own tradition.

Moreover, Sankunni's deep veneration for kings and upper caste personages are evident from the way in which he describes them. He often associates qualities such as eloquence, scholarship, intellect, craftsmanship, perfection, piousness and so on with Brahmins and his descriptions of kings are full of praises. Legends such as that of "Chembakassery Rajavum Kaypuzha Rajniyum" (The King of Chembakassery and the Queen of Kaipuzha) touch upon royal personages like Marthanda Varma, Swati Tirunal as well as the local kings. However, the reference of minor figures in *Aithihyamala* stories are worth mentioning in this regard. Bini B.S observes that Sankunni refers to some of the minor characters, not by their names, but by their caste, religion or gender. Some of the terms are *Antharjanam* (Malayali Brahmin woman), *Muhammadiya* (Muslim woman), *Kanakkan*, *Ezhava*, *Nair*, *Ambalavasi*, *Moothathu* and so on (terms indicative of caste) (123).

Another important feature of *Aithihyamala* worth mentioning is the legends related to elephants. Elephant plays a significant role in the cultural domain of Kerala and it is regarded as the state animal. Its presence is crucial in social rituals and ceremonies like temple festivals and public events. Legends of "Kidangur Kandangoran", "Vaikathu Thiruneelakandan", "Panthalam Neelakandan", "Aranmula Valiya Balakrishnan", "Thiruvattadhi Kesavan" and so on serve as perfect examples for anthropomorphism. They have prominent physical features, intelligence and loyalty. The elephants are always referred to as 'he' instead of 'it'. In the legend of "Vaikathu Thiruneelakandan", Sankunni gives an explanation for it. He says that some people may find it problematic to address an elephant as 'he' instead of 'it'. However, readers should understand the fact that Thiruneelakandan is not an animal by nature (265). In

all these legends, the elephant is raised into a status of more than a human being. As the elephant is always addressed as ‘he’ and not ‘she’, a gendered cultural notion of elephant also comes into play. There are no *pidiyana* (female elephant) stories in *Aithihamala* collection. In the same story, Sankunni tells that even in the species of elephants, one could find caste hierarchies such as Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaisya and Shudra and Thiruneelakandan belongs to Brahmin caste (265). Hence these stories give a deeper view of the cultural milieu of Kerala and its complex hierarchies like caste, class and gender.

One cannot find a central theme connecting the 126 legends in *Aithihamala*. However, it may be observed that each volume of *Aithihamala* starts with the legend of a goddess and ends with the legend of an elephant. The only exception is the first volume which starts with the legend of a king. Moreover among the 126 legends, 123 legends deal with Hindu figures and the remaining three non-Hindu figures include Kadamattathu Kathanar, Kayamkulam Kochunni and Arakkal Beebi. In the absence of these non-Hindu figures, *Aithihamala* would have been a text exclusively devoted to Hindu legends. Thus the representation of these non-Hindu figures can be perceived as an inclusive act to create a common past for the Keralites irrespective of the religious differences. The 123 legends revolve around the then dominant community and the remaining three legends centre on Muslims and Christians who belonged to the minority. When Kayamkulam Kochunni questions the dominant community and Kadamattathu Kathanar questions other Hindu ritualists, it makes the text acceptable. Moreover, such kind of social tensions and intergroup conflicts always surface in legends.

The reappearance of characters is also one of the characteristic features of *Aithihamala*. For instance, the character Vilwamangalathu Swamiar appears in “Thalakkulathur Bhattathiriyum Pazhur Padippurayum”, and two other legends under the same title “Vilwamangalathu Swamiar”. Similarly Kunjaman Potti who is a character in “Kadamattathu Kathanar” makes a previous appearance in the legend of “Kunjamanpottiyum

Mattappalli Namoothirippadam”. Kunjaman Potti and his magical powers are already known to the readers before they move on to the legend of “Kadamattathu Kathanar”. It serves to make the characters more immediately understandable to the readers. Alex Olrik had observed in 1909 that the presence of repetition was a fundamental principle of folk narratives (qtd.in Gray 289). Some of the repeated motifs in *Aithihyamala* are temple, elephant, *Yakshi*, *Chathan*, magic, medicine and so on. Bini’s observation on *Aithihyamala* stories are relevant in this regard. She finds that sometimes characters from narratives of other region may appear as part of important local mythical narratives. For instance, the appearance of the mythical emperor Vikramaditya of Ujjain and Vararuchi in the legend of “Parayipetta Pandhirukulam” (122).

The next aspect under scrutiny is the categorisation of legends in *Aithihyamala*. The background of the study has already dealt with the European perception and categorisation of legends. However, categorisation of the legends in Malayalam in the light of European perception cannot be justified as the cultural experience of legends is different in the tradition of Kerala. By doing so, one would be neglecting the ideological peculiarities of other cultures. For instance, the legends related to elephants in *Aithihyamala* are specific to the ritual tradition of Kerala. They play a significant role in the cultural imagination of Kerala as they are closely associated with temple festivals, auspicious events, ceremonies and public events. The researcher has already discussed four tentative classifications of the legend put forth by the International Society for Folk Narrative Research at Budapest in 1963 namely a) Etiological and Eschatological legends b) Historical Legends and Legends of the History of Civilization c) Supernatural Beings and Forces or Mythical Legends d) Religious legends or Myths of Gods and Heroes. It is difficult to incorporate the elephant stories into this framework as envisaged by the European cultural imagination. A.B. Raghunathan Nair followed the European model of classification to interpret the legends in *Aithihyamala* in the work *Kottarathil Sankunni-Jeevithavum Krithikalum* in 1989. However, Vishnu Namboothiri attempts to put forth a

different model of classification for the legends in Malayalam in his work *Naatodtivistijnaaneeyam* (Folkloristics) in 1996. The legends are divided into five categories- 1) *Ulpathiparam* (origin related narratives)- for example, legends related to festivals, worship, art forms and so on; 2) *Mahatmyaparam* (greatness related narratives)- For example, legends related to temples, pilgrim centres, rivers, peculiar things and so on; 3) *Mrigacharithapadhanaparam* (animal related narratives)- for example, legends related to elephants; 4) *Charithraparam* (historical legends)- for example, legends related to royal personages and 5) *Mahadhapadhanaparam* (based on great personages)- for example, legends related to magicians, scholars, astrologers, poets and so on (224-225). According to this classification, as Kadamattathu Kathanar is believed to be a famous magician, the legend falls under the last category. However, this form of classification disregards supernatural figures such as *Yakshi*, *Chathan*, and so on.

Raghavan Payyanad is one of the contemporary folklorists who offers a scientific, and detailed approach towards the categorisation of legends in his work *Aithihyamala: Paadavum Padanavum* (Collection of myths and legends – Text and Study) in 2017. He offers three sets of contents for the *Aithihyamala* narratives: 1) General, 2) Cultural and 3) Thematic. The general part offers the general order of the 126 legends as published by Sankunni. The second part which is based on the cultural sphere categorises the narratives into three: a) Travancore based stories (64 stories); b) Cochin based stories (21 stories) and c) British Malabar stories (26 stories). The thematic classification categorises the narratives into twenty four: a) Stories based on martial arts, b) Ritual stories, c) Elephant stories, d) Stories based on illusionists, e) Origin stories, f) Festival stories, g) Stories based on physical strength, h) Stories based on poetry, i) Stories based on astrology, j) Stories based on goddesses, k) Stories based on place names, l) Stories based on scholarship, m) Stories based on sin/curse, n) Stories based on devotion, o) Magical stories, p) *Yakshi* stories, q) Stories based on logic, r) Stories based on

loyalty, s) Entertaining stories, t) Stories based on kings, u) Stories based on loyalty, v) Stories based on medicine, w) Stories based on great personages, and x) Stories related to truth/justice. It may be observed that Payyanad's inquiry into the nature of legends in *Aithihyamala* follows an inductive method and provides new catalogues for types and motifs. Although his thematic classification is very extensive, it is hard to draw a precise distinction between these twenty four categories. These types and motifs cannot be regarded as the standard parameter for categorisation because these narratives are not static in nature. Instead, they are so dynamic and flexible that these categorisations may merge or overlap each other in many ways. For instance, the two categories *Abhyasa Kathakal* (stories based on martial arts) and *Kayika Kathakal* (stories based on physical strength) are interconnected. Both the legend of "Kulappurathu Bheeman" which falls under *Abhyasa Kathakal* and the legend of "Pathayikkara Namboorimaar" which falls under *Kayika Kathakal* focus on the great physical strength of the characters. Pathayikkara Namboorimaar eat huge quantities of rice and they have the power to stop a moving elephant (Sankunni 178). Similarly Kulappurathu Bheeman also eats huge quantities of rice and has sufficient power to collapse a tiger and a bison (481). Here. Kulappurathu Bheeman has not learnt any fighting arts, he is known for his massive body and superhuman strength. In fact *Abhyasa Kathakal* may form a sub-category of *Kayika Kathakal*. Similarly, the legend of "Kadamattathu Kathanar" also exhibits such crossover between categorical boundaries. It is placed under *Yakshi Kathakal* (stories related to *Yakshi*). However, as Kathanar is a great practitioner of sorcery, it may also fall under the category, *Mantharavadha Kathakal* (stories related to sorcery). Hence, it may be inferred that such categorisations in folklore are ever evolving and subject to new sub-groups and categories. Although these categories tend to be slippery in nature, they pave way for more interpretive possibilities. Thus due to the greater diversity, *aithihyam* proves to be difficult to contain and breaks exceeds the framework of European categorisation of folklore.

With regard to time, *aithiham* finds venue in recent past, remote past and any time and with regard to place, it deals with both the world of today and different world. For instance, legends such as “Kayamkulam Kochunni”, “Kadamattathu Kathanar”, “vattaparmabil Valiyamma” and “Alattur Nambi” revolve around the recent past as well as the world of today. At the same time, legends which have mythical characters like Vararuchi like that of the legend of “Parayipetta Panthirukulam” and mythical setting like that of “Kodungallur Vasoormala” deals with remote past and different world. The elephant stories exhibit folktale characteristics that the time period is indeterminate. In terms of attitude, the stories in which principal characters are human (kings, outlaw, scholars, astrologers, and many more) give a secular face to *aithiham* whereas stories based on divine characters like “Kumaranalloor Bhagavathy”, “Kilirur Kunninmel Bhagavathy”, and temples like “Thrippunithura Kshetrathile Ulsavangal” (Festivals of Thripunithura temple) are sacred in nature. In terms of principal characters, human characters such as Kayamkulam Kochunni, animal characters like Kidangur Kandankoran, suprahuman characters like the previously mentioned goddesses and deities appear in the *Aithihamala* stories. Moreover, it is interesting to note that even a material like mango appears as the principal character in the legend of “Pandanparabathu Kodanbharaniyile Uppumanga” (Pandanparambathu and the Twisted Jar of Mangoes).

Thus it can be inferred that any attempt to fit *aithiham* into European generic framework proves to be futile. It is because *aithiham* is so rich and diverse in terms of genre that it interacts with other systems and also exhibits the folktale and mythical characteristics mentioned in the European model. In other words, *aithiham* becomes a blanket term which accommodates legends, folktales and myths. Indian folklorist Jawaharlal Handoo observes that it is hard to find a common framework to categorise folklores of various cultures. Some cultures tend to be rich in some genres as the *marchen* (folktale) is a strong genre of Indo-European cultures owing to various geo-cultural factors (Handoo 10). All the features of *aithiham*

discussed in the chapter offer an ociotypical view or the ethnic and cultural distinctiveness of legends. It brings into light the specific characteristics of Kerala culture. Furthermore, all the attempts to categorise *aithiham* like that of A.B. Raghunathan Nair, Dr. Vishnu Namboothiri and Raghavan Payyanad points to the fact that *aithiham* is a dynamic, fluid and ever-evolving concept that resists stabilization.

A few legends in *Aithihamala* have moved beyond the print medium and made their way into the popular media. The legend of “Kadamattathu Kathanar”, “Kayamkulam Kochunni” and “Parayipetta Panthirukulam” are a few examples. With regard to the legend of “Kadamattathu Kathanar”, the previous studies have examined the legend as part of a larger work. Corinne G. Dempsey, in her work “Lessons in Miracles from Kerala, South India: Stories of Three “Christian” Saints” touches upon the legend of “Kadamattathu Kathanar” along with the stories of two other miracle workers in Kerala including Marttasmini and Sister Alphonsa. One of the aspects which needs to be critically looked at in this work is difference between the popular image of Kathanar in the minds of the devotees and the image constructed by the Church. Even though Kadamattathu Kathanar is a Christian priest practising sorcery, he has never been attributed sainthood officially by the Church. However, there are countless devotees from various religious backgrounds who visit Kadamattom church on a regular basis and believe in his miraculous powers. In the work, Dempsey examines an oral version, which she collected from K.P Isaac, the Vicar of Kadamattom church in 1994. Dempsey’s work was very relevant to the present study as it offered an old oral version of the legend.

The encounter between *Yakshi* and Kathanar is one of the important episodes in the legend of “Kadamattathu Kathanar”. The dissertation entitled “The Woman Who Walks the Night: Yakshi as Myth and Metaphor in Kerala’s Cultural Imaginary” by Meenu B focuses on the concept of *Yakshi* in the cultural context of Kerala. In addition to the popular horror movies in Malayalam, it touches upon the aspect of *Yakshi* in the legend of “Kadamattathu Kathanar”

and *Kadamattathachan* (1984) as it plays a crucial role in the popularisation of the notion of *Yakshi* that is prevalent in the folk tradition of Kerala. Her work focuses on the construction of the concept of *Yakshi* in both *Aithihamala* and the movie version of the legend that appeared in 1984. Similarly, the work entitled *Yakshi Sangalpam* (The concept of *Yakshi*) written by Dr V.V Haridas in 2016 discusses in detail how the concept of *Yakshi* and *Yakshi* worship in Kerala is intimately connected to the Buddhist, Jain, Hindu and folk tradition of Kerala. It gives possible reasons for the representation of *Yakshi* as an enchantress who lures men into the forest and kill them as portrayed in the legends of *Aithihamala* such as “Kadamattathu Kathanar” and “Kaladiyil Bhattathiri”. In its attempt to offer deep insights into the concept of *Yakshi*, it throws light on several other aspects of Kerala culture including the decline of Jainism with the arrival of Brahmins, the conversion of *Yakshi* groves into *Bhagavathy* temples and so on. It was also relevant to the present study as it places the notion of *Yakshi* in a broader cultural context and offers multiple perspectives of *Yakshi*.

The background of the study has discussed the previous studies that have dealt with the concept of legend and *aithiham* as well as the legend of “Kadamattathu Kathanar”. Most of the studies in Malayalam concerning *aithiham* discussed so far offer a literary perspective. As they do not touch upon the oral versions of legends, the multiple lives of a legend in the oral tradition remain unaddressed. Moreover, they disregard factors such as performance, oral formulaic expressions, and social context that are crucial to the study of folk narratives. With regard to the legend of “Kadamattathu kathanar”, the previous literature has only dealt with specific aspects of the legend such as the notion of *Yakshi* and its religious dimensions. However, no prior literature has exclusively focused on the diverse variants of the legend that cover the orality, print, theatre, film, serial and the new media platforms and examined its trajectory from an interdisciplinary perspective. To fill this void in the previous literature, the present study attempts to undertake a much expanded approach by tracing the diverse paths

taken by the legend under study and examine its transformation from the perspective of both Translation Studies and Folklore.

1.4. Theoretical Framework

Traditionally, translation was viewed merely as a linguistic activity that was concerned with the transfer of texts from one language into another. However, with the emergence of Translation Studies as a new discipline, the processes involved in translation began to be approached and interpreted from a broader perspective. The idea of translation was conceived differently by various scholars at different phases of the evolution of Translation Studies. Modern definitions of translation such as that of Roman Jakobson expanded the traditional view of translation as the transfer of meanings from one language to another and accommodated other semiotic networks at play. He classified translation into three different areas: intralingual translation (interpretation of verbal signs by means of other signs of the same language); interlingual translation or translation proper (interpretation of verbal signs by means of some other language) and intersemiotic translation (interpretation of verbal signs by means of signs of nonverbal sign systems) (114). The emergence of such new definitions of translation has expanded the frame of translation theories in such a way that it covers the “entire intersemiotic network of language and culture, one touching on all disciplines and discourses” (Gentzler 1). Thus today, translation theories are relevant to any kind of representation. Moreover, due to the highly interdisciplinary nature of translation studies, it has expanded to accommodate a wide range of fields such as literature, linguistics, history, anthropology, psychology and so on.

As the present study deals with the transformation undergone by the legend of “Kadamattathu Kathanar” in each of its translations, it is necessary to state clearly in the beginning of the study the fact that any kind of translation involves a transformation. This question of transformation has been discussed by various scholars such as Roman Jakobson,

Andre Lefevere, Walter Benjamin and Jacques Derrida at different points of time. Roman Jakobson clearly states in his work “On Linguistic Aspects of Translation” that “the meaning of any linguistic sign is its translation into some further, alternative sign, especially a sign ‘in which it is fully developed’ ” (114). Similarly, Andre Lefevere holds the view that translation is the rewriting of an original text. He says that translation is the most recognizable form of rewriting and manipulates the original to some extent under the constraints of certain ideology or poetics (7-8). Thus Lefevere clearly states that the original undergoes modification under the influence of the “dominant ideological and poetological currents of their time” (8).

Walter Benjamin, in his work “The Task of the Translator” (1923; translated by Harry Zohn in 1968) has emphatically stated that translation is a transformative process. His approach is rooted in “the autonomy of translation, its status as a text in its own right, derivative but nonetheless independent as a work of signification” (Venuti 11). Benjamin puts forth the question: “If original does not exist for the reader’s sake, how could the translation be understood on the basis of this premise?” (16). He says that no translation is possible if it intended to resemble the original in its ultimate essence. Instead the ‘afterlife’ of the original is nothing but a “transformation and a renewal of something living- the original undergoes a change” (17). He holds the view that “fidelity in the translation of individual words can almost never fully reproduce the meaning they have in the original” (21). He says that instead of the reproduction of the meaning of the original, the translation should supplement the original. Just like the fragments of a vessel that are glued to each other match one another in the smallest details, translation, “instead of resembling the meaning of the original, must lovingly and in detail incorporate the originals mode of signification, thus making both the original and the translation recognizable as fragments of a greater language”. He says that the task of the translator is to “release in his own language that pure language which is under the spell of another, to liberate the language imprisoned in a work in his re-creation of that work” (22).

However, it is the emergence of deconstruction that undermined the theoretical framework on which translation was built. The traditional translation theories that were concerned with the notions of equivalence and faithfulness assumed the presence of an original in their approaches. However, with the emergence of poststructuralist theories such as that of Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault and Martin Heidegger, the notion of original itself came to be undermined. As Gentzler notes “at the foundation of Derrida’s thought is the assumption that there is no kernel or deep structure or invariant of comparison, nothing that we may ever discern- let alone represent, translate, or found a theory on” (147). It points to the fact that any kind of representation itself is a re-representation. Thus “the translated text becomes another of another earlier translation and translated words” (147). This calls for the reformulation of the earlier notion of translation as the transfer of meanings from the ‘original’ source text to the ‘secondary’ target text as there is no stable meaning or text to transfer or carry forward to another system of signification. Hence Derrida prefers the term ‘transformation’ or rather ‘regulated transformation’ over translation. According to him, “Difference is never pure, no more so is translation, and for the notion of translation: a regulated transformation of one language by another, or of one text by another” (qtd. in Gentzler 167). Thus all the theories that we have discussed so far clearly define and underline the fact that translation is a transformative act.

The folklorist Linda Degh’s observations on the transformative nature of the legend as a genre is also relevant to the present study. According to her, a legend is extremely variable and context-sensitive in nature that it reacts “sensitively to local and immediate needs that modify both and reformulate both the narrative and the messages they communicate” (75). She holds the view that a legend does not die under the impact of urban life. Instead, it adapts easily to its modern living conditions and generate new types based on the most up-to-date issues of contemporary life (77). As the legend of “Kadamattathu Kathanar” started as a folk narrative,

an important aspect that needs to be highlighted is the fact that a legend does not have an origin. A legend has an anonymous origin (Varier xi) and for this reason, it is very difficult to trace its historicity. In other words, the notion of original is irrelevant to the study of the translations of legends as they are oral narratives with anonymous origin.

The theoretical framework has attempted to establish the fact that any kind of translation is a transformative act. The legend's ability to create new variants in accordance with its changing circumstances involves the process of translation and transformation. Thus as a legend is extremely variable in nature and produces countless variants, the study of the transformations of the legend of "Kadamattathu Kathanar" can be very effective in demonstrating the concept of translation as transformation.

1.5. Methodology

The study involved archival data collection as the primary sources related to the early representations of the legend of "Kadamattathu Kathanar" were not available in libraries, book stores and other online resource platforms. The researcher has used the re-published version of *Aithiyamala* by Kottarathil Sankunni, brought out by Mathurbhumi books in 2012 for the study. However, in order to cross check if the legend under study was the exact version that appeared in 1909, the researcher visited the Malayala Manorama Office at Kottayam and accessed the original version of the legend that appeared in *Aithiyamala* in 1909 from the *Bhashaposhini* magazine archives. She also visited *Kottarathil Sankunni Smaraka Kala Mandiram* in Kottayam and accessed another re-published version of *Aithiyamala*, published by National Books in 1974. A single complete text such as a script or a video was not available for the researcher for the analysis of the theatrical representations of the legend by Kalanilayam. However, with the help of Anantha Padmanabhan, the creative head of Kalanilayam Stagecraft, the researcher accessed the archival materials such as photos, posters, and newspaper reports based on the earlier representations of the play *Kadamattathu Kathanar*.

for the study. Even though the researcher was not allowed to shoot the recent performance of *Kadamattathu Kathanar* (2019), she watched the play on the releasing day i.e on 15 April 2019 and recorded her experience as a spectator.

The study also demanded fieldwork for collecting the oral versions of “Kadamattathu Kathanar” and gaining a first hand observation and experience of the process of legend narration. As the story of the legend spreads over two different regions, Kadamattom and Parumala, the oral versions were collected from the respective regions. The study makes use of two oral versions from Panayannarkavu, and four oral versions from Kadamattom. The conversations were carried out with priests, devotees, lay people who work in and around the church of Kadamattom and Panayannarkavu temple premises. The narrators belonged to different age groups and gender: Razak, Kunjavaran and Madhurima (70-80 years), Emil (25-35 years), Beena (35-45 years), and Varghese (45-55 years). Moreover, they belong to different professional backgrounds: Razak was a businessman, Madhurima was a retired teacher, Emil was a Deacon at St George, Church Kadamattom, Beena was a house wife, and Varghese was an engineer. The researcher conducted qualitative and open-ended interviews and participated in the process of legend narration by actively interacting with the narrators. The interview sessions were conducted in a conversational manner and direct questioning was avoided. The researcher did not stop the narrators when they digressed from the story and allowed them to speak spontaneously and freely as it was one of the essential features of legend narration. All the oral versions have been recorded and transcribed for the study. As the collected oral versions were spontaneous and less polished, the researcher also kept the oral expressions and repetitive phrases used by the narrators intact when she translated the transcription into English. The researcher has also included one of her field experiences in the study. She went to a local tea shop and tried to initiate a conversation with some of the old men who were having tea there. However, as soon as one among them started talking about the legend, the others

interrupted and got into a verbal fight. Even though the researcher had to leave the shop immediately with her friend, the experience at the shop was highly relevant to deepen the understanding of the highly context-sensitive nature of the legend as a genre. Hence this field experience was also recorded for the study.

The film, teaser, recent posters of the play and TV serial versions of the legend were accessed from various online platforms. The movie *Kadamattathachan* (1984) and the teaser of the upcoming movie *Kathanar: The Wild Sorcerer* was accessed from YouTube, the TV serial *Kadamattathu Kathanar* (2004-2005) was accessed from OTT (over the top) platform service, Hotstar; and the online posters of the play *Kadamattathu Kathanar* (2019) were accessed from the Facebook page of Kalanilayam Stagecraft.

1.6. Chapter Division

The thesis is organised into six parts: introduction, four core chapters and conclusion. The opening chapter entitled “Introduction” puts forth the main objectives of the study and offers a background study of legends. It also explores the nature of *aithiyam* in the Malayalam tradition in the light of the legends in *Aithiyamala*.

The second chapter entitled “‘Kadamattathu Kathanar’: The Legend of the Modern” deals with two questions: What are the historical imprints carried by the legend of “Kadamattathu Kathanar”? How does Kottarathil Sankunni’s version of “Kadamattathu Kathanar” become a modern legend? The first part explores the traces of indigenous Christianity that was deeply merged with the medieval social ethos of Kerala and sheds light on certain folk belief systems prevalent during the times. The second part examines the factors that led to the transcription of the legend and its transformation into a product of colonial modernity. It demonstrates how the process of transcription becomes a transformative act.

The third chapter entitled “The Contemporary Life of “Kadamattathu Kathanar”: An Analysis of the Oral Narratives” looks into the oral variants of the legend of “Kadamattathu Kathanar” collected from Kadamattom and Panayannarkavu and examines the multiple lives enjoyed by these narratives in the oral tradition. The study analyses in detail how the legend undergoes transformation from narrator to narrator and region to region. As the characteristics of the legend as a genre are more prominent in the oral versions, the study also sheds light on the phenomenon of folklore: folk mind’s capacity to construct multiple narratives out of a given folk narrative and folklore’s ability to create new folklore.

The fourth chapter entitled “Kalanilayam’s *Kadamattathu Kathanar*: Dramaturgy and Translation” focuses on Kalanilayam’s theatrical translation of the legend of “Kadamattathu Kathanar”. As Kalanilayam was one of the theatre groups that revolutionised the mainstream theatre in Malayalam and heralded the period of professional and commercial theatre in the 1960s, the study looks into the transformation undergone by the legend when it became part of the repertoire of Kalanilayam. It examines the popular ingredients in the play *Kadamattathu Kathanar* and how such interpolations constructed Kathanar as a popular hero.

The fifth chapter entitled “Kadamattathu Kathanar: Transitions in the Popular Media” examines the representations of “Kadamattathu Kathanar” in the popular media. The first part deals with the movie *Kadamattathachan* (1984) and the teaser of the upcoming movie *Kathanar: The Wild Sorcerer*. It examines the transformation undergone by the legend when it was made to fit into the format of the commercial cinema of the respective time period. The second part looks into the TV serial version of the legend, *Kadamattathu Kathanar* (2004-05) and examines the modifications undergone by the legend when it was translated into a mega serial that placed greater stress on horror and fantasy. The chapter explores the new dimensions attained by the legendary hero and demonstrates the legend’s immense potentiality to adapt to new genres and media.

The final chapter entitled “Conclusion” summarises the findings of each chapter and traces the transformation undergone by the legend of “Kadamattathu Kathanar” over time. It points out the fascinating features of the specific legend that contribute to its translatability and underlines its immense ability to adjust to its contemporary living conditions.

Chapter 2

“Kadamattathu Kathanar”: A Legend of the Modern

The oldest version of the legend of “Kadamattathu Kathanar” available for the study was the print version of the legend that appeared in *Aithihyamala* by Kottarathil Sankunni in 1909. As a legend, it bears the imprints of the collective perceptions of a community that are transmitted from one generation to other. It throws light on the indigenous Christianity that had been deeply merged with the social ethos of medieval Kerala before the arrival of the Portuguese missionaries. The idea of a Christian priest practising sorcery in the legend also points to the Christianity of the then period that was deeply rooted in the local traditions and customs of the region. Although some of the deeds of Kathanar in Sankunni’s version of the legend were miraculous in nature and reminds one of the conventions of European saint legends, he has never been attributed a saintly status. As he is perceived as a practitioner of magic and sorcery, folklorists like Chummar Choondal have pointed out the curious connections of the legend with the Norwegian legendary tradition concerning magic and witchcraft (1: 298). Even though he shares certain features that are common to the folk heroes of all times and people, there are certain indigenous factors that are very specific to his cultural domain. In fact, it is his very engagement with the hill tribes such as *Malayarayans* and supernatural beings like *Yakshi*, and *Chathan* that makes him a unique cultural hero. However, as Kottarathil Sankunni transcribed it during the beginning of the twentieth century, it became a product of the colonial modernity. The present chapter is divided into two parts and addresses two questions respectively: what are the historical imprints carried by the legend of “Kadamattathu Kathanar”? How does it transform into a modern legend when it was transcribed by Kottarathil Sankunni in his work *Aithihyamala*?

2.1. Part A: The Historical Imprints of “Kadamattathu Kathanar”

This section discusses the traces of history carried by the legend of “Kadamattathu Kathanar” in the version of Sankunni. It begins with the narration of the childhood of Kathanar who was then known by the name, *Kochu Paulose* (Little Paulose). He was adopted and raised by an old church vicar. He teaches him Syrian and theology to prepare him for ordination and he came to be called as Paulose *semmassan* (deacon) (Sankunni 498). Here, learning Syrian and theology for priesthood under an elderly priest points to the early system of priestly formation in Kerala- the *malpanate*⁹ system- that was prevalent in Kerala before the establishment of modern seminaries. In this system “the candidate for priesthood stayed with the parish priest or an elderly priest who gave some instructions in Syriac, mostly based on catechetical principles” (Thomas 9). During that time the liturgical rites of the native Christians were not translated into the vernacular languages and were available only in Syriac language (Ancy 30). Hence, in the *malpanate* system, several hours were devoted to teaching Syriac to the candidates for priestly formation (Payyappilli 4). However, with the arrival of Portuguese missionaries, seminaries were established for the training of such candidates which led to disappearance of *malpanate* system.

Later, when Paulose *semmassan* goes in search of the cows, he gets lost in the forest. Here Sankunni states that he might have lost his way in the forest due to the effect called *pishachukal kannukettuka* (illusionary effect of evil spirits) (499). Here, *pisachukkal kannukettuka* is a belief that was prevalent in the folklore tradition of Kerala. A similar kind of folklore motif called *Pootham*¹⁰ can be observed in Edassery Govindan Nair’s poem

⁹ The term *malpan* derives from the Syrian term *malpana*. It refers to a master. In the *malpanate* system, candidate for priesthood joins as the disciple of *malpan* and learns Syriac, theology and other liturgical rites required for priesthood.

¹⁰ It is a supernatural being. Here, the poet weaves a myth around the “folklore idolatry character enacted by a village performing artist who traditionally visits the village homes after summer harvest” (“story”)

Poothapattu (Ode to a Pootham). In the poem, once the people fall under the spell of *Pootham*, it makes them confused and forget their way home. They continue their walking and get lost in the dark. However, if they keep betel leaf and arecanut by the way side, the path becomes clearer and they can find their way. Meanwhile, the *Pootham* comes to accept its offering (“Story”). Edassery’s concept of *Pootham* was drawn from the folk tradition that had existed at that time. In his preface to *Poothapattu*, Edassery says that folk concepts like *Yakshi*, *Podichootu*¹¹, *Bhuvaneswari*¹² and so on were the major influencing factors behind the construction of *Pootham* in his poem (qtd. in Haridas 50). In the English translation of the legend that appeared in 2012, the author Sreekumari Ramachandran omits the part where Sankunni mentions *pisachukkal kannukettikuka* (1:519-520). What is lost in translation here is an important component of the folk belief system of a particular tradition. Being the first and the oldest print version, Sankunni’s version of “Kadamattathu Kathanar” throws light on such finer nuances of the traditional expressions of a particular community.

When Paulose reaches the cave of *Malayarayans*, he learns that they are cannibalistic in nature and becomes deeply insecure. However, the chief of *Malayarayans* is impressed by his humble and meek behaviour and decides to spare him under the condition that he should not leave the place and remain naked throughout his life as per the custom of their community. He accepts him as his disciple and teaches him the lessons of sorcery and magic. Thus he acts as his *guru* and equips him to become a great sorcerer. Such adult mentor figures who help the orphan heroes can be observed in many literary and folklore traditions across the world. For example, in the legend of “King Arthur”, Merlin, a powerful wizard serves as a mentor to King Arthur and helps him to become the king of Camelot (Stableford 24-25). The chief of

¹¹ The poet refers it to the mysterious speck of light often perceived as a ‘witch light’ that is seen from his open window during nights in his childhood. It is often associated with supernatural spirits and ghosts.

¹² The word *Bhuvaneswari* means goddess of the world. It refers to one of the ten *Sivasakhti* goddesses in Hinduism.

Malayarayans is one such mentor archetype that can be observed in the legend of “Kadamattathu Kathanar”. It is the art of sorcery that he learnt from the chief of *Malayarayans*, which he employs later to ward off supernatural beings like *Yakshi*, *Chathan* and so on and win over his opponents like Kunjaman Potti. It is both his priesthood and sorcery which make him a unique cultural hero, often known as Kadamattathu Kathanar, the great sorcerer.

A Christian priest practising sorcery is not acceptable in the present social context of Kerala as such superstitious customs are considered as ‘evil’ and banned by Christianity. However, Kathanar who practises sorcery to combat evil spirits is indicative of an era in the history of Kerala Christianity before the arrival of religious colonialism. Till then, the indigenous Christians of Kerala, called St Thomas Christians or *Nasranis*¹³ or *Malankara Nasranis* had their own unique tradition and practices which were different from the European Christian tradition. This indigenous tradition claimed to be centuries-old was deeply merged with the medieval social ethos of Kerala. Before the Synod of Diamper that took place at Udayamperoor in 1599, there was a great religious harmony between the Hindus and Christians of Kerala. This version of Christianity was different from its European counterparts as “To the native Christians all indigenous religious faiths- the Jainas, the Buddhists, and the Hindus- were matters of enrichment and fulfilment of their own religion” (Johny 454). The legend of “Kadamattathu Kathanar” gives enough examples of an age-old Indigenous Christian tradition that existed before the intervention of the Portuguese missionaries.

The indigenous style architecture of the Kadamattom church mentioned in the legend points to the confluence of Hindu and Christian traditions of the times. The Kerala Christians had intimate connection with the Hindu social customs that according to Manu S Pillai, they

¹³ The term *Nasrani* or *Malankara Nasrani* is derived from Hebrew word *Netzer* or Aramaic *Nasraya*. Here, it refers to the ancient community of Christians from Kerala who claims to be converted from the Jewish and Hindu community in India.

developed a “fascinating syncretism of culture in Kerala” (Pillai 9). He cites an interesting example that their churches “were modelled on Hindu temples and da Gama¹⁴ himself worshipped in a shrine to the goddess *Bhagavathi*, mistaking it for a chapel to the Madonna” (9). It points to the unique architecture of traditional Kerala Christian churches which Europeans referred to as ‘Hindu by nature’ (Edward 167). As Corienne G Dempsey and Sunil Edward who have worked on church history have already pointed out in their studies, the entrance porch of the church of Kadamattom resembles the Hindu architecture- it has a *mugha-mandapam* (entrance porch) (Dempsey 162; Edward 171).



Fig.1.The Entrance Porch of the Church of Kadamattom (Image Source:

“Kadamattom Church”*Arjunpuri’s Blog*, 29 Jan. 2009,

arjunpuri.wordpress.com/travel/kadamattom-church/. Accessed 10 July 2019.)

T.O Aleyas, in his work *Syrian Manuel: Samagra Kerala Charitram* (An Extensive History of Kerala), points out that there were countless transactions between these indigenous

¹⁴ It refers to the context when the Portuguese explorer Vasco de Gama reached Calicut in Kerala in 1498 AD.

Christian churches and Hindu temples. They exchanged *muthukuda* (ceremonial umbrella) and elephants for their ceremonial events; typical Kerala names were used by the Christians during the naming ceremonies; when Christian mothers gave birth, they abstained from entering the church for forty one days for a male child and eighty days for a female child (282). Other local traditions include dowry system, fortieth day of observance of death, decorations with rice flower, feeding the new born with powdered gold and honey, *chorunu ceremony* (first rice feeding ceremony), *aranyanam* (tying amulet around the waist of the baby), beliefs in *jotsyam* (astrology), *rahukalam* (avoiding bad time for starting a new work), *jathakom* (horoscope), tying of *thali* around the bride's neck and *manthrakodi* (bride's veil) during the wedding ceremony, preparation of special sweets like *neyyappam* and *kozhukatta* on special occasions and so on- all of these derive from the native traditions . Furthermore, as K.J John notes:

Thomas Christians had formed themselves into an Indian caste and observed the rules and rituals associated with it. They being a trading community, were identified with Vaishyas and occupied the third rank and position in the Varna social hierarchy. There were some who claimed Nambudiri rank on the grounds of their projected descent from St Thomas converts and they used to say that they were accorded Nambudiri status by Nambudiri themselves. They were considered by the caste Hindus as capable of acting as pollution neutralists because of their complete identification with the caste organisation of Kerala. They believed in the concept of aytham (purity and pollution) attached to the members of each caste (165).

Historians like M.C Joseph, Idamaruku Joseph, and N.K Joseph observe that the ancient Christians of Kerala were the people who were the followers of Buddhists. Even the *chatta*, a clothing worn by Nasrani women is believed to have evolved from Buddhist tradition (qtd. in Zacharia 21-22). Thus Christianity in Kerala was not an extension of the European Christian tradition. The version of faith of the *Malankara Nasranis* was unique and should be perceived

in the light of the vast and diverse cultural milieu. In fact, Christianity had reached Kerala long before the arrival of Portuguese in the sixteenth century. Although the Kerala church had affiliation with the East Syrian church of Mesopotamia, its unique Christian identity was deep rooted in the socio-cultural environment of the native land. As John notes:

In the absence of sacramental life, proper pastoral care and ignorance in the essentials of Christian doctrines, Kerala Christians had no adequate Christian formation and their identity was completely merged with the decadent medieval social ethos of Kerala...The social ethos of medieval Kerala in general was founded on irrational feelings, especially of fear, and marked by credulity for the occult such as belief in omens, charms, signs, witch-craft, sorcery and necromancy. (165)

Sabeena Raphy, in her study on *Chavittunadakam*, also states that the St. Thomas Christians including the ordinary people and the priests were engaged in the practice of sorcery and touches upon some of the *mantras*¹⁵ (sacred utterances) used by them. She also mentions the legend of “Kadamattathu Kathanar” with reference to a Christian priest practising sorcery and refers to one of the mantras used by the St. Thomas Christians mentioned by K. M Varghese in his study *Malankara Nasranikalude Mantratantrangaal* (The Mantras and Tantras of Malankara Nasranis) in 1937. She quotes:

Aloha loha, clim clim

Nishadhi vighraha Pathala khanta

Hom khreem, bhoom, bhukta, bhukta,

Prim, krom, vidhushta sindhu,

¹⁵ They are a form of spiritual expression in both Hinduism and Buddhism. In most cases, they do not have an obvious verbal meaning. However, such formulaic expressions that are arranged in a specific syllables, sound, rhythm and order, when uttered repeatedly are likely to produce an effect.

Hana, hana, dhunu, dhunu, jhala, jhala,

Dhrina, dhritha, dhishti dhisthi

Mada mada, khagu khagu, vaang vaang

Gurunathanaane, Ammeenisho. (qtd. in Raphy 50)

The *mantras* are an important characteristic of the ritual tradition of India. The chanting of mantras has a central place in the Hindu ritual gesture. The above mentioned monosyllabic words draws its roots from the *Bija mantra*, a form of Hindu *Tantric Mantra*¹⁶ and corresponds to the respective Hindu deities. The word *om* is one of the most powerful mantras in Hinduism and *kreem* is related to the Hindu goddess Kali. The *mantra* discussed above combines these Hindu *mantra* terms and Christian terms such as *amen*¹⁷ and *Eesho*¹⁸. *Amen* is a term that is used at the the end of a Christian prayer. Even though the Hindu *tantric mantra* terms dominate in the specific verse, the native Christians improvised it by using the term *amen* and *Eesho* in the end and transforming it into the pattern of a Christian prayer. Thus the specific mantra also points to the fact that the practices and customs of the native Christians were deeply rooted in the local ritual tradition. Many Christian families in Thrissur and Kunnankulam still worship *Avanagattu Chathan*¹⁹ for their economic prosperity (Raphy 50).

In the last part of the legend, while talking about the folk art form *padayani*²⁰ Sankunni mentions that earlier the artists used to perform the role of Syrian priests (513). This previous era which Sankunni talks about is the era before the Synod of Diamper. At present *padayani* is regarded as a ritual performed in *Bhagavathi* temples. K.J John notes that in the sixteenth

¹⁶ For an insightful analysis of the tradition, see Burchett, 807-843.

¹⁷ The meaning of this Biblical term that has Hebrew origin is 'so be it'. It is used as a term of agreement at the end of a prayer.

¹⁸ The Aramaic or Syriac name of Jesus

¹⁹ *Avanagattu Chathan* is the main deity of the Vishnumaya temple, located at Peringottukara, Thrissur.

²⁰ It refers to a folk ritualistic art form that draws its origin in Central Kerala. This ceremonial dance using masks is performed in temples.

century, the native Christians used to participate in folk art forms like *padayani* and *onathallu*²¹. They used to fight each other with bows and arrows and some of the performers die in their fight and they believed that they would reach heaven through their heroic act. However, the Synod of Diamper instructed Christians to refrain from such superstitious customs and practices (166).

Scaria Zacharia notes that the above mentioned native version of Christianity was termed by St Thomas Christians as *Marthomayude Marghavum Vazhipaadum* (The faith and lineage of Saint Thomas). However, when the Portuguese arrived in Kerala in the sixteenth century, they were not happy with the version of Christian faith followed by the native Christians. In their discussions and arguments with the Portuguese missionaries, the native Christians reinforced the view that they followed the faith and lineage of St Thomas unlike the Western Christendom that followed the faith of Peter. They were unable to understand the fact that European Christianity had a different identity in the light of Crusades and the Reformation movement started by Martin Luther and the *Malankara Nasrani* community has to be perceived in the unique cultural and social context of Kerala. Instead, they believed that any kind of Christianity that deviated from their tradition of Christianity was not Christian and all the Christian communities should follow the European model of Christianity. They worked towards bringing the indigenous Christians of Kerala under the Roman Catholic Church for almost a century and their efforts found fruitful results in 1599 through the Synod of Diamper at Udayamperur. In their attempt to Westernize and modernize the indigenous Christianity, they tried to separate Christians from their cultural sphere and provide them with a distinct Christian identity (Zacharia 11). The Synod under the leadership of Latin rite Archbishop of

²¹ It is also a folk art form of central Kerala and is often performed as part of the *onam* festival of Kerala. It involves fighting and thrashing each other by men of Nair community in commemoration of battles they fought in the past.

Goa, Aleixo de Menezes passed two hundred decrees (the Malayalam translation lacks thirty five decrees) in nine actions to impose rules and regulations for the indigenous Christians. Owing to the vastness of the area under study, the researcher does not intend to discuss all the changes brought forth by the Synod of Diamper. The part which is relevant to the present study is the decrees related to the social customs of the Saint Thomas Christians. It is the ninth session of the Synod which touches upon the superstitious practices of the existing Christian community. As K.J John notes that the decree six, seven of Action IX of the Synod “condemned the practice of consulting witches, witch-craft, juggling and diabolical charms. It was observed that many Christians used to bring the sorcerers to their houses to perform black magic by offering animal sacrifice to invoke the evil spirits” (166). As Scaria Zacharia notes, the synod condemned superstitious beliefs such as transmigration of souls (90), exorcism (161), forbade Christians from attending heathen festivities (204), consulting witches and fortune tellers, witch-craft workers and conjurors (205). Even the books that did not fulfil the Portuguese ecclesiasts were burnt, creating a great loss for the archives of St Thomas Christians (Viswanathan 16). Many Syrian texts and books on sorcery and magic were destroyed in this way. A similar kind of episode appears in the legend of “Kadamattathu Kathanar” too. Once a *Bava* (patriarch) from Jerusalem visited Kadamattom church and expressed his wish to have a bunch of green grapes. Kathanar employed his supernatural powers and provided him the grapes in no time. But when someone informed the *Bava* that Kathanar was a sorcerer who had many books on magic and sorcery at his home, he immediately went to the Kathanar’s house and burnt all the books that he had found there. However, the books flew up the sky and he could not destroy any of them. Seeing this, he advised Kathanar not to use such tricks and practice sorcery as they were not meant for Christians (Sankunni 512). This episode in which Bawa burns the books and condemns the practice of sorcery bears the traces of the decrees of the Synod of Diamper. The arrival of a *Bava* from Jerusalem also bears historical imprints

because Mar Gregorios Abdal Jaleel *Bava*, a Syriac Orthodox Bishop from Jerusalem had actually visited Kerala in 1665 on a mission to re-establish the ties between *Malankara* church and the Syriac Orthodox church²².

The encounter between Kathanar and Kunjaman Madathil Potti in the legend can also be read in the light of the above mentioned context. Kunjaman Potti was a Hindu Brahmin whose family had been traditionally renowned for the practice of sorcery and *chathan seva*²³. Kunjaman Potti's extraordinary power of sorcery is already established by Sankunni in two other legends of *Aithihyamala* namely "Kaladiyil Bhattathiri" and "Kunjamanpottiyum Mattapalli Nambooripadum". Kunjaman Potti felt that he was more superior to Kathanar as he had *Chathans* always ready for his service and Kathanar thought that Potti was not as expert as him in magic and sorcery. However, when both of them applied their tricks to defeat each other at the time when Kathanar visited Potti's house, Kathanar won over Potti in the end. However, they promised each other that they would not compete each other again and would maintain a cordial relationship throughout their lives (510-511). Similarly, in the episode concerning *Yakshi*, many sorcerers tried their best to bind the *Yakshi* who used to allure the travellers into the forest and kill them. However, as all their attempts failed, the people approached Kathanar for help and it was he who finally tamed the *Yakshi* and saved the people. The Synod of Diamper that ended up as the religious colonialism, followed by the Oath of

²² After fifty years of Latin rule imposed by the imperial Portuguese government of Goa, the Christians of Malabar protested against the colonial atrocities and resisted their submission to Western Latin Church through a historical event known as 'The Oath of Coonan Cross', following which there were rifts among the Saint Thomas Christians and they were divided into two different groups. The faction which adhered to the Church of Rome came to be known as 'Pazhayakootukar' (old adherents) and the one which returned to old faith were called 'Puthankuttukar' (new adherents). The former constituted the Catholic Church and the latter constituted the Malankara church which followed a variant of the West Syriac Rite from the Syriac Orthodox Church.

²³ Chathan is the son of Lord Shiva, but is often regarded as a negative spirit as he was born to a tribal woman. However, as he was destined to kill Jalandhar, an asura, he gets blessings from Lord Vishnu to take any form he wishes for. Thenceforth he came to be known as Vishnumaya. After killing Jalandhar, he is raised to the status of a demi-god by Indra. Because of his ability to assume any form, Chathan is worshipped and invoked by people to harm one's enemies. Chathan is rarely worshipped in temples as it is regarded as a negative spirit. Chathan seva is a kind of black magic performed to satisfy Chathan and fulfil the wishes of a person.

Coonan Cross and the emergence of different Christian sects had impacted upon the harmonious relationship that had existed between the native Christians and Hindus. Hence, in this context, Kathanar can be perceived as a figure who represents the tensions and conflicts of a newly established Christian community that struggled to straddle both Christian and the local belief system. The ego conflict between Potti and Kathanar can also have other dimensions. Potti belonged to a Brahmin family that had a long legacy of sorcery. However, Kathanar learnt his art of sorcery from *Malayarayans* who constituted an excluded tribal community. Hence when Kathanar wins over Potti, it challenges the long legacy of sorcery of Potti and raises the question- whose knowledge is better?

The next episode under discussion is Kathanar's encounter with *Yakshi*. The locale of the *Yakshi* in the legend was the path through a forest between Trivandrum and Padmanabhapuram. The *Yakshi* stood by the wayside in the guise of a beautiful prostitute during the daytime and asked the travellers if they had *chunnambu*. She, then lured them into the forest with her charms and sucked their blood out of their bodies, leaving behind their nails and bones. Hence, the people were scared to take this path. As many sorcerers failed to get rid of her, people approached Kathanar to save them. Kathanar went to the area and saw her standing by the wayside, asking for *chunnambu* with an enchanting smile. Hearing this, he placed *chunnambu* at the tip of an iron nail and stretched it to her. When *Yakshi* touched the iron nail, she became powerless. Kathanar took her to the house of his widowed aunt at Kayamkulam for her domestic help. After having lunch, Kathanar took a nap. The old lady and *Yakshi* had casual conversations and she started combing *Yakshi's* hair out of her affection. As she parted her hair and saw an iron nail wedged deep into her crown, she was shocked and pulled it out. Soon she turned into a fierce *Yakshi* and left the place. She crossed the river on a boat and reached the bathing ghat of Panayannarkavu Temple. Kathanar who followed *Yakshi* managed to get a plantain leaf and used it as a raft to cross the river with his supernatural

powers. He confronted the *Yakshi* and asked her if she wanted to be sacrificed to the fire or stay there. *Yakshi* promised that she would never harm anyone and reside there peacefully. She came to be known as Panayannarkavu *Yakshi* after the abode of goddess *Bhadrakali* and *Parumala Yakshi* after the name of the village.

The concept of *Yakshi* surfaces in various legends, art forms and cultural traditions. It can be observed in Buddhist, Jain and Hindu traditions. The concept of *Yakshi* in Kathanar is also a combination of the various notions of *Yakshi* at different points of time in history. V.V Haridas, in his studies on *Yakshi*, notes that the concept of *Yakshi* in South India dates back to Sangam period. In Tamil Sangam literature, *Yakshi* is called ‘Iyakki’ or ‘Ishakki’. It is assumed that the concept draws its roots in Jain, Buddhist and Hindu traditions. *Yakshi* worship had been a prominent feature of the followers of Jainism. According to the beliefs of Jainism, *Yakshis* are the guardian deities of Thirthanakaras whereas for Buddhism, they are the guardian deities of their forests (44-62). K.N Ganesh notes that the concept of *Yakshi-Yaksha* appears mostly in Buddhist-Jain texts. When these two traditions evolved, they might have influenced the belief system of the people (9). Historians like Raghava Varier holds the view that the *Yakshi* concept in Kerala has been mostly influenced by Jainism (qtd.in Haridas 62). The historical traces of the presence of Jainism in medieval Kerala have been found from places like Wayanad, Palakkad, Kozhikkode, South Travancore, Kodungallur and so on. However, with the religious renaissance of Hinduism, many Jain temples in Kerala were converted into *Shiva* temples. The *Yakshi* worship in Kerala exhibits connections to Jainism as in many Jain temples, the carvings of *Yakshi* sculptures can be found along with the Theerthankaras (a spiritual teacher of *dharma*) (Vasanthan 44). In this light, it must be noted that many places of *Yakshi* worship called *Yakshi kavu* (groves of *Yakshi*) were later converted into *Bhagavathy*²⁴ temples (Haridas 78). One example would be the *Yakshi* statue which is found along with the

²⁴ *Bhagavathy* is an honorific title for female deities in Hinduism.

statues of Mahaveeran and Parswanathan in Kallil Temple in Perumbavoor. Today it is regarded as a *Bhagavathy* temple.

However, the concept of *Yakshi* that has been discussed so far do not perceive *Yakshi* as a prostitute. As Ganesh points out, at the same time they lead independent lives (9). But, the *Yakshi* mentioned in the legend is different from this notion of *Yakshi*. It reflects the concept of *Yakshi* as a beautiful enchantress awaiting the travellers on the deserted paths. If anyone comes on her way, she asks for *chunnambu* and lures him into the forest and kills him. It indicates that Kathanar's *Yakshi* belongs to a later tradition. To be specific, Haridas points out that this notion of *Yakshi* familiar to the Malayalees draws its roots from the folk tradition of Kerala. More specifically, the above mentioned representation of *Yakshi* can be observed in *Thekkan Pattu* (ballads of South Travancore) and the legends of Kerala (50-53). Among them, the prominent one is *Neelikatha* (the story of Neeli) often known as *Panchavankaattu Neelikatha* or *Kalliyankattu Neelikatha*. The revengeful *Yakshi* who sucks the blood out of body of people that appears in many legends including that of "Kadamattathu Kathanar" is related to the story of Neeli²⁵. In order to lure and kill her murderer, Anandan, Neeli wears her jewelleryes and appears as a beautiful woman in the forest. When Nambi passes, she asks him *chunnambu* for her betel nut (200-202). As Haridas points out, though Neeli is not inviting Anandan for sex directly, when he runs away from her, she shouts that he would not get a wife like him and he shouts back that she should not lock him using the chain of lust (51). As *Neelikatha* is one of the most popular tales in *Thekkanpattu*, the image of *Yakshi* asking for

²⁵ In the story of Neeli, the main character Lakshmi is the daughter of Shivakami who was a Devadasi of Ammayappan Shiva temple of Pazhakainallur or Pazhakaiyur village in Salem. She seduces Nambi, the son of the temple priest with her beauty and gains his wealth. After acquiring his wealth, her mother asks her to get rid of him. But she refuses to leave him. In her absence, her mother asks Nambi to leave the house. When Lakshmi reaches home and learns it, she goes in search of him. She finds him at a distant path and apologises to him for her mother's acts. She then sleeps on Nambi's lap. Nambi becomes revengeful when he thinks about his wealth and property being stolen by Neeli and her mother. He removes all her jewelleryes and kills her with a big stone. Later Nambi walks ahead, gets bitten by a snake and dies. Lakshmi's brother who comes in search of her finds her dead and in deep pain he hits his head against the ground and dies there itself. It is in the next birth Lakshmi is born as Neeli and takes revenge on Nambi who is born as Anandan (Haridas 200-202).

chunnambu as an enchanting prostitute became imprinted in the psyche of Malayalees. However, this notion of *Yakshi* was widely popularised in Kerala through the legend of “Kadamattathu Kathanar”. V.V Haridas also points it out in his study. He also gives a possible historical explanation for such an image of *Yakshi*. He says that exchanging *tamboolam*²⁶ was a sign of invitation for sex in the medieval period of Kerala (57). As *chunnambu* is a stimulant for sex and is white in colour, indicative of semen, it is symbolic of sex. Bini finds that the taming of *Yakshi* by offering her *chunnambu* at the tip of an iron nail by Kathanar can have symbolic connotations as it is a phallic symbol and can be indicative of sexual liaison (35). Haridas continues that perhaps during a later period, the prostitutes who waited on the deserted paths for men might have received the things in their hands in return for sexual favours. Hence, the men who have exchanged their valuable belongings in return for sexual favours might have also created some of the *Yakshi* stories (57). Like many popular *Yakshi* stories in Kerala, the *Yakshi* in the legend of “Kadamattathu Kathanar” also inhabits the deserted forest area. It must be noted that forest is an ideal abode for loneliness. Loneliness and forest together form the perfect setting to generate fear. Hence the haunting stories of *Yakshi* usually involves such deserted paths in the forest unfrequented by humans. The caste system of the period might have also played a crucial role in constructing the image of *Yakshi* in a particular way. For instance, in many legends of Kerala, it is usually the Brahmins who are the victims of *Yakshi*. In the legend of “Kaladiyil Bhatatthiri” in *Aithihyamala*, *Yakshi* appears as a beautiful Shudra woman who allures men. Thus Shudra women waiting on the deserted pathways to allure Brahmin men was regarded as a threat to the caste dynamics of the period and it could be a possible reason why they were equated with *Yakshis*.

V.V Haridas notes that *Yakshi* could be the imagination of male psyche which looked at the sexual desires and charms of women with fear. Women who expressed their sexual

²⁶ A preparation combining betel leaf with areca nut

desires freely might have been constructed as blood sucking *Yakshis* in the imagination of men (96). The sexual prowess of *Yakshi* and her destructive capabilities are very apparent in another legend in *Aithihyamala* titled “Venmani Nambooripadanmar” in which the *Yakshi* targeted young men in the place to satisfy her sexual urge. However, most of the men die as they were unable to withstand her immense sexual energy. *Yakshi* in Kathanar also appears as a beautiful prostitute. It is described that after getting *chunnambu* from the men, *Yakshi* seduces them with her words and sexual charms and finally kills them. Many sorcerers come and fail to tame the fierce *Yakshi*. It is finally Kathanar who tames her using the iron nail. As all the men in the story are seduced by the sexual charms of *Yakshi*, Kathanar is able to defend himself from her lustful advances. Here it must be observed that Kathanar’s celibacy is one of the aspects which make him distinct from other sorcerers and *Yakshi* could not lure him with her sexual charms.

In many *Yakshi* stories in Kerala, *Yakshi* is tamed by striking the nail into her crown. Similarly, in the story of Kathanar, *Yakshi* becomes powerless when Kathanar places *chunnambu* at the tip of an iron nail and gives it to her. Here, the connection between *Yakshi* and iron nail is worth interrogation. Why is *Yakshi* scared of iron? As it is also common in Buddhist Jataka tales, V.V Haridas gives a possibility for this connection. He says that *Yakshi* could be a goddess of the people in the Stone Age. In the Bronze Age, specifically the Iron Age, the new communities, who were relatively modern might have replaced *Yakshi* with new goddesses. Thus the binding of old goddesses in the Iron Age and the rise of new goddesses and culture could be the underlying factor behind the iron fearing *Yakshi* stories (94). However, this interpretation is based on the view of perceiving *Yakshi* as a goddess. The concept of taming of *Yakshi* called *Yakshiye Thalakkuka* (chaining of *Yakshi*) in the folk tradition of Kerala can have different interpretations as well. It is related to the tradition of sorcery. The practitioners of sorcery and exorcism in Kerala used to chain the evil spirits to the tree. *Changala Maram* (The Chain Tree) in Wayanad district of Kerala where the spirit of a person

is bound to the tree using an iron chain serves as a good example for such practice. The fact that such early practitioners have used metals to bind the spirits could be one of the possible reasons why *Yakshi* is scared of iron. Dempsey points out that “Yakkhas, like Kerala Yakshis are described in Buddhist texts as being afraid of iron as well” (116). Once *Yakshi* becomes powerless, she is enslaved and domesticated. Bini observes that in such *Yakshi* stories, “The Yakshi is either killed or disciplined to fit into conventionally accepted modes of womanliness” (35).

In the end, as *Yakshi* promises Kathanar that she would not harm anyone again, Kathanar allows her to stay at Panayannarkavu. Thus, thereafter the *Yakshi* resides in Panayannarkavu, a sacred grove where goddess *Bhadrakali* is being worshipped. The association of *Yakshi* with groves is also worth analysis. Haridas notes that after the decline of Jainism with the arrival of Brahmins, many groves of *Yakshi* were transformed into groves of *Bhagavathy*. He cites temples and places like Chitharal, Wayanad, and Thriuvalla which bear traces of *Yakshi* worship to show such transformations. In the work *Manthrikavijnanam* (The knowledge of sorcery), Vishnu Namboothiri talks about the presence of *Yakshi* in the ritual art tradition of Kerala. Ritual art forms like *Sarppam Thullal* which is performed as part of serpent worship in many snake groves and snake temples in Kerala mentions *Yakshi* in their songs (qtd.in Haridas 134). Thus groves are intimately connected with the *Yakshi* worship tradition which was prevalent in Kerala in the past. The *Yakshi* worship is still done in some temples and places. The yearly worship of *Yakshi* in Durghambika temple in Kannoore is one such example. Haridas also notes that the travel of *Yakshi* from south Travancore to central Travancore could be indicative of the spread of *Yakshi* worship tradition in Kerala (58).

Thus the legend of “Kadamattathu Kathanar” gives a wide range of perspectives on the concept of *Yakshi* in Kerala. One can find several notions of *Yakshi*- *Yakshi* as a beautiful seductress, *Yakshi* as a blood sucking evil figure, *Yakshi* who is scared of iron, *Yakshi* who can

be tamed and domesticated using sorcery, *Yakshi* who resides in the sacred groves and so on. Although the concept of *Yakshi* observed in the folk tradition of Kerala seems to be different from the Buddhist –Jain perceptions of *Yakshi*, some of the folk notions of *Yakshi* also bear similar traits and traces of such traditions. For instance, the *Yakshi* in “Kadamattathu Kathanar” inhabits the forest area. In the Jataka Tales, the *Yakshan* and *Yakshi* have the power over specific forest areas. *Yakshi* catches anyone who encroaches that specific area (72). As mentioned earlier, the decline of Jainism with the arrival of Brahmins could be a possible reason for the construction of such notions. V.V Haridas notes that the concept of *Yakshi* attacking Brahmins as in other *Yakshi* stories in *Aithihyamala* such as “Kaladiyil Bhattathiri” is only observed in Kerala that it might have evolved from this context. *Yakshi* and *Yakshan* were the guardian deities of Jain Theerthankaras. Hence, the *Yakshi* might have scared them more than the Theerthankaras converted by them (72).

The episode concerning the hostility between the Dutch and the King of Cochin in the legend also bears the imprints of history. In the story, when the Dutch began to trouble the Cochin Raja, he sought the help of Kathanar. Kathanar blesses an arrow and sends it to him telling that his problems would be resolved if the arrow is shot at the camp of the Dutch. When he makes his soldier do so, the Dutch soldiers become hysteric and start to stab and kill each other. This Dutch- Cochin Raja encounter is indicative of the year 1663 when Dutch captured Cochin in Kerala. As the historian Sreedhara Menon notes, the Dutch came to Kerala and entered into the first political agreement with Indian power in 1604. During this time, their main area of focus was central Kerala. After the renewed agreements in 1608 and 1619, their focus shifted to the minor powers in central Kerala. Then followed their conquest of Quilon in 1658 and Cochin in 1663. The capture of Cochin was a major political event. The study has attempted to trace some of the historical imprints carried by the legend. The next part of the chapter attempts to examine how the legend becomes a product of colonial modernity.

2.2. Part B: The Traits of Colonial Modernity

This section discusses the transformation of “Kadamattathu Kathanar” into a modern legend when Kottarathil Sankunni transcribed it in *Aithihyamala*. Although the legend of “Kadamattathu Kathanar” had already existed in oral tradition in the pre-colonial era, it fell under the category of *aithiyam* when Sankunni published his compilation of legends under the title *Aithihyamala* in 1909. This tendency to revive and preserve the tradition was certainly a product of colonial modernity and new intellectual trends in Europe. The categorisation of all the 126 stories as *aithiyam* itself can be perceived as a modern exercise. In an oral context, whether the story narrated falls under the category of *aithiyam* or not seems pointless. However, such categorisation began to gain importance in writing since the Enlightenment because it was a form of recording and compartmentalizing knowledge driven by scientific thinking. In other words, such disciplining of the disciplines is a product of the scientific temperament of the modern era.

The idea of the folklore and the nation is the first aspect worth interrogation as it is a crucial factor that led to the transcription of the legend of “Kadamattathu Kathanar” along with the other 125 legends in *Aithihyamala*. The nationalist consciousness that emerged in India as part of a counterbalance to colonialism created a need for reclaiming the past through re-inventing tradition. According to Hutchinson and Smith, a nation’s survival is dependent upon three factors- national autonomy, national unity and national identity (4-5). In the wake of this sense of oneness along with the influence of English education and modern thinking, they focused their efforts on constructing a unique identity for India. The thoughts of Mahatma Gandhi, Rabindranath Tagore, Swami Vivekananda, Raja Ram Mohan Roy and many more reflect the convergence of a deep rooted sense of nationalism and modern thinking.

The notion of ‘one nation’ inspired the nationalists to search for the cultural forces that bind the nation and shape local identities which led to the collection, compilation,

categorisation and publication of regional myths and folktales all over India. This practice was also seen as an expression of the indigenous culture that existed in the pre-colonial era. It has already been discussed in the first chapter that a century before this movement in India, folklore was intrinsically connected to the nation-building enterprise in Europe. This movement did not have any direct influence on these similar practices in India. However, the cultural interaction with the Europeans, missionaries, civil servants and scholars in the beginning of the nineteenth century had brought European ideas of folklore to India. In the context of the wake of the Indian nationalism, Dr. K. M. Panikkar argues that “nationalism developed directly by resistance and indirectly by the recovery of historical sense and pride in cultural achievements as a result of Western contact” (Harris and Sudhakaran 266). With regard to the cultural nationalism in India, Susan Visvanathan states that:

Apart from the all-India level, nationalism in India was also seen at the regional-national level. Unlike the pan-Indian national consciousness, however, the regional national consciousness emerged as a form of cultural nationalism seeking to preserve identity and protect ‘homeland’ vis-à-vis other nationalities in the country... Moreover the regional national consciousness emanated from a cultural sense of ‘pre-existent’ nation defined in terms of a distinct culture, shared history, specific language and common territory. (220)

However, this modernist project that linked folklore and the nation in the nineteenth century is the second phase of any kind of literary and cultural enquiries in the direction of folklore. The first inquiry in this direction was taken up by the British civil servants and missionaries in the eighteenth century. Paulinius Pathiri was the first to compile and print the proverbs of Kerala in Rome as *Adagia Malabarica* in 1791. Further studies were continued after a long gap of 40 years by many British scholars and German missionaries including Dr. Herman Gundert whose works like *pazhancholmala* (1845) reveal his deep knowledge of local culture. Although the

idea of nation building and folklore had existed in the intellectual background of these European scholars and missionaries, their purpose of exploring the indigenous tradition was different. Raghavan Payyanad and Ramanthali Ravi note that since the sixteenth century, there had been efforts by the missionaries to establish seminaries and teach the religious subjects in the mother tongue. In order to spread the Gospel, it was instrumental for them to learn Malayalam language and the tradition (134-36). Some of the Baptist missionaries even attempted to publish the translations of folk tales in order to illuminate their understanding of the native tradition and the people (Goswami 141). Moreover, the colonial interest and civilizing mission of the British also compelled them to associate with the Indian scholars who were part of these indigenous discourses. Such strategies are very much evident from the view of Warren Hastings that “every accumulation of knowledge, and especially such as is obtained by social communication with people over whom we exercise a dominion founded on the right of conquest, is useful to the state” (qtd. in Viswanathan 28). The publication of journals such as *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal* (1832) and the *Indian Antiquary* (1872) by various scholars and archaeologists established folklore as a subject of scholarly interest. In the inaugural issue of the journal *Indian Antiquary* (1872), the founder and archaeologist James Burgess wrote that the scope of the journal would include ‘Manners and Customs, Arts, Mythology, Feasts, Festivals and Rites, Antiquities and History’ (qtd. in Blackburn 156). It may be observed that in a way, such scholarly initiatives gave an academic dimension to the Indian folklore which was considered as a subject of little value by the Indian scholars in the pre-colonial era.

Thus the first phase of folkloristic pursuits in Kerala was carried out by the British and it was the second phase wherein the Keralite began their folkloristic ventures. However, their modernist mission in this direction was not inspired by the European interest in folklore; it was the product of an emerging Malayalee consciousness during the period of nationalism.

Bhashacharitam (1881) by P. Govinda Pillai considered folk songs as a subject of serious concern for the first time and marked the beginning of folklore studies in Kerala (Payyanad & Ramanthali 136). The newspapers and the magazines of the 1880s including *Vidyavinodini* and *Vidyavilasini* also played a crucial role in bringing the folklore to the forefront. Similar kind of intellectual trends and literary practices were attempted by men of letters in many parts of India as a result of the colonial contact. Rabindrananth Tagore, for instance, began to show a keen interest in folklore and had been collecting children's folktales and rhymes since 1883; and the Bengali Literary Circle which was established in 1894 gave him a forum where he encouraged others to collect folklore from their respective regions (Goswami 141). Furthermore, Stuart Blackburn who studied the uses of print in the nineteenth century Madras demonstrates the convergence of print and folklore in colonial South India in his work *Print, Folklore, and Nationalism in Colonial South India* (2003). In one of its significant chapters entitled "Folklore and the Nation: 1860-1880", he describes how folklore was at the centre of many discussions regarding tradition, modernity and nationalism and provides materials to construct the identity of a nation (143-48).

As discussed earlier, the legend "Kadamattathu Kathanar" appeared for the first time in print in the work *Aithihyamala* by Kottarathil Sankunni. He had spent almost quarter to a century on collecting, documenting and compiling the legends of Kerala. The work which consisted of 126 legends was published in eight volumes in the years 1909, 1914, 1925, 1926, 1927, 1929, 1932, and 1934 respectively. His initiative to collect and record the legends of Kerala can be perceived as an attempt to construct a unique identity of Kerala as part of the nation-building enterprise. Moreover, such kind of record-keeping was also one of the characteristics of the modern era. Through the process of selection, rejection, modification and codification of a vast spectrum of oral narratives, Sankunni fixed on these 126 narratives which were put together and categorised as *aithihyam* during the colonial Kerala.

In the preface to *Aithihyamala*, Sankunni explains the context that led him to collect and record the legends that had been perpetuated in different regions of Kerala in the end of the nineteenth century and beginning of the twentieth century. *Aithihyamala* was first published in the Malayalam literary magazine *Bhashaposhini* founded by Kandathil Varghese Mappillai in 1892. He was also the founder of the leading Malayalam newspaper *Malayala Manorama* which was started as a weekly in 1890. Kottarathil Sankunni started working in *Malayala Manorama* as the editor of the poetry section in 1890 and had been an active contributor to the growth of the journal and weekly. In the preface to the book, Sankunni tells that in his leisure hours, he used to chat with Varghese Mappillai and some of his friends and once or twice he had made some casual remarks about some of the legends in Kerala. Varghese Mappillai was deeply fascinated by these oral narratives and after making him narrate more of such stories, he felt that there was a need to preserve and document them. He told Sankunni that “these legends are not meant to be narrated in a casual manner, even though they are narrated as mere time pass and are ironic and absurd in nature, they contain certain morals and philosophies which we must be aware of. Hence there is a need to document them and we can publish them in *Malayala Manorama* as well as *Bhashaposhini*” (my trans; Payyanad 88-89). Hence, Sankunni’s transcription of the legends also becomes a didactic act aimed to instil moral and philosophical values in the minds of the readers.

It is important to note that it was Varghese Mappillai, the founder-editor of *Malayala Manorama* and *Bhashaposhini* who suggested that Sankunni may preserve and document the legends that had been perpetuated in Kerala in his respective weekly and journal. His career in journalism started as the editor-in-chief of the newspaper *Keralamitram* run by Gujarati businessman Devji Bhimji which is regarded as the first newspaper in Malayalam by many historians and eminent editors like P. Govinda Pillai. Later he launched his own newspaper *Malayala Manorama* through the establishment of Malayala Manorama Company as a private

LLC corporation. N.P. Rajendran notes that even before people had started conceptualizing Kerala, Varghese Mappillai had envisioned the idea of ‘united Kerala’ and it was very evident right from the naming of the newspaper as *Keralamitram*. Moreover, he founded a literary club called *Kavisamajam* that later turned into *Bhashaposhini Sabha* and conducted literary conferences in places all over Kerala spreading from Kanyakumari to Kasaragod. Without any discrimination on the basis of religion and caste, he had entertained writings of good literary value. Because of his immense fascination for Malayalam language, he had worked relentlessly towards bringing out reforms in the elitist style of the newspapers so that common people could also have access to them. Moreover, his true spirit of Kerala Renaissance is reflected in many of his forwards to *Malayala Manorama* newspaper. A striking example for his views on equality and progressiveness can be observed in his forward to *Malayala Manorama*, published on 3rd June, 1892. In the forward, he boldly touches upon a wide range of topics including social reformations, education of women, the plight of Brahmin widows, the condition of the people of the Pulaya caste and Mappillai revolts in Malabar (Rajendran 69-75). Embracing the Western values, his tolerance to appreciate, respect and accommodate all religious beliefs and traditions has been reflected in all of his forwards to *Malayala Manorama* and it makes him one of the important figures of Kerala renaissance. This vision of a united Kerala is apparent in his attempt to bring together the diverse local narrative traditions of Kerala through *Aithihamala* and give a homogenous face to Kerala.

Kottarathil Sankunni was also a renowned Sanskrit-Malayalam scholar who was also good at English that he taught Malayalam for some of the European missionaries. Analysing the intellectual background of both Varghese Mappillai and Kottarathil Sankunni, it may be observed that both of them were representatives of an emerging middle class who had received English education and upheld renaissance values facilitated by colonial modernity. Aneesh notes that:

This class wanted to recover the space of the indigenous language and culture in a new form coloured with national modernity. These cultural activists were either members of the landlord class or the new elite emerged out of the colonial system. The new middle class originated from the public school system and courts and offices also used their skills to address the public audience in the new public language emerged from the colonial modernity...These activists were primarily writers and they selected themes suitable to provoke the reading public in favour of anti-colonialism. (750)

The growth of regional consciousness can be traced in the early Malayalam newspapers and periodicals right from the launching of *Keralamitram*. Thereafter, the founding of *Nasrani Deepika* and *Malayala Manorama* by the 1890s led to the birth of sustained Malayalam journalism. The emerging newspaper tradition in Kerala played a crucial role in shaping the socio-political environment of Kerala. Analysing the above discussed nature of the forwards written by Varghese Mappillai, it may be observed that these early newspapers and periodicals looked at the past traditions from the present and attempted to redefine them. It was ambiguous in nature because on the one hand, they tried to document and preserve tradition and on the other, they tried to bring about modernisation and social reforms. They also contributed to the establishment of prose narratives in Malayalam and introduced new genres such as short stories, essays and writings concerning science and history. Being the products of a literary and politically self-conscious class, they constituted an important institution of public sphere and the construction of public opinion in Kerala. Thus, it was in this context of the formation of public sphere and the construction of modern Kerala, Kottarathil Sankunni's *Aithiyamala* was born.

The next subject of discussion is the question of the aesthetics of the magazine *Bhashaposhini* in the determining the nature of the transcription of "Kadamattathu Kathanar". In the preface to *Aithiyamala*, Sankunni states that his collection of legends were published

in *Bhashaposhini* and *Malayala Manorama* in the form of essays (Sankunni 87-89). During that period, many of the writings in *Bhashaposhini* were modelled on English journals. K.M Krishnan looks at the contents of Vol 1 No.1 of the magazine and observes such changing aesthetic perceptions. The item “Mangalam” (greetings) was modelled on the English poet Alfred Lord Tennysons’ prefatory sonnet to the nineteenth century. Sankunni’s hymn in praise of Queen Victoria entitled “Sreemaharani” formed another noted example. A part of the magazine dealt with the need for and concerns revolving around translating books from English to Malayalam (Krishnan 1-6). Thus, it is clear that even though the aim of the magazine was to construct a unique identity for Kerala, the magazine followed the methods of English journals. Moreover, when Sankunni had decided to publish the legends in the form of essays, he was adopting a modern form of writing. And therefore these legends were not the exact transcriptions of their oral versions collected by Sankunni. Legends in the oral tradition do not have a definitive form; each narrator of the legend narrates his or her version of the story. However, in an attempt to incorporate these narratives into the framework of the prose narratives, Sankunni gave a logical and well-recognizable structure to these legends. Since he polished these narratives to fit to the language of the press, the form in which the readers receive them can be regarded as a literary production. Thus what was flexible and open ended at one point of time became fixed and stable. Moreover, Sankunni transcribed these legends in a refined and polished language. Scholars like Sankunni were deep rooted in both Malayalam and Sanskrit traditions. When Sankunni uses a refined and ornate style, loaded with Sanskrit words in *Aithihamala*, it becomes a folk appropriation of the elite. It is similar to what K. Satchidanandan observes in his discussion on ‘folk’ becoming ‘classical’. He states that “Once absorbed into the upper caste/class discourse, their disruptive energy and subversive worldview came to be smoothed out, their contours stylised and fixed for all time and subjected to canon” (282).

With regard to the use of Sanskrit words and high ornate style, a similar process has been observed by Bernard Cohn in the colonial period. In 1772, when Warren Hastings, the Governor of Bengal decided that East India company's courts would apply Hindu law for the Hindus and Muslim law for the Muslims, it popularised the notion that Indian civilization was founded on particular Sanskrit texts. "The idea of the primacy of the Sanskrit component became the determinant of action, policy and structure, not only for the rulers but for many of the ruled. What had been fluid, complex and even unstructured, became fixed, objective and tangible" (qtd.in Satchidanandan 279). Thus the oral versions of the legends were absorbed into the upper caste/class discourse through *Aithihamala*. Moreover, one of the significant aspects that was brought about by print culture with respect to oral narratives including legends is the authorship. Legends in the oral tradition have anonymous origin. However, when Sankunni became the compiler of the legends, he is attributed its paternity.

Another aspect that makes the legend of "Kadamattathu Kathanar", a modern legend is its specificity of time and place. Along with the structural changes, driven by the principles of enlightenment reason and logic, he also attempted to give an accurate description of time and space which is not common in the oral versions of the legend. He begins the legend with a precise description of the place where Kathanar was born- Kathanar was born at Kadamattom which belongs to Kunnathunadu Taluk under Travancore (497). When Kathanar gets lost in the forest, it is informed that he has been walking in the forest for twelve *nazhika* (*nazhika* is a unit of time. 1 *nazhika*= twenty four minutes) and when he reaches the house of old lady and asks the distance from her house to the church, she replies that it is around four *nazhika* (504). Moreover, Kathanar learns the art of sorcery under *Malayarayan* for one *vyazhavattam* (one *vyazhavattam* = twelve years). Similarly, in the legend of "Thirunakkara Devanum Aviduthe Kalayum", he mentions that the place 'veloor' is '2 *nazhika*' west from Thirunakkara. In the legend of "Nalekkattu Pillamar", Sankunni describes the location of the ancestral home of

Nalekkattu family as Vijayanarayanapuram near Nankuneni in Pandi and their current location as Kuttamberur near Thiruvalla in Travancore. Such accurate description of the time and setting is a scientific preoccupation of the modern era. Such sense of specificity in writing is one of the prominent aspects of print. As Sankunni enriches his descriptions with more factual details, Sankunni, his version of legends becomes more accurate and complete. Such full-bodied detail also builds up authenticity and encourages a fixed point of view. Moreover specificity in the degree and detailing of something is a means of producing emphasis in literature.

As *Aithihyamala* was indeed a consumer-oriented text and involved many persons besides the author such as publishers, literary agents, copy editors, the vested interests of the magazine will also impact upon the transcription of the legend. It is observed that in many oral versions of the legend, the figure that attacks and kidnaps Kathanar when he goes in search of the cow and gets lost in the forest is addressed as *Pisachu*. The reference of *Pisachu* can be also observed in the oral versions collected by Dempsey in her religious study based on Kerala (163) as well as in the versions collected by researcher. However, in *Aithihyamala*, the same figure is represented by Sankunni as *Malayarayan* (also called *Malai Arayan*) which refers to the member of a tribal community in Kerala. Thus, by attributing an acceptable identity to the character, Sankunni attempted to give specificity and authenticity to the character. In other words, it can viewed as an attempt to narrate the legend in a convincing manner and legitimise it. Such specificity in characterisation is certainly a product of colonial modernity. However, even when Sankunni tried to legitimise and rationalise the legend by replacing the term *Pisachu* with that of *Malayarayans*, the caste system that was prevalent during the period was also inbuilt in his representation of *Malayarayans*. The vocabulary and imagery used to represent *Malayarayans* deserves special mention. They are represented as beastly, gigantic and ugly looking figures in Sankunni's version of the legend. He uses the terms like *athibhayangaramoorthi* (beastly figure), *bhayangarakrithikal* (ferocious figures),

bheebatsakrithikal (loathsome figures), *vikrithakrithikal* (disgusting figures) and so on to describe *Malayarayans*. Such stereotyping and misrepresentation of indigenous tribes is strikingly evident throughout the description of *Malayarayans*. The Anthropological survey of India in 1995 identifies *Malayarayans* as short-statured (Joseph 132). The Travancore Census Report that appeared in 1901 states that *Malayarayans* are superior in appearance compared to other tribes and they are generally short statured (qtd.in Thurston and K IV: 388). Sankunni's representation of *Malayarayans* as gigantic and beastly figures are contradictory to these findings.

Moreover, in Sankunni's version, one can find that Kathanar feels extremely scared when he hears one of the *Malayarayans* asking their leader if they could eat him right away. They are represented as cannibalistic in nature who delights in feasting on the members of their species. Moreover, the conditions put forth by the chief of *Malayarayans* when he decides to spare him are to remain naked and not to leave the place ever. As Kathanar has no other option, he agrees to it, but he finds it difficult to live with them as they were 'unclean' and 'cruel'. Such descriptions of Sankunni portray them as a tribe which is ignorant of gentleness and humanity. The *Malayarayans* are also represented as 'cave dwellers' as the Kathanar-*Malayarayan* episode takes place in the cave. In the work, *Castes and Tribes of Southern India* (2013), it is mentioned that *Malayaryans* have a custom of burning lamps in their huts in memory of their ancestors (Thurston and K 392). However, in Sankunni's version, the lamps are lighted in the interior of a cave. Here, 'cannibalistic', 'disgusting', 'unclean', 'nakedness', 'cave-dwellers'- all these characteristics attributed to *Malayarayans* by Sankunni points to the portrayal of *Malayarayans* as primitive, uncivilized, savage, exotic and inferior. On the other hand, Kathanar embodies humbleness, rationality, peace-loving and civilized nature. Such kind of othering of *Malayarayans* in Sankunni's representation also entails an orientalist perspective. Through the portrayal of Kathanar and *Malayarayans*, Sankunni establishes an

awareness of cultural otherness. It must be noted that the marginalisation of tribal communities was accelerated during the British colonial period. K.M Anil notes that due to political and economic interests, the British exploited forests and hills inhabited by the tribal communities for resources like timber and minerals and transformed their living areas into plantations. As a result, their way of life was greatly affected. It created insecurity among the tribes and some of them started to revolt against the British. It is in this particular context, British started to define them. And when they attempted to define and categorise them, they did not consider the geographic and cultural peculiarities of these indigenous communities (254). The construction of cultural otherness through the use of imageries and vocabulary such as ‘primitive’ and ‘savage’ was a common practice during the British colonial period. The stereotyping and categorisation of colonial subjects was pervasive not just in the Indian sub-continent, but also in the African colonies. Most anthropological studies that were undertaken during this time described Africans as “different from ‘civilized’ peoples and so ‘savage’ just at the time that Europe needed to justify colonial expansion” (Kuper 111). Similarly, the accounts of European missionaries, travellers, administrators and many more on the tribes of India also reflected an orientalist perspective. For instance, J. Lampard, a former missionary in Baihar in Madhya Pradesh described a Baiga (a tribe) as ‘nude figure’, ‘tangled hair’, ‘lithe wiry limbs’ and ‘jungly and uncivilized appearance’ in his work that appeared in 1907 (Elwin 9). In the *Indian Antiquary*, M.J Walhouse observes the similarities between the customs and practices of *Malayaraya* tribes in Travancore and African tribes. In the work *Native Life in Travancore* (1883), Rev Samuel Mateer notes that:

The Arayans are for the most part short in stature, and not very long lived. But the feverishness of the climate of the Districts they inhabit is enough to account for any physical degeneracy of race. They are as fair as the high-caste Hindus, the women

frequently beautiful, proving that the aborigines of India were not black from race peculiarities, but only sometimes black through circumstances. (72)

In fact, Sankunni's representation of *Malayarayans* also reflected the stock of exotic stereotypes such as 'naked', 'wild man' and so on. Sankunni's English education, his exposure to English works, journals and articles and his association with *Bhashaposhini* magazine could have also played crucial roles in his construction of such exotic stereotypes. Sankunni who had received English education was closely associated with the British civil servants and missionaries as he taught them Malayalam for twelve years. Moreover, *Bhashaposhini* magazine was modelled on English journals. Some of the works that appeared in the magazine such as "Mangalam" which resembled Tennyson's poetry and Sankunni's hymn in praise of Queen Victoria brings into light the indebtedness of the journal and its English educated writers towards English language as well. When Sankunni's representation of *Malayarayans* as exotic stereotypes is read in this light, it serves the interests and demands of an English modelled journal. Even the minds of the new English educated reading public were also framed to interpret such representations in an orientalist manner.

However, while representing *Malayaraya* hill tribes as 'primitive', 'savage', 'cannibalistic' and 'uncivilized', Sankunni ignores the fact that they had a unique tradition of their own. S.K Vasnthan notes that even among *Malayarayans*, there are different sects called *Illakkar* among which marriages cannot happen between the same *Illakkar*. With regard to inheritance, they follow the *Makathayam* system (from father to son) even though, earlier it was *Marumakathayam* system (inheritance through female line). Their objects of worship are *Shasthavu*, *Bhagavathy*, ancestral spirits and local demons. As they worship the stone below the tree, they are also called *Kallu Brahmins*. They bury their dead in the southern end of the house and have unique funeral rites. During the puberty rites, a mixture of turmeric and oil is applied on the girl's body. Only her mother or father's sister has the rights to do it. The

marriages take place in the bride's house. They have performing arts like *kolkali* and *malayoottu maamangam* (Vasanthan 523-524). In the work *Castes and Tribes of Southern India* (1909), it is stated that they are very good hunters and are engaged in wizardry. They often offer coconuts to demons in the hills. Each village has its priest and if he gets afflatus, he yells and screams out the answers sought and invokes the demons in case of sickness (Thurston and K 388-393). G. Keralavarman Thirumulpadu in his work *Malabar Laws of Inheritance* (1875) refers to *Malayarayans* as hill cultivators who were earlier nomadic agriculturalists and later, settled peasants (qtd.in Joseph 137). These accounts point to the fact that the *Malayaraya* tribes have their own unique tradition, beliefs and rituals. Sankunni's representation ignores their unique tradition and considers everything other than the dominant culture as 'savage' and 'uncivilized'.

The conversion of *Malayarayans* into Christianity with the arrival of European missionaries during the colonial period in Kerala also deserves special mention in this context. V.V Joseph, in his study on *Malayaraya* tribes mentions that "According to the 1981 census 53.34 percent of the *Malai Arayans* were Hindus and 46.06 percent Christians" (Joseph 116). Thus the European missionaries were in close contact with the *Malayarayans* during this period. Moreover, the *Malayaraya* tribe was more educated and superior than the other tribes. Thus they enjoyed a prominent position among the tribals of Kerala during the particular social context. The Travancore census report which came out in 1901 states that some of them were rich and owned plots of cultivated lands, and were superior in appearance to most other hill tribes (qtd.in Thurston and K 388). Even though the census report itself conforms to the conventional perspectives of beauty in its representation of other hill tribes as inferior looking compared to *Malayarayans*, Sankunni's construction of *Malayarayans* as ugly, monstrous, savage, and animal like contradicts their actual way of living in every manner. K.M Anil says that at one point of time in history, these tribal communities were the powerful owners of earth

who had a peculiar social structure. In different phases of colonialism, many indigenous communities were forced to withdraw to the interior of forests. One of the failures of Indian nationalism is that it excluded the tribal communities from its mainstream history (254-256). Moreover, *Malayarayans* claim that the famous Sabarimala temple originally belonged to them as they were the ones who had the rights to light the lamps and perform the rituals of the temple, but later their rights were taken away by the Pandalam Royal family. There are legends and folk songs that talk about their deep connection with Lord Ayyappa which is discussed in the study of *Malayaraya* tribe by V.V Joseph. Hence, when they are merely misrepresented as savages, their unique identity and tradition are being silenced and marginalised. Sankunni's representation of *Malayarayans* also demonstrates how the caste politics of Kerala during the specific time plays a crucial role in the transcription of a legend.

The next aspect for the analysis is the nature of sorcery practised by Kathanar in Sankunni's version of the legend. As mentioned earlier, *Malayarayans* worship their ancestral spirits and are engaged in wizardry. The Travancore census report says that "As wizards they stand very high, and all the low country people cherish a peculiar dread for them" (Thurston 388). The village priest acts as devil dancer and invokes demons in case of sickness. Vishnu Namboodiri notes that tribes like Kurichyar, Adiyaan, Kurumar, Malapanikkar, Kaattunaykkar, Kaanikkar, Kalanaadikal, Malayarayar, Vettuvar, Kuravar and so on in Kerala have a long tradition of wizardry and sorcery. Just like the chief of *Malayarayans* in the legend, they have a community leader or a healer (15). However, in Sankunni's version, the chief of *Malayarayans* offers to teach Kathanar *manthravadham*, *indrajalam* and *mahendrajalam* if he agrees to their conditions. It must be observed that *indrajalam* and *mahendrajalam* are comparatively recent concepts concerning magic in relation to *manthravadham* which dates back to centuries. *Malayarayans* were engaged in *manthravadham* which is related to sorcery and wizardry and not in any magical technique. It was chiefly ritualistic in nature. As

mentioned earlier, their magic and way of life revolves around healing, ancestral spirits, local demons, and animism. S.K Vasanthan notes that a belief was prevalent among them that one gets the power of a wizard after forty one days of rigorous meditation (524). But in Sankunni's version, Kathanar does not attain the supernatural powers through meditation or an accident, instead he learns all the lessons of the art of sorcery from the chief of *Malayarayan* by heart. As Kathanar learnt them for twelve years, it becomes a body of subject matter that can be systematically taught. Thus his supernatural power is given a logical reasoning and explanation. As an aftereffect of the scientific revolution in the sixteenth century, the European tradition which was trying to provide reason and scientific explanation to the superstitions and witchcrafts prevailing at that point of time. The work *The Discoverie of Witchcraft* (1584) by Reginald Scot in the sixteenth century articulated how magicians used tricks to create a supernatural effect. In a way, it rendered a scientific reasoning behind magic. Thus it could be viewed as an attempt by Sankunni who was exposed to the European tradition to rationalise the legend in the light of colonial modernity.

Furthermore, Kathanar's practice of sorcery and magic points to the superstitious customs that had prevailed in the social life of St Thomas Christians before the Synod of Diamper. Kathanar's encounters revolve around sorcery, supernatural beings like *Yakshi*, *Chathan* and so on were part of the local belief system of the particular cultural context. Kathanar attains a heroic image among the people only through his supernatural powers. Since Kathanar is a Christian priest, a reader might perceive it as a miracle, an act familiarised by the Bible. For instance, in one of the episodes in the legend, Kathanar gets exhausted after walking in the forest for a long time and he sees a house owned by an old woman and asks her for a little porridge. As nothing was left in the kitchen, the old woman feels helpless. Kathanar asks the old lady to get a few grains of rice and boil it. Soon the rice fills up the vessel and both of them eat it happily (504). In another episode, he employs his supernatural abilities and creates

a grape yard out of one grape (512). Even though these episodes reminds one of the Biblical miracles, Kathanar's discursive sphere is very different from that of the saints. His supernatural deeds are deeply rooted in the local traditions of the particular historical and cultural context. Thus Sankunni's exposure to English journals and his interactions with the missionaries have influenced his representation of Kathanar as his practice of magic bears great similarities with the European saint miracles. With regard to this construction, Sankunni's Kathanar is an insider by his birth, but an outsider in terms of his Christian values. With the attribution of Western values, Kathanar becomes an outsider who comes for the help of people, when the indigenous Hindu sorcerers like Kunjaman Potti fails to bind the evil spirits. Even the church versions of the legend (which will be discussed in the following chapter) dissociate Kathanar from these local traditions and try to attribute him a saintly status.

Even though the legends in *Aithihamala* including that of "Kadamattathu Kathanar" were transcribed in line with the aesthetics of the *Bhashaposhini* magazine and absorbed into an upper caste discourse, such folk narratives were still regarded as casual materials that need little attention. Although *Aithihamala* has risen to a canonical status at present, Sankunni had received harsh criticism from his contemporaries during the time of its publication. In his preface to *Aithihamala*, Sankunni talks about an anonymous man who wrote in a newspaper that as *Bhashaposhini* magazine was not an ancestral property of Kandathil Varghese Mappillai and Kottarathil Sankunni, it was unfair to include articles of negligible importance like "Parayipetta Panthirukulam" in it. He also added that the cost of paper and publication must be charged from Sankunni and given to Sheshagiri Prabhu who writes classic pieces of works like *Keralapanineeyam*. However, Sankunni adds that royal personages like Kerala Varma Valiyakoyithampuran, Sheshagiriprabhu and so on found great philosophical and moral insights in his work and motivated him to write again (my trans; Payyanad, *Aithihamala* 88-89). The criticism received by Sankunni points to the elite nature of the literary works of the

times. It is apparent that *aithiyam* was regarded merely as a casual piece of writing that did not cater to the intellectually curious people of the age. Raghavan Payyanad observes that such cold reception could be because it was not in line with the values brought out by Kerala Renaissance and colonial modernity (52).

2.3. Conclusion

The chapter has examined both the historical imprints as well as the traits of modernity carried by the legend. It is observed that the legend is a product of various discourses of the age in which it is reconstructed. Kottarathil Sankunni's version of "Kadamattathu Kathanar" is certainly a product of Kerala modernity. The nationalist discourse of the respective period, the print culture, the creation of new genres, the adoption of modern forms of writing, the aesthetics of the *Bhashaposhini* magazine, the caste politics of the times, and the traits of scientific and intellectual revolution that occurred in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries have played a crucial role in the transformation of the legend. Thus the study demonstrates how transcription proves to be a transformative act.

Chapter 3

The Contemporary Life of “Kadamattathu Kathanar”: An Analysis of the Oral Narratives

The previous chapter examined the transformation undergone by the print version of the legend of “Kadamattathu Kathanar” from a literary and historical perspective. The present chapter analyses the oral variants of the legend and looks into the transformation of the legend in the oral tradition. The highly context-sensitive nature of the legend and its folkloristic dimensions are more pronounced in the oral versions of the legend. Even though the chronological transition of the legend is from oral to print and later to visual and new media, the analysis of the oral versions are carried out after the examination of the print version of the legend in the study. It is because the oral versions that are accessible today do not refer to the primary oral culture that had existed before the arrival of the technology of writing. Rather, the oral versions available today are not only passed on from one generation to another, but also influenced by various versions of the legend that have entered into the popular culture. It must be noted that even if the legend makes its appearance in print or visual culture, the oral tradition does not cease to exist. The oral versions continue to exist in their own traditional ways through the bearers of tradition. As each narrator has his or her own version of the story, the oral text has multiple lives. The oral versions for the present study were collected from Kadamattom and Panayannarkavu regions. They interacted with their specific surroundings and developed interesting local patterns. Unlike the print version of the legend which had a definitive plot structure, the oral narratives were fragmentary and digressive in nature. As the oral versions demonstrate the extremely variable and highly sensitive nature of the legend of “Kadamattathu Kathanar”, the present chapter examines the transformation undergone by the legend as it adapts to its local and immediate demands and generate new variants.

3.1. Oral Narratives: A Brief Overview

Before moving on to the analysis of the oral narratives, the study attempts to offer a brief overview of the nature of the oral narratives. According to Linda Degh, the “impulse to tell a story and the need to listen to it have made narrative the natural companion of man throughout the history of civilization” (“Folk Narrative” 53). The tendency to narrate is a universal phenomenon. Such oral performances always demand the presence of an audience who may listen to as well as participate in the whole process. Diverse forms of narration gave birth to diverse verbal genres ranging from oral histories to folk tales, legends, myths and epic poetries. All these folk narratives are part of the oral folklore. These verbal art creations involve both narrative and non-narrative forms of expression. As the legend under study is a folk narrative, the following sections discuss the aspects that are more relevant to folk narratives.

Before delving into the nature of orality, one must admit the fact that it is very difficult and almost impossible for us to conceive of an oral culture that had existed in the pre-literate period. Our thoughts are deeply affected by the technology of writing. Hence the modes of thoughts and verbal expressions that had prevailed in this primary oral culture may seem to be totally unfamiliar to the literate world. Walter J Ong who worked extensively on the nuances of orality and literacy calls this oral speech that helped the formation of human society in the beginning as ‘primary orality’. Today writing has completely restructured our consciousness that the orality that we find in our electronic age is marked by ‘secondary orality’ which depends on writing and print for its existence (134-135). Hence, the orality that we find in the collected oral versions of the legend is the orality that is affected or enhanced by writing. Even though the collected oral versions of the legends are evolved from a literate universe, they still retain certain characteristics inherent in oral situations.

The narrators in an oral culture completely rely on memory. The modes of expression and the thought process of the narrators would be different from the authors who are engaged

in the conscious creation of literary forms. Ong's observations on the psychodynamics of orality are relevant to the present study. The narrators narrate what they can recall at that moment. In order to retrieve their thoughts during the narration, they follow certain mnemonic patterns. They retain their thoughts through rhythmic patterns, repetitions, alliterations and other formulaic expressions. He points out certain characteristics that are specific to orally based thoughts and expression, viz., a) they are additive, rather than subordinative as they are less structured compared to literary works. They always follow pragmatics and do not have an elaborate and fixed grammar; b) they are aggregative rather than analytic. They carry lots of epithets and other formulaic expressions to implement memory; c) they are redundant or copious in nature as they repeat information in order to maintain their fluency; d) they are conservative or traditionalist as they repeat what had been telling for ages; e) they are close to the human world as they are close to lived experience and interact with immediate surroundings; f) they are agonistically toned as they engage with the immediate context where human beings struggle with one another; g) they are empathetic and participatory rather than objectively distanced. The speakers and audience are interactive in nature; h) they are homeostatic in nature as their words are relevant to their present meanings and do not dwell on the past; and i) they are situational rather than abstract as they remain close to the human world (36-50). The present chapter also examines whether the observations put forth by Ong are applicable to the oral versions under study.

While Ong's study provided important insights into the nature of orality in general, Linda Degh's study on oral folklore shed light on the dynamics of legend narration in particular. In spite of certain formulas that are relevant to the narration of a legend, she touches upon how a legend develops interesting local patterns and merge with their immediate surroundings and undergoes constant modifications ("Folk Narrative" 75). The messages they want to convey

are always placed in their local environments. Such local patterns could be observed in all the all versions collected by the researcher for the study.

The study analyses six oral versions of the legend collected by the researcher from both Panayannarkavu and Kadamattom regions. The background details of the narrators are already discussed in chapter one. The first version was collected from Beena, a regular visitor of Kadamattom church. The second and third version was collected from Varghese and his father Kunjavaran who live within the church locality. The fourth version was collected from Deacon Emil from the same region. As the legend has connections with Panayannarkavu, where Kathanar bound the *Yakshi*, the fifth and sixth versions were collected from this region. The main narrator was Madhurima and the second narrator was Rasak. Apart from these collected oral versions by the researcher, the study also makes use of an oral version collected by Corianne Dempsey from Fr. K.P Isaac in 1994 as it is an older version. The researcher has also included one of her field experiences as it is highly relevant for the study.

3.2. Oral Versions - The Integrated Plot Structure

All the collected oral versions of the legend of “Kadamattathu Kathanar” proved to have great adaptability and constantly modified the messages they communicated. The story lines of these versions are as Dempsey states “sometimes bold and other times smudged between and around religious affiliations” (150). The versions collected from Kadamattom centred on the church of Kadamattom and the local belief system whereas the versions collected from Panayannarkavu centred on *Panayannarkavu Yakshi*, Panayannarkavu temple and its local belief system. These narrations were not simply a story-transmitting act, they entailed, the narrator’s judgements, values, world-views, beliefs, and so on in spite of their didactic and cautionary dimensions. First, the study intends to provide the plot structure of these variants of a single story. The following is a plot structure created by integrating the individual narrations which were mostly partial in nature.

The *Aithihyamala* version of the legend began with the childhood of Kathanar. However, among all the oral versions, the versions that touched upon the childhood of Kathanar were those of Deacon Emil and father Isaac. According to their versions, Kathanar was the son of a poor widow and once they were visited by a Bishop from Persia who had miraculous powers. Emil added that the Bishop was believed to be Mar Abo. He was very hungry and asked them for food. They replied that there was no food in the house and only a few grains of raw rice were left in the kitchen. He asked them to put those grains for boiling and to their surprise, the rice filled up the vessel after boiling. They realized that he had some magical powers. During that time, *Karthakkanmar*¹ were the rulers of the land. Once the daughter of the king of *Karthakkanmar* suffered from an eye disease and the king learnt about the Bishop who had magical powers from his people. She was brought to Mar Abo and due to his miraculous capabilities, she recovered soon. The king was extremely happy that he pointed to a large hill nearby and told Mar Abo that he could worship his god there². Mar Abo accepted his offer and built a church there. He also called Paulose *Semmassan* along with him. When there was a situation which demanded Mar Abo to leave for Thevalakkara, he ordained him to serve as the priest and entrusted him with all the duties of the church. Thereafter, he came to be known as both Kadamattathachan and Kadamattathu Kathanar. One day, Kadamattathachan was performing the holy mass and his ring fell off his finger. Mar Abo had told him that if something happened to him, the ring would come off his finger and it was symbolic of his death³. Hence Kathanar had an intuition that something might have happened to his mentor and he immediately left for Thevalakkara. By the time he reached there, his funeral rites were over. As he stood in front of his grave in tears, a hand rose from the tomb as if to console him.

¹ Karthakkanmar' were the members of a Nair aristocratic clan who ruled small kingdoms in the respective region. According to the church website, the Karthakkanmar mentioned in the legend belonged to the family of "Aikunnathu Karthakkanmar" ("General Information").

² The narrator digressed at this point and informed the audience that later the church lost some of its land due to encroachments from different people.

³ The incident of ring falling off the fingers of Kathanar was narrated by Varghese from Kadamattom.

The narrator, Emil then digressed from the main narrative and told that the holy hand was wrapped in silk and kept inside the church. Later some people wanted to renovate the church and they started off the demolition with breaking the wall. However, when they started breaking the side wall, the tomb rose from below and this is the tomb which people can find inside the church today.

The second version of the legend was the most common version of the legend among the local people. This version started with the episode of Kathanar grazing the cattle⁴. As three or four cows were found missing, Kathanar went in search of them in the forest. After walking for a long time, he realized that he was lost in the deep forest⁵. However, he walked ahead and saw a spot of light in front of a place and stopped there. He entered the place and realized that he had reached the cave of a group of wild people⁶ in the forest. They soon kept him in captivity. These group of evil people were hunters who were engaged in sorcery and other evil practices. They wanted to kill him, but they realized that he had some miraculous powers and decided to keep him under their custody. They began to call him “Kadamattom” as he came from Kadamattom. They decided to teach him the art of sorcery. However, they asked him to forget everyone in his life before he started learning sorcery. Kathanar replied that he was ready to forget everyone except his mother. The chief of the wild people replied that it was fine if he could not forget his mother, but he had to forget everyone else in his life and become one among them. Gradually Kathanar learnt the lessons of sorcery from them. One day he felt that

⁴ Beena, 46 years old started her narration with the episode of Kathanar grazing the cattle. This episode also surfaces in the narrations of Emil, Varghese, his father and Isaac.

⁵ The narrator mentioned that the well which is currently seen near the church is not the actual well that is mentioned in the legend. The actual well was situated below the Poyedam church which is at a walking distance from the church of Kadamattom. He continued that the cattle was believed to be disappeared through the well. But he said that it was not actually true. Instead, he told that there was a path which led to the hill and at the end of the path there was a rubber plantation. There were four tunnels there and if anyone chose one of them, one could again find tunnels. In the end, he or she would get lost in the forest.

⁶ Emil mentions this group of people as ‘Malavedans’ (the name of a tribal community in Kerala); Beena refers to them as People with *Pishachu* like qualities who live in the forest; Isaac refers to them as ‘wild people’ and Kunjavaran mentions them as *Pishachu*.

he wanted to return to his own place. However, it was almost impossible because of a particular rule imposed by the wild people. Fearing that Kathanar would run away from that place, *Malavedans* used to shout his name, “Kadamattom” every ten minutes and he had to respond to their call. In order to escape from this rule, Kathanar figured out a way. Using his magical powers, he taught all the items in his room to respond to their call. As these items started to respond to their call, Kathanar escaped from the place. He ran for a long time and finally reached in front of the church of Kadamattom. He tried to push open the huge door at the entrance of the church. But as it was made of eight locks, he could not open the door. He cried and told that “Mother, I have not forgotten you, please help”⁷. The mother he referred to was none other than Mother Mary. The door was open and he could enter the church. Meanwhile some *Pishachukkal* sent by the people in the forest came in search of him and reached the church. As they could not open the door, they started beating the walls of the church with heavy metal chains⁸. The local version concluded with the disappearance of Kathanar into the underground tunnel which is presently known as *pathala kinar*⁹. The versions collected from Kadamattom ended here. They centred only on Kathanar and Kadamattom church. All other episodes including those of old woman, *Yakshi*, Hindu sorcerer Kunjaman Potti, *padayani*, King of Cochin and Dutch and so on which were found in Sankunni’s version were missing in these versions.

The versions collected from Panayannarkavu started with the *Yakshi* episode. The narrator Madhurima who belonged to the old generation began her narration with the mention

⁷ In Beena’s version, Kathanar prays to his ‘Father’ to save him instead of ‘Mother Mary’.

⁸ Beena and Emil added that the imprints of the church were seen on the walls of the church for a long time. Even the paint could not be applied properly on that area. However, later it was covered with heavy coating during the church renovation.

⁹ It is an underground well situated near the Poyyadam chapel near the church of Kadamattom. It is regarded as the portal through which Kathanar reached the abode of either *Malayarayans* or demons. Hence the well is believed to have miraculous abilities and receives a steady flow of pilgrims round the year.

of Kathanar's wife¹⁰. According to her, once Kathanar went somewhere to do sorcery and brought a girl with him when he returned home. Apparently she was a dangerous *Yakshi* who had destroyed some places using her evil powers. Kathanar turned her into a girl and brought her home. He asked his wife to look after her and give her whatever is cooked at home. He instructed her not to give her fish or meat and left the place. However, he did not tell her that she was actually a *Yakshi*. His wife found that the girl had beautiful hair. Hence, she offered her that she would comb and tie her hair. As she was parting her hair, she felt something on her head which looked like a thorn and she pulled it out. Suddenly, the girl flew up the sky in the form of a bird. She observed keenly in which direction she was flying. After sometime, Kathanar came and she informed him that the girl had flown up the sky in the form of a bird. After learning the direction of *Yakshi*'s flight from the old woman, he headed for that route with his cane. He reached near the banks of river Pamba. Kathanar asked the boatman if he had seen any girl. He replied that he saw a woman with her hair left open, crossing the river a little while ago. Immediately he tied his boat to the bank and left. Kathanar used to keep a small foldable knife tucked into his waist. He took it out and cut a plantain leaf. When he put it on water, it turned out to be a flattened board. He got on it and reached the other side of the river with his magical powers. When he reached the other side of the river, he looked around. There were so many palm trees. When he used his magical powers, he understood that *Yakshi* was sitting on one of the palm trees. Then, using his magical powers, Kathanar made the *Yakshi* come down from the palm tree and consecrated her next to the *Bhagavathy* of the Panayannarkavu temple. He made her promise that she would not trouble people anymore and let her reside there. However, during the month of *Karkkidakam*¹¹, on *Amavasi*¹² days, *Yakshi*

¹⁰ Rasak intervened her narration and added that the character in Kathanar's house was not his wife, but his mother.

¹¹ It is the last month of the Malayalam calendar

¹² It is the day when moon is invisible. As per the Hindu lunar calendar, *Amavasi* usually falls in the middle of the month. It is considered as inauspicious as the power of evil spirits are believed to be at its peak.

could be seen walking in many places. The narrators, Madhurima and Rasak added that *Yakshi* would never turn back as its back part is hollow and had a long hair to cover its hollow part. If certain rituals were not performed for goddesses, they would show their true colours. Hence, every year a ritual called *kuthiyottam*¹³ was performed during the festival of ¹⁴*vishu*.

3.3. The Analysis of the Oral Versions

The folklorist Linda Degh states that “legend is extremely variable, reacting sensitively to local and immediate needs that modify and reformulate both the narratives and the messages they communicate” (“Folk Narrative” 73). The analysis of the oral versions of the legend looks into this ability of the legend to constantly modify its narrative and undergo transformation. A detailed analysis in terms of the structure, theme and texture of these versions would add depth to the study. The first aspect of discussion is how the perception of Kathanar in the respective regions contribute to the transformation of the legend. In the oral versions collected from Kadamattom area, Kathanar is addressed by the narrators as *achan*. *Achan* is a term used by the believers to address the priest in a respectful manner. Thus, when a believer narrates the legend of Kathanar, he attains more of a saintly status than that of a mere legendary character. On the other hand, in the versions collected from Panayannarkavu, both the narrators addressed him as ‘Kathanar, the great sorcerer’. These variations in addressing the legendary character points to the context-specificity of the legends. For the people in Panayannarkavu, Kathanar was a great sorcerer who succeeded in binding a dangerous *Yakshi* who took refuge in their area in order to escape from Kathanar. He consecrated the *Yakshi* next to the goddess of Panayannarkavu temple and made her promise that she would not harm anyone again. The encounters of Kathanar beyond the boundaries of Panayannarkavu were not mentioned in their narrations of the legend. On the other hand, it is also interesting to note that the versions of

¹³ It is a ritual art form usually performed in *Bhadrakali* temples in the Malayalam month of *Kumbham* that falls in February- March.

¹⁴ Vishu is a Hindu festival and new year celebrated in Kerala.

Kadamattom region did not touch upon the *Yakshi* episode of the legend. The version of Emil from Kadamattom began with the church history whereas the version from Panayannarkavu began with the arrival of *Yakshi* in Panayannarkavu. These variations in the narrative frameworks are indicative of the fact that the oral narratives of Kadamattom and Panayannarkavu revolve around their locality as well as their religious affiliations. A close scrutiny of the versions of the respective regions will throw light on this aspect.

Deacon Emil Kurian narrated two versions of the legend. The first version revolved around the church of Kadamattom. It dissociated Kathanar's supernatural powers from the local sources and associated it with the bishop, Mar Abo and the church. Without touching upon the childhood of Kathanar, the narration began with the church history and the capturing of Syrian Christian churches by the Catholics after the Synod of Diamper. The narration gained credibility as the Synod of Diamper was an actual historical event. Then the narration moved on to the arrival of the Bishop Mar Abo from Persia. In order to render more credibility to the story, he added that the photo of Mar Abo could be seen above the wall of *madbaha*¹⁵ of the church. Thus, at each points of narration of the story, the narrator presented verifiable facts to the audience in order to make the story acceptable. As the bishop had miraculous powers and Kathanar was his disciple, the source of his supernatural powers could be attributed to Mar Abo from Persia. The oral version of the legend collected by Corinne G. Dempsey, from the then vicar of the church, K.P Isaac who was 94 years old also talked about the bishop who possessed miraculous powers from Persia. However, he did not mention the name of the Bishop in his version. Emil's version ended with the death of Mar Abo and the miracle of right hand raising from his tomb to console Kathanar who was in tears. He added that the right hand was covered in silk and kept inside the church. Thus the story gained official validation from the church. Emil's version also talked about the establishment of the St George church of

¹⁵ It refers to the sanctum sanctorum of the church.

Kadamattom. According to his version, Mar Abo healed the eye disease of the daughter of the king of the then land rulers of Kadamattom region and the land for building the church was offered to him in return of his service. The gift of a plot of land to build the church in return of his miraculous deed legitimised the church's rights over the land on which it was built. However, in this version of the legend, Kathanar was not presented as a great Christian sorcerer whose supernatural powers were rooted in the local traditions. Instead, Kathanar was portrayed as a disciple of the bishop from Persia who had miraculous powers. Even though the legend of "Kadamattathu Kathanar" centred on the magical powers of Kathanar in the local versions, the version of the church gave prime importance to Mar Abo. Perhaps the church did not attribute official sainthood to Kathanar as he was believed to be a practitioner of sorcery which had been forbidden in Christianity. However, large number of devotees visit the church of Kadamattom on a regular basis due to his devotional popularity. Dempsey says that "For those who come to his shrine, it is his invincibility, not his good standing with the Jacobite tradition that makes him capable of bestowing blessings and therefore, worthy of devotion" (167). Even though church does not give him the official status of a saint, he is revered as a saint in the minds of the pilgrims due to his miracle-working powers. Even at present, the local versions are very different from the version of the church. The conviction of the devotees in the miraculous capabilities of Kathanar was very evident in the version collected from Beena.

Beena's version did not touch upon Mar Abo and his miraculous powers. Her version centred on Kathanar and his extra-ordinary miraculous capabilities. She said that there was a regular flow of devotees from Thrissur. The following is the belief shared by the devotees from her place.

If one needs to achieve or fulfil something, one has to go to Kadamattom church and it will be fulfilled. Nobody knows how it would happen. But the church has great power. If you call him (Kathanar), your call will be heard... There are so many believers from

the Thrissur side. Some people shiver when they hear the name of Kadamattom church... I do not go to any other church like this. (Beena)

She also narrates her personal experience to substantiate the miraculous powers of Kathanar and the church:

If somebody offers a cock to Kadamattom church, that cock soon attains a special charm. Once our family offered a cock to Kadamattom church. However, one of the neighbours killed and ate it. All of a sudden a black cobra coiled around a shrub in their compound. Soon, five to eight snakes entered their house. They have a jasmine plant near the tea shop next to their house. The black cobra coiled around it. Everyone was scared to kill it. Seeing this, my father told loudly that the cock that was missing was offered to Kadamattom church and if anyone had caught it, something would happen like this. Hearing this, they vowed to offer a cock to Kadamattom church the next time. After this incident, they became greater believers than us. (Beena)

Thus, Beena tried to convince her audience of the trustworthiness of her words through the narration of her personal experience. It complemented the belief content of the legend she narrated. Moreover, it warned the audience against doing such things. Her narration of the legend of “Kadamattathu Kathanar” centred on Kathanar’s encounter with a group of evil people in the forest after he had gone in search of the missing cows. It touched upon how he got his magical powers from those people and his return to the church of Kadamattom. She concluded the story with the disappearance of Kathanar into the underground well. She neither mentioned the *Yakshi* episode at Panayannarkavu nor the fight between the Dutch and the Raja of Cochin. Her version was transmitted to her by her mother.

The version collected from Panayannarkavu also exhibited this highly localised characteristic of the legend. Madhurima’s and Abdul Rasak’s versions of the legend proved to

be very useful to the current study as they belonged to the older generation. Their versions did not touch upon the childhood of Kathanar, Kadamattom church or any of his encounters beyond the narratives of *Panayannarkavu Yakshi*. As mentioned earlier, for them, he was not a miracle-working saint, instead, he was a very powerful sorcerer. At one point of narration, Madhurima told that Kathanar was more powerful than all the sorcerers in the Panayannarkavu region. This statement not only entailed a comparative assessment of the powers of Kathanars and the sorcerers in her region, but also reflected a narrative strategy to build up the character of Kathanar. The difference in the perception of Kathanar in the respective regions was indicative of how the legend is shaped by the social and local climate surrounding its narration. Moreover, her version of the legend was highly sensitive to her immediate surrounding that the chief deities of the temple-goddess Bhadrakali and Lord Shiva- constantly surfaced in her narration. In fact, at a certain point she completely digressed from the main plot and talked about the rituals and customs of Panayannarkavu such as *Kuthiyottam* which was performed every year to reduce the power of the goddess Kali. Thus it must be inferred that the legend of “Kadamattathu Kathanar” overlaps and interacts with the customs, rituals and beliefs of other religious traditions. It also adds depths to the concept of *Yakshi* in Kerala. In the popular *Aithiyamala* version, Kathanar bound the *Yakshi* who came to Panayannarkavu to escape from him and made her promise that she would not harm anyone again. However, in Madhurima’s version, Kathanar consecrated her next to the goddess Bhadrakali of Panayannarkavu temple. However, since the goddess was already in her most furious state, some temple priests and sorcerers performed some rituals and consecrated the *Yakshi* outside.



Fig. 2. Yakshinada: The Place for *Yakshi* Worship (Image Source: “Yakshiyamma” Panayannarkavu.org, 2017, <https://www.panayannarkavu.org/yekshiyamma.php>. Accessed 6 Apr. 2020.)

This specific episode of the legend shed light on the *Yakshi* worship tradition that was prevalent in Kerala in the past. As mentioned in chapter two, *Yakshi* is intimately connected to the groves as it was their place of worship at a certain point of time. V.V Haridas notes that with the arrival of Brahmins, the groves of *Yakshi* were transformed into groves of *Bhagavathy*. *Yakshis* were turned into deities or sub-deities. The removal of *Yakshi* from her original place and consecrating her a little way from the goddess by the temple priests and sorcerers may be indicative of the period when *Yakshis* were brought under the control of *Bhagavathys* as part of the process of Hinduisation. In another Bhadrakali temple in the same place (Thiruvalla), which is also situated near the groves, there is popular belief that a *Yakshi* used to trouble the Brahmins. She inhabited the groves and specifically targeted Vaishnava¹⁶ Brahmins. One day Vishnu in the guise of a celibate walked towards her grove and the *Yakshi* tried to escape at the sight of him. However, he arrested her. When she begged him for her life, he made her jump into a nearby well and covered the mouth of the well with a huge piece of rock. Then he

¹⁶ Vaishnava Brahmins refers to a sect of Brahmins who considers Vishnu as the Supreme Lord.

consecrated goddess Bhadrakali over it. However, she jumped into the well under the condition that *Yakshi* worship should also be done along with that of the goddess Bhadrakali. There is a small temple devoted to *Yakshi* at the north side of the sanctum sanctorum of the Thiruverankavu Bhadrakali temple and people still worship and perform rituals for her (81). This legend from the same locality also points to the domination of *Bhagavathy* over *Yakshi*. In Panayannarkavu temple, she is worshipped as a sub-deity. Other legends in *Aithihyamala* such as “Kaladiyil Bhattathiri” also talk about how *Bhagavathy* makes the *Yakshi* powerless and protects men from her (123-124). Madhurima’s version also addressed certain unanswered questions in the *Aithihyamala* version of the legend. In *Aithihyamala*, the *Yakshi* inhabited the region between Trivandrum and Padmanabhapuram. However, after Kathanar domesticated her and she escapes from him, she flees to Panayannarkavu. The story did not explain why she travelled from South Travancore to Central Travancore. Haridas’ historical explanation with regard to this direction has already been discussed in the previous chapter. One could find a connective link that provided a possible reason for her travel from South to central Travancore in Madhurima’s version from a folkloristic point of view. Madhurima said that *Bhagavathy* wanted the things to happen in such a way because she wanted the *Yakshi* to come to Panayannarkavu to escape from Kathanar. She said that *Bhagavathy* gave the girl to Kathanar in the form of *Yakshi* and the turn of events happened in such a way that Kathanar made her come down from the palm tree next to the temple and consecrated her next to the *Bhagavathy*. Why did the *Bhagavathy* want Kathanar to chase the *Yakshi* to the precincts of her temple? The temple version given on its website addresses *Yakshi* as ‘Yakshiyamma’. It says that *Yakshi* was once a beautiful virgin goddess who became obsessed with nymphomania and was cursed to spend a life as a vampire for her sins. Thus it was Kathanar who brought her to Panayannarkavu in order to release her from her curse and restore her godly status (“Yekshiyamma”). It gives an explanation as to why Kathanar brought her to Panayannarkavu.

Why did *Bhagavathy* assign this duty to Kathanar? Was it because he was an extraordinary sorcerer? Madhurima mentioned at one point of her narration that Kathanar was more powerful than all other sorcerers in that region. Dempsey who has worked on the concept of *Yakshi* in South India says that “It appears that Kadamattathachan is simply deposited into a Hindu story plot, not because of a shared belief in harnessing evil’s potential but, rather, simply to prove his mettle as an efficacious magician” (123). The narration of Madhurima proved to be a perfect example to illustrate how folklore generates folklore again and again. It may also indicate how people connect two different folk narratives and create their own versions. In other words, it gives an interesting insight into the dynamics of the phenomenon of folklore.

Another example is the narration of the origin of the place name, ‘Panayannarkavu’ by Abdul Rasak. It is an interesting place name legend related to Kathanar which one cannot find in *Aithihamala*. According to his narration, Kathanar went to Panayannarkavu in search of *Yakshi* as he came to know through his magical powers that she was sitting on one of the palm trees in Panayannarkavu. He went to each palm tree and started counting them one by one. Finally he reached the palm tree on which *Yakshi* was sitting and made her come down using his magical powers. As he counted the palm trees, the place got the name “Panayennarkavu”¹⁷ and eventually it became Panayannarkavu. Thus, the folk mind connects folklore and the geographical features of the place and create the place-name in a logical manner that the listeners would not question its veracity. *Pana* and *kavu* justify the geographical peculiarities of the place whereas ‘ennar’ is justified through this explanatory story based on a popular belief. Such legends which include explanatory stories about the origin of things are termed as ‘etiological legends’ (Degh, “Folk Narrative” 76). It is an interesting example to show how a place name legend is derived from another legend. It draws our attention to the dynamic, creative and ever-evolving dimensions of folklore. As Muthukumaraswamy observes “The

¹⁷ *Pana* refers to palm tree, *ennuka* refers to count and *kavu* refers to groves.

local community spins stories to glorify their place and communicate local identity and worldview” (116). The place name legend mentioned by Rasak also illustrates the folk mind’s capacity to construct multiple narratives out of a given folk narrative.

Rasak’s and Madhurima’s versions also shed light on a different folk notion of *Yakshi* which was not mentioned in the previous studies related to *Yakshi*. They said that *Yakshi*’s backside was hollow that it always showed its front view only. It did not turn back for this reason and walked backwards whenever it wanted to go back. Normal people could not see *Yakshi*, only sorcerers could see her. In the introduction to V.V Haridas’s work on *Yakshi*, K.N Ganesh offers a possible reason regarding why the *Yakshi* always left her hair open as represented in the popular media. He says that Jain-Buddhist Bikshunis (a fully ordained female monastic) wear white clothes and walk with either fully shaven head or hair fully let open (10). However, in this folk version, Rasak and Madhurima said that *Yakshi* always left her hair open to cover her back part which was hollow. Madhurima added that *Yakshi* never showed the back part as people would get scared. Many studies have touched upon several folk constructions of *Yakshi* in folk texts such as *Thekkan Pattu*, *Aithihamala* stories and so on. The notion of *Yakshi* as a seductress, *Yakshi* who asks men for lime, *Yakshi* as an enchantress who lures men into the forest and kill them, *Yakshi* who confuses the path and so on have been discussed in many studies related to *Yakshi*. Although some versions including the representations in movies have held the view that *Yakshi*’s feet never touched the ground, they did not talk about the *Yakshi* whose backside was hollow. Therefore, the oral versions of Madhurima and Rasak throw light on the fact that there are still some of the unexplored notions of *Yakshi* in the folk tradition of Kerala. Moreover, neither of their versions represented *Panayannarkavu Yakshi* as a seductive enchantress. Rasak said that she was very dangerous as she destroyed a place completely. Neither of them knew in what kind of ways she had destroyed that place. To them, it was an unknown place. Rasak’s narration also shed light on another

notion of *Yakshan- Yakshi* who dwells on the crown of palm trees. *Yakshi*'s association with *pana* can be observed in many legends in Kerala. The legend of "Kaladiyil Bhattathiri" talks about *Yakshi*'s magical powers to transform the palm tree into a palace to lure the victims. V.V Haridas points out one of the possible explanations given by M.R Rajesh in his work *Hindu Dharma Rahasyam*. He says that *Yakshan* is the supreme soul. As the god performs the *yajnam* (ritual) of creation, he got the name *Yakshan* and the place where ritual takes place came to be known as *Yakshi*. Perhaps, *Yakshi* became an inglorious term later when *yajnam* turned into a heinous act of sucking the blood out of humans. There was a practice of planting palm trees in the soil where *yajnam* had happened. As the place where *yajnam* happens was called *Yakshi* and the practice of planting palm trees could be the reason why *Yakshi* is always associated with palm trees (qtd.in Haridas 93-94). In fact, trees were intrinsically linked to the concept of *Yakshi* in different parts of India. In Buddhist-Jain stories, *Yakshis* were the guardian deities of a particular area of the forest (72). Moreover, the concept of *Yakshi* also bears relations to the tree worship which was prevalent in the Vedic period. Several sculptures of *Yakshi/Yakshan* illustrate these connections. One such example is that of 'Yaksha chandramukhan' who dwells in trees (108). These trees may differ from region to region. While Ashoka tree is mostly associated with *Yakshi* concept in North India, in Kerala, it is mostly associated with trees such as *pala* ¹⁸and *pana*. Among palm trees, one could find many varieties such as *ezhutholapana* and *karimpana*. *Karimpana* appears more in the popular versions of *Yakshi* as it has a scary appearance. The reason for the appearance of palm trees in the oral versions collected from Panayannarkavu could be because of the geographical peculiarities of the region. According to the narrators, once Panayannarkavu was a dense forest full of palm trees and thick groves. It could be true as the place name connotes the same idea. The legend is narrated in such a way

¹⁸ It is commonly known as Devil tree and is found in many parts of India. It blooms at dusk and has a unique strong scent which is why it is often associated with evil spirits.

that it fits the typical landscape of the specific region. Thus, these oral versions from Panayannarkavu serve as an interesting example to illustrate how geographical variations play a great role in generating diverse variants of a legend.



Fig. 3. Palm Trees near Panayannarkavu Temple (Image Source: Author)

The creative potential embedded in folk narratives could be observed in all the collected oral versions. The narration of the legend became a great creative process that the narrators weaved their memories and ideas into interesting patterns. Such creative interventions and cultural interpolations generate diverse oral variants of a single story and transforms the legend. In Madhurima's version, *Yakshi* escaped from Kathanar in the form of a bird. When Kathanar's mother pulled out the nail from her head, she transformed into a bird and flew up the sky. This imagery of *Yakshi*'s transformation into a bird could not be found in any other popular versions of the legend of "Kadamattathu Kathanar". This creative addition could also be influenced by the geographical variations of Panayannarkavu. As mentioned earlier, '*Yakshi* on palm tree' motif appeared in the oral versions of Panayannarkavu due to its geographical peculiarities. Hence *Yakshi*'s transformation into a bird in Madhurima's version justifies how *Yakshi* reaches

the crown of the palm tree. The narration of legends is so lively that they involve a lot of fast moving actions. *Yakshi*'s flight to Panayannarkavu in the form of a bird grabs the interest of the audience and keep them entertained. Such interesting oral variants of the legend illustrate how stories evolve on their own.

Another interesting aspect which is found in Madhurima's version is Kathanar's instruction to his mother regarding *Yakshi*'s food. Kathanar says to his mother that she could give her anything to eat except meat and fish. The dangerous *Yakshi* in the legend fed on humans, leaving behind only their nails and hair. When Kathanar asked his wife not to give her meat and fish, it could suggest that she would turn more aggressive if she was given them. This notion of *Yakshi* could be constructed by people who are in favour of vegetarianism. It puts forth the idea that meat and fish are connected with violence and eating them may fuel aggressiveness in *Yakshi*.

The influence of popular culture was also reflected in some of the oral variants of the legend. In Beena's version, she mentioned the daughter of the chief of the people in the forest who was interested in Kathanar. She had special feelings for Kathanar that she helped him to escape from the custody of the wild people. Emil's second version of the legend also touched upon this character. Even though this character is absent in *Aithihyamala* version of the legend, she appears in the theatre and movie version of the legend. Film and theatrical versions usually invent such characters or interpolate scenes to fit the dynamics of such media. Emil also added that the Malavedans used to call him 'Kadamattom'. This name is also drawn from the theatre version of the play by Kalanilayam. Similarly, in Madhurima's version, Kathanar went after *Yakshi* with a cane in his hand. It was in the theatre version of the legend, Kathanar appeared with a magic staff in his hand for the first time. It was used as a theatrical property used by the hero to assert his magical powers. The film version of the legend also employs cane as a property. Even though these mass mediated versions do not completely replace the oral variants

of a specific region, they certainly solidifies certain images and infiltrate into the oral tradition. The reference of other films also surfaced in the narrations. Emil told that the film *Amen* (2013) talked about the history of Kadamattom church (Emil). Furthermore, other popular legends may also intervene in their narration. For instance, Madhurima says that Kathanar had the habit of keeping a small foldable knife tucked into his waist band. This characteristic which Madhurima attributed to Kathanar is an important feature of another popular legendary hero “Kayamkulam Kochunni”. In *Aithihyamala* and all other popular culture versions of the legend, Kayamkulam Kochunni is represented as a bandit who always keep a small knife tucked into his waist. Since the legend of “Kadamattathu Kathanar” and “Kayamkulam Kochunni” were two of the most popular legendary heroes in Kerala and have appeared in the popular media, they may interfere with each other during the narration. Such intertextual links could also be observed in the legend narration.

Linda Deigh observes that “The purpose of a legend is to report, inform, explain, teach, advise, warn, help or enlighten. The legend answers unuttered questions of human concern” (487). These characteristics of legend may be observed in all the oral variants of the legend. Emil informed the audience that some local people stole some of the rare documents from the church and their lives were ruined in the end. He also warned the audience that if one played with Kadamattom church, church will fight back and he or she would be destroyed. He also told in a cautionary tone that if anyone practised black magic in the well called *pathala kinar* near the church, his or her wish would be fulfilled, but he or she will not die. The person would be bedridden and undergo suffering till someone else carry forwards the ritual (Emil). Beena also warned the audience that if one made vows to offer something to Kadamattom church and did not do it, the church would cause something as it had great power (Beena). Madhurima also warned the audience telling that if certain rituals were not done for *Bhagavathy* and *Yakshiyamma* of Panayannarkavu temple, they would show their true colours. Madhurima also

advised the researcher that she should pray to *Panayannrkavu Bhagavathy* before writing her thesis. She also added that the researcher should not get scared of *Yakshi* at night. In case, she was scared, she should fall on her feet and say that “I am a small child, it is my research and life” (Madhurima). If she did so, *Yakshi* would love her. These versions also touched upon certain educative aspects. Rasak said to the audience that “there were certain invisible things in some matters and we should believe them” (Rasak; my trans.). Madhurima said that “once *Kuthiyottam* is done for a kid, he won’t lose a drop of blood from his body. The devi would save him” (Madhurima; my trans.). These didactic statements also demonstrate the beliefs and world views embodied in the legend. On the other hand, Madhurima’s description of *Yakshi* ‘s flight in the form of a bird and Beena’s description of the cock’s beauty after it was being offered to Kadamattom church serve the entertaining purpose of the legend. Apart from these purposes, as mentioned earlier, the narrators also make their own judgements and assessments in their narrations.

The occurrences of numerous paradoxes in the oral narration also contributed to the transformation of the legend of “Kadamattathu Kathanar”. In *Aithihyamala*, after domesticating *Yakshi*, Kathanar takes her to his aunt’s house. She was an old woman who was a widower and Kathanar leaves the *Yakshi* in her place for domestic help (Sankunni 508). However, in Madhurima’s version, the character of aunt is replaced by Kathanar’s wife. This regional variation in the character’s relation to Kathanar could be because of the dominance of Orthodox Christians in Parumala region. As the Catholic Church insists on the law of clerical celibacy, Catholic priests do not marry. However, the Orthodox Church allows the priests to marry before their ordination. Parumala region is mostly inhabited by Marthoma and Orthodox Christian sects. As their church allows marriage, most of the priests in the region are married. This could be the reason why the character was addressed as Kathanar’s wife in Madhurima’s version of the legend. Similarly in Beena’s oral version, Kathanar got lost as he went to graze

cattle. However, in Varghese's version, the cattle initially appears as goat. Such variations happen in legends as they travel in time. Similarly, in most of the popular versions of the legend, Kathanar learns sorcery from the tribal community called *Malayarayans*. In Emil's version, *Malayarayans* become *Malavedans*. *Malavedans* are also another hill tribe which inhabited the same regions of *Malayarayans* and followed similar practices. It could be the reason why *Malayarayans* were replaced by *Malavedans*.

The process of legend narration also conformed to some of the observations on the dynamics of orality mentioned by Walter J Ong in the beginning of the chapter in terms of the use of formulaic expressions, repetitive phrases, and participatory and interactive nature. Many formulaic expressions were used by the narrators while narrating the legend of Kathanar. Beena says "Kathanar went, and went and went" while Madhurima says Kathanar's wife "parted and parted" *Yakshi*'s hair. She also says Kathanar "walked and walked". In both cases, the speakers are emphasizing on an action which is repetitive by its nature itself. As Kathanar walks for a long time, such repetitive emphasis helps the listeners to envision his action of walking. Similarly Kathanar's wife did not find the iron nail on *Yakshi*'s crown as she parted her hair for the first time. She found the iron nail as she parted her hair many times. However, repetition is a basic characteristic of oral narration. As Walter J Ong says, the speaker's need to keep the narration going while he or she is running through his or her mind what to say next also prompts the speaker to repeat (40). It also involves a performative aspect as the speakers repeat the words or phrases and modulate their voices very artfully. Although they could pause and narrate the story, Ong finds that "hesitation is always disabling" and hence they keep on repeating as oral cultures always encourage "fluency, fulsomeness and volubility" (40). The performativity of the legend-narration could also be observed in many oral narrations. When Madhurima narrated the part where *Yakshi* flew up the sky in the form of a bird, she modulated

her voice and used her arms expressively to bring life to her narration. Similarly, when Emil narrated the part where the king pointed to a hill, he stretched his arms to connote the action.

In an attempt to entertain, educate, inform or caution the audience through the narration, the narrators of the oral versions did not focus on accuracy. For instance, Beena said that when Kathanar was grazing the cows, three or four cows went missing. Similarly, while she described her personal experience, she said that there were five to eight snakes in her neighbour's house. In both cases, her focus was on conveying the idea rather than the accuracy in details. Similarly, in Rasak's version, he mentioned that the *Yakshi* destroyed a place completely. When the researcher intervened and asked him if he knew which place it was, he answered that he didn't know it. However, when the oral version was transcribed into a literary text by Kottarathil Sankunni, such details in terms of time and space were accurate as discussed in the previous chapter.

Another aspect which could be observed in their modes of narration is the swapping of images, and characters. For instance, Beena began her personal experience with the reference of offering cock to Kadamattathachan. However, as she proceeded her narration, Kadamattathachan became 'Geevarghese punyalan' (Saint George). However, later she switched to Kadamattathachan again. She could be a devotee of Saint George who is believed to protect his believers from the attack of snakes. Offerings to Saint George also included cocks as it is the enemy of snake. This could be the reason behind the swapping of the characters in her narration. Similarly, Madhurima swapped *Yakshi* and *Bhagavathy* of Panayannarkavu temple during her narration. As Bhadrakali in Panayannarkavu temple is in her most aggressive state, people were scared to go out even during the day. As both were ferocious characters, *Yakshi* and Bhadrakali used to get swapped in Madhurima's narration. She also added that *Yakshi* could be seen in the form of fire balls during the time of *Amavasi*. However, the appearance of fire balls also occurs in the legend of Panayannrkavu *Bhagavathy*. Such

swapping of images and characters point to the fact that it is the idea that dominates the mind of the characters during narration that they confuse the characters bearing the same idea in the process.

At some points, narrators digressed from the actual plot and added information and personal experiences which seemed to be extraneous. However, when the researcher analysed such details in depth, they did not seem to be actual digressions. All the additional data that they provided were relevant to their narrations. They were what Robert A. Georges identified as ‘contextual data’ (248) that provided additional information about the narrator, his family or occupational background, his perceptions and values. For instance, while talking about *Yakshi*, Rasak recalled a past incident from his life. He told that his father was a sorcerer who had the supernatural powers to see *Yakshi*. When *Yakshi* used to trouble the people in his village, they approached him for help. He requested *Yakshi* not to harm people and she would finally listen to him as he was a sorcerer. Once he sent back a *Yakshi* who in her fury took fire from the hearth in the kitchen and threw at Rasak’s brother who was just a new born baby. *Yakshi* was so invisible to his mother that she could only see sparks of fire falling on the baby. He added that still the body of his brother bore those marks of fire. Although this personal experience of the narrator digressed from the development of the main plot of the legend, it was an integral part of his narration to build up the image of *Yakshi* and make the audience envision and experience her fierce nature. Thus their narration of the legend was not merely a story transmitting and receiving act. It also embodied their world views, beliefs, values behavioural patterns, judgements, assessments, warnings, advices, entertainment elements, information and so on.

The versions of Varghese and his father Kunjavaran which were collected from Kadamattom were different from all other narrations as they were highly critical of the miraculous stories of Kathanar perpetuated by people of the Kadamattom church locality.

According to them, these people had vested interests in perpetuating the superstitions revolving around legend. Some of them entertained activities like *kozhikuruthy* at the *pathala kinar* near the church whereas others perpetuated the miraculous powers of the church. Their narration threw light on how the church appropriated the legend of “Kadamattathu Kathanar” to meet its specific interests. It is believed that Kathanar disappeared through an underground well called *pathala kinar* in the end. As it is a major physical evidence that validates the legend, it is one of the main attractions of the pilgrims. They lit candles at the well believing that it has miraculous powers to fulfil their wishes and needs. Certain superstitious practices such as *kozhikuruthi* also happen in the well on a regular basis. People from various religious backgrounds come and offer cock and liquor at the well as it provides them a spiritual security. Although this practice is forbidden by the church, it is still continued by the believers and people with vested interests. Varghese’s father said that the well which is called *pathala kinar* at present was an ordinary well earlier. People including him in the church locality has drunk water from this well long ago. However, later the church took over this well and family who was using the water from the well moved to a different place. Thenceforth, it turned into the *pathala kinar* through which Kathanar disappeared. He also added that earlier there were two other wells which used to be regarded as *pathala kinar*. However, these wells were demolished later for reconstructing the church. According to him, the present *pathala kinar* is third such well, claimed by the church. Similarly, in the church’s version of the legend, Kathanar gets his miraculous powers from the Bishop, Mar Abo. The tomb of Mar Abo was erected inside the church and it receives a steady flow of pilgrimage on a regular basis. However, the narrator added that the tomb was installed around thirty five years ago which is very recent. He told that earlier, during his father’s time, the number of priests were very less that they were buried inside the church after their death. But later the church discontinued this practice. Once, during the renovation of the Kadamattom church, they found some bones underground and the priest

who was in charge at that time claimed that it was Kathanar's bones and they soon erected a tomb there¹⁹. These two instances pointed out by the narrator explain how the church engages in the manipulation and creation of the physical evidences surrounding the legend for its promotional purposes. Both *pathala kinar* and the tomb inside the church form important objects of veneration and play significant roles in making the Kadamattom church a major pilgrim centre. Thus it could be observed that in spite of its tendency to warn, advise, inform and educate, the legend narration also intervenes in the contemporary politics of the church. The pictures of the above discussed objects of worship are given below:



Fig. 4. *Pathala kinar* (Source: Author) Fig. 5. The Tomb inside the Church (Source: Author)

The following tables give an outline of the variations of the legend in accordance with time and space. The first table is based on the thematic variations in the oral narratives under study whereas the second table does a comparative investigation of the versions collected from Kadamattom and Panayannarkavu separately.

¹⁹ When the researcher enquired at the church, she was told that there were two assumptions related to the tomb. The first one says that it is the tomb of Kathanar and the second one says that it is that of Marthoma IX of Pakalomattom family.

Table 1**Thematic variations in the oral narratives**

Narrative aspects of the legend	Beena	Emil's first version	Emil's second version	Madhurima	Rasak	Varghese	Isaac
Childhood	-----	Son of a widow	-----	-----	-----	-----	Son of a widow
Initiation	Gets lost in forest	Arrival of Mar Abo from Persia	Kathanar gets lost in the forest	-----	-----	Kathanar gets lost in forest	Arrival of Bishop from Persia
Source of Supernatural powers	Tribal people with evil powers	Mar Abo	<i>Malavedan</i>	-----	-----	Pishachu	Bishop, Wild people
Encounters	Kathanar/pishachu	-----	Kathanar/pishachu	Kathanar/Yakshi	Kathanar/Yakshi	Kathanar/pishachu	Kathanar/pishachu
End	Kathanar goes to <i>pathalam</i>	-----	-----	Kathanar consecrates <i>Yakshi</i> near Panayannar	Kathanar consecrates <i>Yakshi</i>	Kathanar goes to <i>pathalam</i>	

				kavu <i>Bhagavathy</i>	near Panay annark avu <i>Bhaga vathy</i>		
Physical Evidences	Impri nts on the churc h wall	Mar Abo's hand wrappe d in silk cloth	Labyrinth cave, <i>Pathala kinar</i>	Grove, palm trees	Palm trees	<i>pathala kinar</i>	-----

Table 2**Regional Variations in the oral narratives**

Regional Aspects	Kadamattom	Parumala
Geographical characteristics	Deep forest, labyrinth cave	Thick groves and forest full of palm trees
Institutional Affiliation	Kadamattom church	Panayannarkavu temple
Religious connections	Mar Abo	Panayannarkavu <i>Bhagavathy</i>
Encounter	<i>Pishachu</i>	<i>Yakshi</i>
Perception of Kathanar	Kadamattathachan	Kathanar, the sorcerer
Physical Evidences	The imprints of the attack of <i>pishachu</i> on the church wall,	Groves, Palm trees

	Mar Abo's hand wrapped in silk, <i>pathala kinar</i> , labyrinth cave	
Rituals and Festivals	Mar Abo Feast	<i>Kuthiyottam</i>
Warnings	If you play with Kadamattom church, the church will fight back	If you do not perform the rituals for <i>Yakshi</i> and <i>Bhagavathy</i> on time, they will show their true colours

The above tables illustrate the highly context-sensitive nature of the legend despite its tendency to migrate. It may be observed that even though the versions collected from Kadamattom showed variations in details, they all had one aspect in common-- they all talked about a) Kathanar getting lost in deep forest and b) Kathanar's encounter with *Pishachu*. How did forest become an important element in the versions of Kadamattom? It is certainly related to the geographical characteristics of the region. Earlier, the area where the church was situated was a dense forest. Isaac mentioned that people used to burn coconut leaves at night during those times to get rid of the wild beasts (Dempsey 165). Emil said that a little far away from Kadamattom church, there was a hill called Kodikuthimala which had a lot of caves. If one entered a specific cave, it led to another four caves and it multiplied again. Thus the cave was in the form of a labyrinth which confused anyone who entered it. Thus the story of Kathanar getting lost in the forest was very much related to the landscape of the region. On the other hand, the episode of Kathanar counting the palm trees and making the *Yakshi* come down from the palm tree surfaced in the oral versions of Panayannarkavu. As mentioned earlier, once Panayannarkavu was a thick forest full of palm trees and groves. Here also, the association Kathanar with palm trees in the story was connected to the regional peculiarities. Similarly, the

versions from Panayannarkavu centred on Kathanar's association with Panayannarkavu temple, its rituals and *Bhagavathy*. On the other hand, versions from Kadamattom touched upon Kathanar's association with Kadamattom church, its festival and Mar Abo. Even the cautionary dimension of the legend was related to its respective region. All these features of the legend pointed to its context sensitivity in accordance with the space. The legend of "Kadamattathu Kathanar" serves as a perfect example to illustrate how the legend reacts extremely sensitive to its local needs and undergoes modifications when it crosses the borders.

The researcher also adds one of her field experiences in this chapter. It centres on an incident that she encountered during her data collection at Parumala. She went to a local tea shop where a group of four old men were having tea. She introduced her to them as a researcher and told them that she wanted to collect the versions of the Parumala episode of the legend. When they learnt that it was for an academic purpose and I had a recorder in hand, they were not willing to open up. As three of them remained silent, the one who was seated on an opposite bench started to narrate the story. Immediately one among the three got up from his seat and told him angrily "Aren't you a *varathan* (an outsider)? What right do you have to talk about the story of our place?" They got into a verbal fight and the researcher had to leave the place as there was no scope for further narration. Although this incident seemed to be of little importance in the beginning of the study, further thoughts on it gave an interesting insight into the concept of legend. It demonstrates how a legend sets its own boundaries despite its tendency to migrate. The above mentioned incident indicates that the people in the locality have a sense of ownership over the legend concerning their place. This highly localised nature is one of the important aspects which set the legend apart from other folk narratives.

3.4. Temporal Variation

- *Pishachu* → People with the qualities of *pishachu* → Wild People → *Malayarayans/Malavedans*
- Local priest → Bishop from Persia → Bishop Mar Abo
- Kathanar made *Yakshi* promise that she won't harm anyone → Kathanar made *Yakshi* promise that she won't harm anyone and consecrated her next to *Panayannarkavu Bhagavathy*

On a close inspection of all the oral versions from Kadamattom and Panayannarkavu, it may be observed that the representation of certain characters in the legend underwent transformations over time. In the oral versions collected from Kadamattom, the characters in the forest from whom Kathanar learns sorcery is referred as *Pishachu*, Malayalarayans, Malavedans, wild people and people with *Pishachu* like qualities by different narrators. When arranged in a linear sequence, one could find a changing world-view in the perception of tribal communities in the region. Perhaps, as indicated by the arrow mark above, *Pishachu* could have been transformed into people with *Pishachu* like qualities, to wild people and then to *Malayarayans* or *Malavedans* as in Emil's or Dempsey's versions. This transformation of the character could be indicative of the changing world views and values. Varghese's father, Kunjavaran who is the oldest narrator remembers that he had been told by his elders that the region where the Kadamattom church is situated at present was a dense forest. Emil has heard that there were a lot of people in the dense forest region who were engaged in sorcery. The tribal communities in this region such as *Malayarayans* and *Malavedans* were engaged in black magic as part of their tradition. Their way of life and cultural practices have been described in detail in the previous chapter. Hence there are chances for a Christian priest to learn sorcery from the tribal communities in the nearby region. However, the question arises as to why the people of a particular period might have equated these tribal people with *Pishachu*. It could be

because of the tribe's association with black magic and supernatural beings. Moreover, in olden times, tribal communities were looked down upon by the people outside their circle and they were not regarded as humans. However, at later point of time, they were accepted as humans, but with *Pishachu* like qualities. Later, in the narration of Isaac in 1994, they were referred as wild people. It is in *Aithihyamala* version of the legend, they were first represented as *Malayarayans*. The people who have read *Aithihyamala*, refer to them as *Malayarayans* in their oral narrations. Hence these variations in the representation of character could reflect the changing attitude of the society towards the tribal communities. The earliest reference of *pishachu* could point to any of the tribal communities in the region. Thus the transition from *pishachu* to *Malayarayan* or *Malavedan* entails the changing world view of the people.

Another example illustrates how the church appropriates the legend of “Kadamattathu Kathanar” over time to meet its own interests. In many old versions of the legend including the one appeared in *Aithihyamala*, it is the local vicar of Kadamattom church who adopts Kadamattathu Kathanar and takes care of him. Kathanar learns sorcery from *Malayarayans* and in one of the episodes, he fills up an empty pot with rice using his magical powers. However, in Isaac's version which was collected in 1994, a bishop from Persia visits Kathanar and his mother and it is this bishop who fills up the empty pot with rice using his miraculous powers. Later, the tribal people who possesses “sacred secrets” keep him in captive. Isaac does not mention that Kathanar acquired his supernatural powers from the wild people in the forest. In this way, the listeners can attribute the magical powers of Kathanar to the bishop. Dempsey gives two possible reasons for the replacement of the local vicar (in *Aithihyamala* version) with the bishop from Persia. First, as Persia was the ecclesial centre of the Kerala Christian tradition, it gives an institutional validity to him and his miraculous powers. Second, as the bishop possesses magical powers, Kadamattathu Kathanar's supernatural powers, by association becomes less suspect (164-165). In the most recent version of the legend collected from Emil

(first version), which is also the version propagated by the church, there is no mention of *Malayarayans*. According to this latest version, the bishop from Persia was Mar Abo and Kathanar's miraculous powers were attributed to him. Thus the local church vicar turns into a bishop from Persia and later into the bishop from Persia named Mar Abo. It indicates how the church appropriates the legend over time and create new narratives for its vested interests.

Similarly, as mentioned earlier, in the *Aithiyamala* version, Kathanar binds the *Yakshi* at Panayannarkavu and makes her promise that she would not harm anyone again. However, in Madhurima's and Rasak's versions, Kathanar consecrates *Yakshi* next to Panayannarkavu temple *Bhagavathy*. This addition could have happened at a later time period because after the arrival of Brahmins, many *Yakshi* groves were converted into *Bhagavathy* temples (Haridas 78). In some temples, *Yakshi* came to be worshipped as a sub-deity in many temples. Thus the consecration of *Yakshi* near *Bhagavathy* can be an addition that might have happened after this phenomenon.

3.5. Conclusion

Thus the analysis of the oral variants of the legend of "Kadamattahu Kathanar" points to the fact that Sankunni's version of Kathanar is not the final version, it is just one among the countless oral variants of the legend. Many cultural interpolations, omissions and creative interventions of the narrators were observed in these collected oral variants. In its attempt to blend with its local environment and history, the legend of "Kadamattathu Kathanar" developed interesting local patterns. While Madhurima's version underlines how Kathanar engages in constant dialogue with other traditions and rituals of Kerala, Rasak's version points out how Kathanar interacts with the topography of a place and construct a local identity through generating another place name legend. Beena's personal experience reveals how Kathanar interacts with the daily lives of the people whereas Varghese's and Emil's versions demonstrate how the legend intervenes in the contemporary politics of the church. As these narrations

asserted the highly adaptable nature of the legend as it crosses the borders of time and space, they were not merely a story-transmitting- and- receiving act. They also entailed the values, memories, local experiences, beliefs, world view and behavioural patterns of the narrators. It is constantly engaged in the process of generating new types to fit to its contemporary living conditions.

Even though the narrators differed in their perception of Kadamattathu Kathanar at various points, there was one aspect in common- they all were enthusiastic and passionate about narrating the legend of Kathanar. While Beena, a firm believer of Kathanar spoke about him in high veneration due to his miraculous capabilities, Madhurima, admired him as a great sorcerer who was more powerful than all other sorcerers in her place. He is held in great esteem by the narrators as he has acquired the status of a local cult in the popular imagination of Kerala. How did he attain the status of an idealized and heroic personage over time? Definitely, popular culture has played a significant role in fetching him immense heroic popularity. How did such mass-mediated versions including theatre, film, television and new media versions of the legend of “Kadamattathu Kathanar” function in the lives of the people? The next chapter attempts to find answers to these questions.

Chapter 4

Kalanilayam's *Kadamattathu Kathanar*: Dramaturgy and Translation

The previous chapter discussed the transformation undergone by the oral versions of “Kadamattathu Kathanar” in the light of its highly context-sensitive nature. The legend underwent further transformation in the later years when it was re-represented on numerous other platforms including the theatre, film, television and digital at different points of time. In fact, theatre was the first art form that re-represented the legend of “Kadamattathu Kathanar”. A professional theatre company, Kalanilayam that was established in 1963 performed their play *Kadamattathu Kathanar* for the first time in 1965. The present chapter examines the archival materials concerning the oldest versions of the play as well as the most recent theatrical representations of *Kadamattathu Kathanar*. *Kadamattathu Kathanar* was one of the most successful plays of Kalanilayam and was performed many times from 1965 to 1980. After a gap of twenty three years, when the Kalanilayam Theatres underwent revival and made their re-entry under the name Kalanilayam Drama Vision in 2003, *Kadamattathu Kathanar* was brought back on stage in 2003, 2010, 2012 and 2019. In fact, the play continues to attract the audience and enjoys its status as one of the most popular plays of Kalanilayam. The present chapter attempts to address the following questions: What kind of transformation did the legend undergo when it became a part of the repertoire of Kalanilayam? What are the historical imprints carried by the play *Kadamattathu kathanar*? In an attempt to examine the theatrical journey of *Kadamattathu Kathanar*, the chapter touches upon the changing aesthetic sensibilities and the transitions in consumer culture over time.

4.1. Dramaturgy and Translation

When a text moves from the realm of written words to performance, various other elements also come into play in addition to words. These aspects include literary elements such as plot, theme, genre, characters, dialogue, songs and so on and performance elements

including actors, set, audience, body language and so on. In addition to these, technical elements including light, colour, props, costume, sound, make up and so on also play a crucial role in a staged play. All these diverse aspects point to an important characteristic of a theatrical text: its multimediality. As Manfred Pfister notes, “As a ‘performed’ text, drama, in contrast to purely literary texts, makes use not only of verbal, but also of acoustic and visual codes” (7). The more recent developments in theatre employ even olfactory and gustatory effects. Even the use of language varies in these two different forms of expression. Eric Bentley says that “all literature is made up of words, but plays are made up of spoken words. While all literature may be read aloud, plays are written to be read aloud” (qtd.in Perry 1313). A theatrical performance is always action-oriented. As Perry observes, “it is not what characters say but what they do that matters” (1313). Therefore, rather than the readability of a text, a director always looks for exploring its stage possibilities. He or she makes various interpolations and omissions to make it fit to the stage mechanics and takes into account his or her contemporary context, time and space restrictions, and the audience. It would be designed in a visually appealing manner to spark the interests of the viewers.

In this context, the concept of dramaturgy is worth mentioning as it explains how translation becomes a collaborative activity in a theatre. The term draws its origins in the work *Hamburg Dramaturgy* (1767-69) written by G.E Lessing as part of his attempt to raise the aesthetic standards of the German theatre. He was the first officially appointed dramaturg in the world and his concept of dramaturgy dealt with “the technique (or poetics) of dramatic art, which seeks to establish principles of play construction” (Romanska). However, Lessing’s intention was to challenge the dominant tastes of the age and encourage high aesthetics. The tasks performed by the dramaturgs include “(1) to select and prepare play texts for performance; (2) to advise directors and actors; and (3) to educate the audience” (Cardullo 3-4). However, it was the second renowned dramaturg, Ludwig Tieck who with Wilhelm

schelegel translated Shakespeare's works into German broadened the scope of the role of a dramaturg to include both translation and adaptation (Romanska). Further, Bertolt Brecht widened the scope of the dramaturg and raised him or her to the level of a theatre collaborator. Hence in his view the concept of dramaturgy involved "the entire conceptual preparation from its inception to realization" (qtd.in Romanska). A dramaturg could be hired by the theatre or in some cases, the director, playwright and dramaturg can be one person. Bert Cardullo states that a dramaturg "prepares the text for performance by translating or editing it, researching the play's production history...and collaborating with its director on textual interpretation" (4). Thus in a theatre, translation becomes a collaborative activity in which several experts work together. Romanska notes that dramaturgy involves translation in various forms. It could be a literal translation, or a translation from one medium to another or a translation of the "world of play between the playwright and the director" or "from rehearsal room to a wider audience" (Romanska). Cardullo states that in a dramaturgical preparation, an old text can be converted into a new one by inculcating it with a contemporaneity of language through a new translation (4). The translation theorist Susan Bassnett states:

...a theatre text, written with a view to its performance, contains distinguishable structural features that makes it performable, beyond the stage directions themselves. Consequently the task of the translator must be to determine what those structures are and to translate them into the target language, even though this may lead to major shifts on linguistic and stylistic planes. (123)

Thus it must be observed that dramaturgy involves a set of practices that facilitates the transition of a text from page to stage. In other words, a written text has to be modified and re-fashioned to fit it into the dynamics of the stage if it needs to be performed.

In order to examine the transformation undergone by the legend of “Kadamattathu Kathanar” during its translation from text to stage, one must look into a wide range of aspects ranging from dramatic conventions and aesthetic sensibilities of the period to the stage dynamics of Kalanilayam theatre group. The director of the play as well as the founder of Kalanilayam Theatres, Kalanilayam Krishnan Nair and the playwright Jagathy N.K Achary took up the role of the dramaturgs and re-imagined the legend of “Kadamattathu Kathanar” in accordance with its particular historical context and theatrical conventions. “Kadamattathu Kathanar” underwent cultural and ideological modifications when it was translated into a performance text. In order to understand at what juncture of the theatre tradition in Malayalam, Kalanilayam Theatres brought “Kadamattathu Kathanar” on stage, a brief outline of the history of Malayalam theatre is necessary.

4.2. The History of Malayalam Theatre - A Brief Overview

There are different schools of thought concerning the origin of Malayalam theatre. As some schools attribute its origin to art forms such as *Kathakali*¹ and *Chakyar koothu*², critics like C.J Thomas reject these assumptions on the grounds of the fundamental differences between these art forms. According to him, Kerala cannot claim a typical theatre tradition of its own, instead it is an art form that has been borrowed from other cultures. Drawing influence from Sanskrit, Tamil and Western traditions, the Malayalam theatre has undergone several transitions. After receiving the Sanskrit education, people in Kerala were familiar with its culture and literary works. Even though Sanskrit dramas were introduced in Kerala, there was little scope for its theatrical performance as they were more of literary pieces with great poetical qualities. In its infant stage, one could trace the first phase of European influence. The Portuguese contact with the natives resulted in some of the plays that dealt with European

¹ It is a classical dance form of Kerala

² A classical art form of Kerala

adaptations such as *Napolean*, *Karlman* and a few Biblical themes. But, they were not successful enough to make a significant impact on the people.

The next phase of the Malayalam theatre witnessed the emergence of social dramas. It was during this phase *Mariamamma* (1901), which is believed to be the first accomplished drama in Malayalam was performed. The third stream that influenced the evolution of Malayalam theatre was the Tamil *Sangeethanadakam* (musical-drama). Later, the second phase of the European influence (this time, from England), from 1940s to 1950s started with the translation of English plays by the new class who received English education (Thomas 13-20). The period from 1950s to 60s witnessed the emergence of new kinds of theatres in the light of the socio-political environment of the time. The establishment of troupes like Kerala People's Arts Club (K.P.A.C) by Thoppil Bhasi marked the emergence of professional and commercial theatre culture in Kerala. The emergence of other organisations such as Kollam Kalidasa Kalakendram, P. J Theatres of P.J Antony and Kalanilayam Theatres, founded by Krishnan Nair marked the period of commercial theatres that revolutionised the mainstream theatre of Malayalam ("Drama During").

4.3. Kalanilayam Theatres: Structure and Function

In order to understand what kind of transformation a text undergoes when it becomes a part of the repertoire of Kalanilayam, one must understand the nature of the stagecraft and aesthetics of Kalanilayam. Kalanilayam Krishnan Nair had envisioned a new kind of theatre experience for the audience of his times. Even though he had been associated with theatre for a long time and dreamt of a theatre group of his own, the period from 1933- 1949 was a struggling period for him. Even though he had started working on the plans of his dream project, it was the Tamil Drama group that performed at Putharikandam ground in Trivandrum in 1961 that ran as the precursor for the birth of Kalanilayam Theatres. Kalanilayam Krishnan Nair was extremely fascinated by the concept of a permanent theatre group when he talked to

the set supervisor Thripunithara Sukumaran Nair after the play. Even though he was associated with the theatre before, the idea of a permanent theatre group was felt more intensely at this moment. Being very ambitious about the new project, he made elaborate plans and discussions with several people to make his dream come true. While working relentlessly towards this dream, he was so particular about one aspect of his project: it was decided that his permanent theatre group should be the first of its kind in the history of Kerala in terms of the experience of the audience. As the structure and function of the Kalanilayam stagecraft had evolved in the mind of Krishnan Nair, he attempted to draw the sketches of the stage and auditorium. It was an extraordinary stage with 4500 square feet at a time when the professional theatre groups followed a maximum size of 624 square feet. Similarly, the auditorium was also huge in size that it could accommodate around 750 audience. He had an early vision that social dramas would not resonate with the huge size of the stage and auditorium. He decided to place greater emphasis on the visual effects of the theatre in an attempt to make the most out of the enormous stage. Viewed in this light, nothing other than the epic *Mahabharata* could give immense scope for visual possibilities. He hired the then secretary of Kerala Sangeetha Nadaka Academy, Sri Kavalam Narayana Panikkar to write the script for the play, which was later titled *Kurukshetra*. The latest technologies in sound and visual effects were availed from Delhi and Calcutta. The play was a mixture of songs, dance sequences and dialogues. But setting up of a magnificent stage was not a smooth task. He not only relied on his complete savings, but also borrowed money from his friends to meet the mounting expense of the stagecraft. Although it was decided that the play would be inaugurated on 1st November 1962, owing to the rising expenditure, the construction was stopped temporarily and the event was postponed. After finding the sources of income, the play was performed on 26th January 1963. There were advertising campaigns everywhere with multi-coloured posters and huge banners. When the starting song “Salkala

Devi...” began and the curtains moved to the sides in the ambience of the lighted background and fragrance, the audience were spellbound to see the colossal size of the stage.

The performance was not only visually stunning, but also aesthetically pleasing to the ears with the use of various high quality instruments. The audience were excited to witness wide range of artists on stage in the roles of Bhiman, Kunthi, Dhushasanan and so on. Later, a wide range of plays such as *Ummiithanka*, *Sreekrishnavatharam*, *Sree Guruvayoorappan*, *Taj Mahal*, *Malabar Lahala*, *Kayamkulam Kochunni*, *Kadamattathu Kathanar*, *Alavudinum Albudhivilakkum*, *Naradhan Keralathil*, *Raktharakshassu* and so on were performed by Kalanilayam between 1963 to 1980. The renowned dramatist Jagathy N.K Achary was also a partner of the Kalanilayam Theatre group and most of their successful plays were written by him. In 1967, during the show of *Sree Guruvayoorappan*, the theatre caught fire and Kalanilayam lost many important documents and stage properties. However, in 1968, it resumed its shows. In 1973, Kalanilayam attempted at another horror genre after *Kadamattathu Kathanar* entitled *Raktharakshassu*. This horror thriller also soon became one of the most popular plays of Kalanilayam. After the death of Kalanilayam Krishnan Nair in 1980, Kalanilayam Theatres remained closed for a long time. After a gap of twenty three years, Kalanilayam Theatres was revived in 2003 by Kalanilayam Anantha Padmanabhan (son of Kalanilayam Krishnan Nair) and Jagathy Sreekumar (son of Jagathy N.K Achary) respectively. During this time, they also modified the name of the company from “Kalanilayam Theatres” to “Kalanilayam Drama Vision”. The Tamil version of *Raktharakshassu* entitled *Rara Rakshassa Ratri* was the major attraction during their comeback.

Coming back to the establishment of Kalanilayam Theatres in 1963 as a permanent theatre group, it may be observed that it heralded a new theatre experience in the history of Malayalam theatre. One of the aspects that made Kalanilayam stand apart from all other theatres was its innovative stagecraft and thrilling ambience that competed with the Malayalam

cinematic experience of the times in every way. It was the time when Malayalam cinema had been evolving and becoming a new rival medium for the theatre. The cinema theatre has been a thing of great curiosity for the people since the establishment of the first permanent cinema theatre in Kerala by K.W Jose in 1907. The moving pictures, sound and light effects, realistic locations, good reproduction of the voices of the artists and so on allured the people to theatre. The film critic, Blais Johny, in his article “Cinemeshala enna folklore” (Cinema theatre as folklore), talks about how the establishment of cinema theatres attracted the masses and played a great role in the formation of a unique cinema culture in Kerala. Even though the rich and the upper castes stayed away from the theatres in the beginning, gradually they were attracted to the magical world of cinema. He shares Shaji Jacob’s view that cinema theatres soon began to act as public spheres (49-51). Moreover, with the emergence of production base, studio system and the supportive measures of the State to promote films in the 1960s, cinema began to gain a strong foothold in Kerala. As Kalanilayam had established itself as a permanent theatre group around this time, they offered the audience everything the cinema could offer. The unique stage and auditorium, and the ticket counter system resembling a cinema theatre was a few among them. The following picture shows the stagecraft of Kalanilayam in 1963:



Fig.6. Kalanilayam Stage: 1963 (Image Source: Kalanilayam Archives)

Kalanilayam touches upon some of the details of its initial stagecraft on its official Facebook page. According to the details, Kalanilayam had a two-storeyed stage with a huge supporting pillar and balcony in 1963. It had two exit doors on both sides. The construction of the stage using plaited coconut leaves, strong areca nut poles, and braided coir cut into the precise sizes as needed used to take nearly two months to develop into a properly functional setting. The auditorium offered all the luxuries of the times: comfortable seating with bamboo wired and cushioned chairs with wooden handles and ceiling fans. Around one fifty technicians worked laboriously day and night to construct the magical stage of Kalanilayam (“Kalanilayam Stage”). Even though Tamil musical dramas and few others like P.J Cheriyan have performed their plays in a similar closed structure, Kalanilayam was the first permanent theatre group that played a crucial role in the formation of a unique theatre culture in Kerala with its innovative approaches.

In terms of the use of advanced technology, they went one step ahead than cinema. Stunning special effects has been a hallmark of Kalanilayam Theatres since the beginning of their journey. Even before the arrival of cinemascope, Kalanilayam brought the 3D film kind of experiences on stage, popularly known as dramascopes and stunned the audience. Spectacular theatre experience continues to be the hall mark of Kalanilayam until now. In the following years, it experimented with more advanced technology and did wonders on stage using the heated valve amplifier. It brought cars, flights, train, waterfall, thunder and lightning, rain without water, and huge trees uprooted by hurricane on stage. It was even successful in bringing elephant, horse and bats on stage and created bathing ghat and interior of the ocean as well. Moreover, Kalanilayam was the first to experiment the image projector called ‘magic lantern’ on stage (“Kalanilayam Stage”). All these spectacular theatre experiences were more thrilling than the spectacle of the film as the audience watched them live. These innovative endeavours of Kalanilayam point towards how the theatre of the specific time period competed with its new rival medium, cinema in terms of technology, and visual and theatre-going experience.

The elements of Tamil musical dramas may also be observed in the plays of Kalanilayam. Tamil musical dramas brought so many new aspects to the Malayalam theatre including high quality music, spectacular curtain changes and costumes. They encouraged women to come to the stage and attracted many groups and classes who were not initially interested in theatre. Their commercial success was also a great attraction for the emerging theatre groups in Kerala. Dramatists like K.C Kesha Pillai followed their pattern and produced musical dramas in Malayalam (Thomas 19). The influence of Tamil musical dramas could be traced in many new emerging theatres including the plays of P.J Cheriyan and Kalanilayam. The earlier posters of Kalanilayam has used the phrase *Sangeetha Nritha Nadakam*³. Kalanilayam also bears similarities with the Parsi Theatre because the painted sceneries, quick

³ It refers to a musical dance drama.

scenic changes, and eye-catching visual effects were a significant part of the Parsi theatre culture (Rubin 163).

4.4. *Kadamattathu Kathanar*: Text to Stage

It is vital to point out the fact that *Kadamattathu Kathanar* has always been an iconic play of Kalanilayam Theatres as it was an important part of the theatre at every stage of its revival. After a long gap of twenty three years, when Kalanilayam underwent major revivals in 2003, 2010 and 2019, *Kadamattathu Kathanar* contributed significantly to its popularity. On June 25, 1965, when *Kadamattathu Kathanar* made its first stage appearance, under the banner of Kalanilayam Theatres in Thrissur, it marked a transition from print to performance. The director Kalanilayam Krishnan Nair, playwright Jagathy N.K Achari, music director Dhakshinamoorthy, lyricist Pappanamkodu Lakshmanan, C.I Paul as Kathanar, S.J Dev as old Kathanar, Kalam Sahib as Uthuppu, Kodungallur Amminiyamma as Kunjara, Omana as Yakshi, Natarajan as Kunjaman Potti and other technicians constituted the crew of the play. Although the trial performances of the play met with a cold reception from the audience, Kalanilayam Krishnan Nair decided to revamp the play with much self-confidence. In such situations, the dramaturgs revise the play to suit the needs of the audience and achieve the best on stage. In this case, following the suggestion of Krishnan Nair, the script writer Jagathy N K Achari revised the script, placing a greater stress on magic and horror. When the play was re-staged, the audience was thrilled to experience the innovative stagecraft demonstrating the magical sequences of Kathanar and his encounter with the demonic figures. As it was a huge success, it ran for several months and became one of the most popular plays of Kalanilayam. Thus, it may be observed that the text was theatricalised and *Kadamattathu Kathanar* was located in a new cultural space.

What are the factors that led Kalanilayam to make *Kadamattathu Kathanar* a part of its repertoire? Firstly, “*Kadamattathu Kathanar*” was one of the popular legends in Kerala. Most

of the plays of Kalanilayam such as *Kayamkulam Kochunni*, *Alavudinum Albudhivilakkum*, *Kurukshetra* and so on dealt with the popular texts in Kerala. This could be because a familiarity with the primary text can ensure a reasonable measure of comprehension for the audience of all kinds. Secondly, to resonate with the extraordinarily huge stage and the auditorium which could accommodate 750 audience, Kalanilayam had to choose plays that could make use of such wide canvas. Moreover, “Kadamattathu Kathanar” had all the elements to fulfil the visual capacity of the stage such as fantasy, magic, horror and so on. The oldest poster of the play available to the researcher was the one that came out in 1968. It defined the play as “albudha manthrika sangeetha nritha nadakam” (fantastic-magical-musical-dance-drama). This phrase highlighted the main attractive elements of the play-fantasy, magic and entertainment. The song sequences of *Yakshi* and Katrina; the dance of *Malayarayans*, and the chief’s daughter made it a perfect musical drama. One of the interesting aspects is that they had added an exclusive line for the play *Kadamattathu Kathanar*- “The entry is restricted to kids and pregnant women for this particular drama” as seen in figure 8. Through this line, it explicitly advertised the impact of horror it dealt with. Horror has always been a genre that had always attracted the readers and viewers alike. It has a great commercial value all the time due to its consistent popularity. The concluding lines of the poster was as follows:

Due to the extraordinary power of sorcery, rocks tear apart, fire rains fall, beautiful blood sucking *Yakshi* does the house hold works, beautiful *apsara*⁴ women fly in the air, great miracles happen on stage. (my trans. Fig.3)

The above aspects were the promotional highlights of the play. Rocks tearing apart and fire rain could be indicative of great sound effects and visual experience respectively, beautiful women could be visually soothing, blood sucking *Yakshi* could induce fear, and *apsara* women

⁴ A celestial nymph in Hindu mythology

flying in the air would be a thing of great excitement for the viewers. Thus when *Kadamattathu Kathanar* made its entry into the stage, it had all the entertaining aspects that had great selling value. The poster that came out in 1974 was a modified version of the 1966 poster. As the old poster showed the individual pictures of old Kathanar and Kunjaman Potti as the highlights, the 1974 poster showcased two stills from the play- the interaction scene between Kunjaman Potti and Kathanar and the shimmering dancing movement of *Malayarayan*'s daughter at their abode. The inclusion of such dance numbers in the new poster points to the cabaret sensation of the 1970s (this aspect would be discussed in detail in the plot analysis part). Thus the new poster also had all the ingredients of the entertainment culture of the respective period. Moreover, it carried the information of the additional settings introduced in the play such as *pathalaguha*⁵ and *narakam*⁶. Thus the growth of the stage settings of Kalanilayam could also be traced in the new poster. By 1974, Kalanilayam not only developed a more advanced stagecraft, but also incorporated more popular culture elements beyond the horror genre. The following pictures illustrate the nature of posters that came out in 1968 and 1974 respectively.



Fig.7. The Poster of *Kadamattathu Kathanar* in 1968 (Image Source: Kalanilayam Archives)

⁵ It refers to an underground cave.

⁶ It refers to hell.

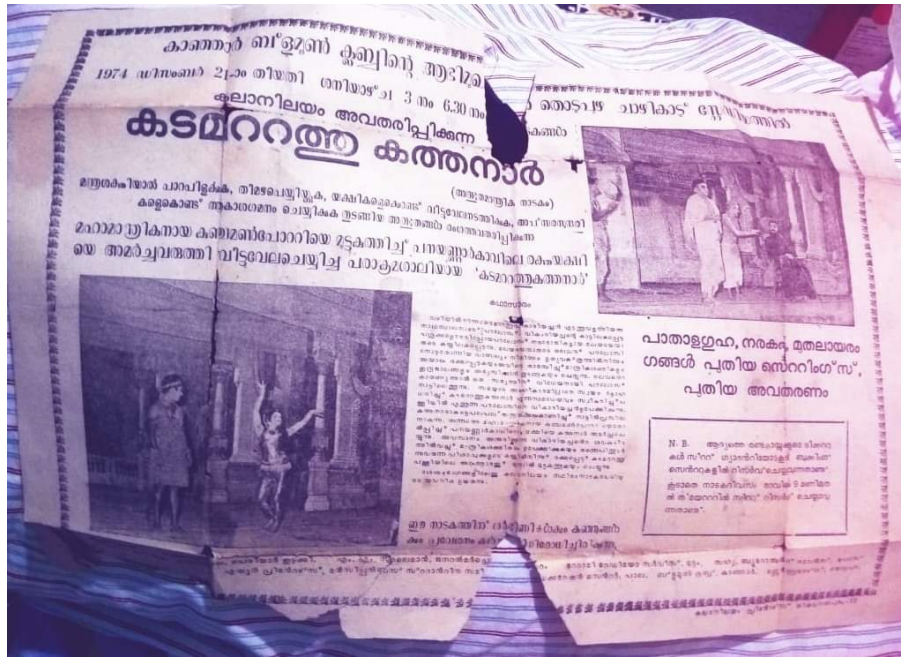


Fig.8. The Poster of *Kadamattathu Kathanar* in 1974 (Image Source: Kalanilayam Archives)

The next aspect under analysis is how the character, Kathanar adapted to its new setting. First, the study looks into the first appearance of Kathanar on stage. Theatre experience is far different from the imaginary world proposed by reading a printed text. Till the play *Kadamattathu Kathanar* was staged, Kathanar was a character who lived in the imaginations of the readers or listeners. Whether it be print or the oral version of the legend, people visualised the character of Kathanar and his encounters in their minds and such mental frames of characters varied from person to person. However, the theatre, brought life to Kathanar as he was a visual character who was physically present on the stage. The theatre registered a realistic image of Kathanar in the minds of the spectators. The actor C.I Paul who played the lead role of Kadamattathu Kathanar on stage in 1965, continued to do it for several years:



Fig.9. C.I Paul as Kadamattathu Kathanar (Image Source: Kalanilayam Archives)

In the initial shows of the play, Kathanar appeared in a white cassock, a clerical clothing used by the priests. However, after several months of the show, both white and black robes were used. When Kathanar was shown as Paulose *semmassan*, he appeared in a white robe whereas the old vicar who adopted him was shown in a black robe. It could be indicative of their respective positions in the clerical ranking. In the episodes following his acquisition of supernatural powers, he was shown in a black cassock. Unlike the Kathanar in *Aithihyamala*, the new Kathanar on stage had a long magic staff in hand. It is one of the character props used in theatre to register the character in the minds of the spectators as well as to enhance the performance of the actors. The magic staff could be symbolic of his magical powers. The black cassock and the magic staff together signified the idea of a Christian priest who was a powerful sorcerer. As the script or video of the first theatrical version of “Kadamattathu Kathanar” was

not available for the study, the analysis of the play is done based on the newspaper reports that came out in 1966 and 1971.

4.5. The Plot Structure

Kadamattathu Kathanar, earlier known as Paulose was an orphan and he was adopted by the old vicar of the church. He served the old Kathanar well and eventually became *semmassan*. He had a lover named Katrina. Katrina's parents Uthuppu and Kunjara were against their daughter's relationship with Kathanar. One day Paulose *semmassan* went in search of the missing cows and didn't come back for ten years. Meanwhile, Katrina was married to a wealthy and arrogant man who was suffering from a skin disease. Paulose was trapped in the abode of *Malayarayans* who were experts in sorcery and magic. The chief of the *Malayarayans* taught him the art and tricks of magic and sorcery and handed over a leaf pamphlet containing the lessons of sorcery to him. The chief's daughter felt deeply attracted to him. However, Kathanar left the place and returned to his church, wearing the clerical clothing of a Kathanar. However, the old Kathanar did not accept him as he lived against the norms of Christianity and wore the Kathanar's clerical clothing without the permission of the church. As a powerful sorcerer, Kathanar's fame spread across Kerala. He defeated another powerful sorcerer named Kunjaman Potti and tamed the dangerous Panayannarkavu *Yakshi* who could not be defeated by Kunjaman Potti. The Christians in the locality believed that the source of Kathanar's supernatural powers was the leaf pamphlet and they stole it in his absence. When they tried to burn it with the approval of old Kathanar, Kathanar reached there and vowed that he would not enter the church ever and left the place. Unable to control his grief, the old Kathanar died out of pain. Kathanar felt great regret for his actions and knelt down at the tomb of his father with a heavy heart. Hearing his plea, his father appeared before him and Kathanar prepared his mind for a religious conversion with him. He discarded the pamphlet and his magical powers. As he threw away the pamphlet, evil spirits rose from it and reached for him. In order to escape from

their attack, Kathanar took shelter in the church. The play ended as he knelt down in front of the altar of the church.

4.6. The Analysis of *Kadamattathu Kathanar*

Whether it be the *Aithiyamala* version or the oral versions of “Kadamattathu Kathanar”, the receiver was always mediated by a narrator figure. However, in the play, the viewers directly confront the characters represented (Pfister 3). This is an important aspect that differentiates a play from a narrative text. The story has to be broken down into dialogues that have a performative function. It should facilitate the spectators to visualise the idea and sustain their interest. Moreover, in the print version, Kadamattathu Kathanar’s life runs on a straight line. But, such straight plot is not deployed in the script of a theatre or movie that involves a large number of audience with diverse tastes and interests. In order to translate the legend into a stage-text, the playwright has to make several structural changes to the text. When *Kadamattathu Kathanar* became a play-text, despite the modifications in the main plot, new sub-plots were added to the story. The addition of such sub-plots not only made the character’s world more believable, but also made the audience more engaged. The romance between Paulose semmassan and Katrina was a new addition to the story. Romance was one of the major entertaining elements that attract the audience of all times. The developing love relationship between Kathanar and Katrina and their parting gave more dimensions to the main plot. Katrina loved Paulose deeply. But her parents always stopped her from meeting him as they did not consider him as a suitable guy for her. Paulose had neither family nor money. The social and economic concerns of a middle class family during the 1960s were also reflected in the play. Katrina did not have any say in her marriage. She was married to a rich man who had a skin disease. Katrina also contracted the disease soon after the marriage. Due to her agony, the viewers would become more sympathetic towards Paulose and Katrina. Katrina’s submissive nature reflected the self-sacrificing and victimised female characters who were represented on

the parallel movies of the times. In addition to the sub-plot, humorous characters such as Aanaranji Kuruppu and his disciple Kolappan were also added in the story. The addition of such characters served as important dramatic components to give comic relief to the viewers.

The newspaper report by P. Aravindaksha Menon states that the scenes concerning *Malayarayans* got good reception from the viewers. The tribal dance with the beating of drums created great visual and acoustic impact among the viewers (“Kadamattathu Kathanar”). The study has already pointed out in chapter two that Sankunni had represented the *Malayaraya* tribes in a stereotypical manner. Such cultural stereotyping of the tribes was reinforced when the legend entered into a visual medium like theatre. The tribal music, the beating of the drums and the dance of *Malayarayans* further reinforced the image of the *Malayaraya* community represented by Sankunni in *Aithihyamala*. In Sankunni’s version, *Malayarayans* were represented as naked people and Paulose had to remain naked throughout his stay at their place. However, this was not feasible on a stage as the nakedness of the character would break the moral norms of the society and shock the audience. Hence Paulose was seen in a tribal hunter costume on stage. Moreover, in Sankunni’s version, there was no reference of a female character at the place of *Malayarayans*. But the theatre version had introduced the character of the daughter of the head of the tribes who had strong feelings for Paulose. Her seducing dance to win the heart of Paulose was one of the main attractions of the play. Her costume and dance in the 1974 poster of the play points to the cabaret culture of the 1970s. The period from 1960s to 1980s witnessed the emergence of cabaret and disco dance numbers in the Malayalam movies. The songs such as “Yahoodiya” from the movie Jesus (1973) is one such example. The body of the female performer is objectified as she appears in the roles of ‘night club dancer’, ‘bar dancer’ and ‘cabaret dancer’ in the movies of the times. How did such dances become a part of the movie culture in the 1960s and 1970s? Isha notes that in the 1960s, bars in Mumbai began showcasing live dance performances to attract patrons (11). The emergence

of such trends might have certainly influenced the Bollywood movies as well as the movies that dealt with the Mumbai underworld contexts. Such dance numbers became a popular source of entertainment in the movies as they catered to the “voyeuristic, heterosexual male gaze” (12). All the components of performance such as the artist, close-ups of various body parts, costume, choreography, music, lighting and so on play an important role in constructing women as objects of pleasure. According to the Indian film scholar, Ranjani Mazumdar, “films of the late 1960s and 1970s had to have at least one cabaret dance; it was almost considered mandatory by distributors” (86). It was a commercial necessity of the popular films of the period. The appearance of *Malayarayan*’s daughter in a glossy and tight-fitting costume as illustrated in the 1974 poster of the play resonated with the cabaret sensation of the particular period. Such dances always occurs in a space which is different from the usual world of the hero and he reaches the place as a mere accident. For instance, many movies that deal with the underground world, dons and mafia place have such dances in their settings. However, the hero would be depicted watching the dance impassively, “as if to signify that men with strength of character may witness the performance without being morally corrupted (13). In the play *Kadamattathu Kathanar* too, Paulose gets lost in the forest and reaches the place of *Malayarayans* accidentally. He has no option other than watching the dance of the women with the chief’s daughter in the lead. The spectators that include the people who have come with their families do not have to feel morally corrupted as the hero is forced to watch the dance and it is not something that the hero does by his choice. It is his destiny and hence the spectators who watch such scenes are also justified. Moreover, the song segment is an important part of the plot. After the song, the chief’s daughter asks him to be with her and Paulose rejects her love without any mercy. Paulose’s strong will power makes him a virtuous hero all the more. Why did Kalanilayam include such cabaret resembling dance which was popular in the parallel movies of the times in its plays? It must be noted that by the 1970s, Malayalam theatre had

attained a full-fledged growth and film as an art of expression and medium was taking over other media at a faster pace. It was the time when the film began to be viewed as a threat to the theatre. Hence, theatre made all attempts to compete with its new rival medium and started to incorporate all the popular entertainment elements that the film offered the audience for its existence. The melodious song of *Yakshi* in the play serves as another example to reinforce the idea.

The next subject for analysis is the Kathanar and the *Yakshi* encounter in the play. As mentioned in the poster, ‘the blood-sucking *Yakshi*’ in the play was the thrilling element that set horror on stage and attracted the audience in large. During that period, whether it be theatre or movies, *Yakshi* was not a much experimented theme. *Yakshi* had appeared in literature before it made its appearance in movies and plays. *Marthanda Varma* (1891) by C.V Raman Pillai, *Aithiyamala* (1909) by Kottarathil Sankunni, “Neelavelicham” (1952) by Vaikom Muhammed Basheer and so on are some of the examples. However, *Bhargavi Nilayam* (1964) directed by A. Vincent was the first movie that featured *Yakshi* for the first time. The movie, often called as the first horror film in Malayalam was the adaptation of Basheer’s short story “Neelavelicham” (1952). Before the emergence of the visual representations of *Yakshi*, popular notions of *Yakshi* were familiar to the people of Kerala through literature, religion and folklore as discussed in chapter two. People were aware of the notion that *Yakshi* dwelt on *pala* and *pana*; *Yakshi* sucked the blood of humans, leaving behind nails and bones; *Yakshi*’s feet did not touch the ground and she had long hair; *Yakshi* waited for men in deserted lands and forests and asked for lime to lure them into the forest and moreover, *Yakshi* always appeared in front of men in the form of beautiful woman to seduce them with her charms. However, people had no specific image in their minds as to identify a *Yakshi*. It was the movie *Bhargavi Nilayam* (1964) that featured *Yakshi* in white saree for the first time. Thenceforth, the white saree image of *Yakshi* became so popular and many movies that followed it later began to adopt the same

attire for *Yakshi*. The play *Kadamattathu Kathanar* that was performed in the following year also employed the white saree costume for *Yakshi*. The following picture illustrates the conversation between Kathanar and *Yakshi*:



Fig.10. Kadamattathu Kathanar and *Yakshi* (Image Source: Kalanilayam Archives)

In the scenes concerning *Yakshi*, Kalanilayam employed many palm trees in the background as seen in figure 10. In the *Aithihyamala* version of the legend, there is no mention of palm trees in the episode concerning *Yakshi*. Even though it is absent in a narrative text like *Aithihyamala*, the inclusion of palm trees in the background was very relevant to the play as it is a very important visual component. As palm trees are closely associated with *Yakshi*, it always evokes fear in the minds of the viewers. The palm trees, deserted road, and spooky noises in the background together build an atmosphere of horror and warns the audience of an impending danger. Even though the *Yakshi* is clad in white saree and has long hair, her appearance is different from that of the *Yakshis* of the movies at present. She is accessorized with necklace, bangles and a head jewellery and jasmine flowers neatly pinned to her hair in a peculiar manner. Moreover, she has applied thick kajal (cosmetic for eye) around her eyes. All

these elements are important visual components of a theatrical text to define a character. The deserted road, palm trees, noises of cricket indicative of night, woman clad in saree, accessories, jasmine flowers and make up make a powerful visual statement to the audience. As the white saree and long hair symbolises *Yakshi*, all other distinguishing features of the character may conjure up the image of a prostitute in the minds of the audience. As mentioned in the previous chapters, *Yakshi* has been popularly conceived as a seductive enchantress. The use of jewellery would be confusing and strange to the contemporary audience as the *Yakshi* who is familiar to them does not use heavy jewellery as shown in figure 10. However, if we look into one of the earliest notions of *Yakshi* as depicted in the story of *Kalliyankattu Neeli* or *Panchavankattu Neeli*, the *Yakshi* appears in the guise of a beautiful woman with elaborate jewellery to lure the man who killed her in the previous birth (Haridas 201). It was the most familiar notion of *Yakshi* familiar to the Malayalees and jewellery⁷ is a significant element in the story. This notion of *Yakshi* could be a possible reason why *Yakshi* had worn heavy jewellery in the play. In C.V Raman Pillai's *Marthandavarma*, the character Karthyayini narrates the story of Neeli to her daughter. In her narration, *Yakshi* is represented as a prostitute with similar distinguishing features as seen in the play- 'beautiful', 'clad in silk clothes', 'smell of flowers', and 'thick kajal' (Ramanpillai 157). In the usual visual representations, a prostitute is clad in silk or bright coloured sarees. In order to integrate the images of both *Yakshi* and prostitute, Kalanilayam has designed the costume of the character in such a way. For instance, usually prostitutes tie their hair and neatly tuck jasmine flowers into it. But in the above picture, the jasmine flowers are woven around the forehead area and then pinned to the sides so that

⁷ According to the story, Lakshmi was the daughter of Shivakami, a concubine of Ammayappan Temple in Salem, Tamil Nadu. Following her mother's words, Lakshmi lures the son of the temple priest and gradually acquires his wealth. After he is devoid of wealth, Shivakami throws him out of the house in the absence of Lakshmi. However, Lakshmi who loves him deeply goes out in search of him. She finds him in a forest and out of love, she sleeps on his lap. However, her husband Nambi gets angry as he is looted by her family. In his anger, he kills her with a stone and takes away her jewellery. However, he too dies soon after he is bitten by a snake. In the next birth, Lakshmi is born as Neeli and Nambi as Anandhan. In order to take revenge on him, she wears jewellery and waits for him as a beautiful woman (Haridas 201-202).

the hair is left open at the back. It might be worn in this peculiar fashion as long hair left loose open is one of the significant characteristic features of *Yakshi*. Similarly, white saree instead of silk or bright coloured saree also could be used to symbolise *Yakshi*. It is an interesting example to observe how an idea in the narrative text is conceived by the dramatist and creatively manifested on stage. It shows how individual visual components are independent on each other and create meaning as a whole. Moreover, the theatre usually highlights the features and projects the appearance of characters so that the character gets registered to the audience sitting at the back. In film, a character's features need not be highlighted much as the camera makes it possible for the movie to offer close and long shots of the characters.

As the posters indicate, the play had an interesting segment concerning the encounter between the Hindu sorcerer Kunjaman Potti and Kadmatatthu Kathanar. However, the researcher could not find data on the specific part of the play. Other magical acts of Kathanar such as *padayani*, 'rice filling up the vessel', 'the fight between the King of Cochin and the Dutch and so on, mentioned in *Aithihyamala* are not included in the play. Kalanilayam has used the episodes that could not only be depicted on the stage, but also has the visual potential to reach the audience. For instance, there is an episode concerning the old woman in *Aithihyamala* in which a few grains of rice get multiplied and soon fills up the vessel by Kathanar's miraculous act. However, in theatre, such a scene cannot make a great visual impact among the audience due to its low visibility. Moreover, the magical act in the specific episode is not very powerful enough to evoke a sudden emotional response from the audience. Thus, a readable text is translated into a performable text.

Kadamattathu Kathanar had great visual potential to capture the attention of the audience. More than the movie version of the legend that followed later, it was the theatre version of the legend that has played a significant role in constructing Kadamattathu Kathanar as a heroic icon. *Kadamattathu Kathanar* could offer a great visual treat to the spectators. This

was evident from the conversation the researcher had with the script writer John Paul. As John Paul Puthussery had watched the play in his childhood, the researcher called him to ask if he could recollect the parts of the play. He replied that he could recollect neither the story nor the characters, but he what he could only remember was it was a breath-taking and visually stunning theatre experience for him (Puthussery). The researcher also talked to writer A.K Puthussery who had watched one of the oldest shows of the play. He still remembered the tribal dance scene, the episode of Kunjaman Potti, and Kathanar's encounter with *Yakshi*. One of the most registered scenes in his mind was the scene of Kathanar crossing the river on a plantain leaf to catch the *Yakshi*. He repeatedly told that the scene created a great visual impact as the dramatists of the time could not depict a river on the stage with that perfection (Puthussery). Thus, it can be inferred that it was the visual impact of the play that dominated the minds of the spectators rather than the story line or its characters.

Thus the play *Kadamattathu Kathanar* served as a perfect example to illustrate the features that are specific to the medium of drama and how a literary text adapts to its demands and requirements. It was not a mere embodiment of the textual version of the legend that appeared in *Aithihyamala*, rather, it placed greater emphasis on aspects of performance and utilized every opportunity to project theatre as an independent medium which had its own rights and freedom to create artistic meaning. It shows how the social and cultural context intervenes in the artistic productions of a particular period. As it unveiled the staging conditions of the 1960s and 1970s, it touched upon various approaches employed by the theatre to tackle the challenges posed by its period.

4.7. The Revival of *Kadamattathu Kathanar* in 2019

In April 2019, *Kadamattathu Kathanar* made another newspaper headline in *The Hindu* – “Kalanilayam is set to re-stage its iconic play “Kadamattathu Kathanar”, on April 15 in Thrissur” (Ramnath). In order to perform before an entirely new audience after a gap of seven

years, the play had undergone great transformation in accordance with its modern living conditions. The emergence of digital media platforms, developments in stage technology, and theatre design, and the changes in the aesthetic sensibilities of the audience and so on have made the play an entirely new theatre experience. The play, directed by Kalanilayam Krishnan Nair's son, Kalanilayam Anantha Padmanabhan was performed at a large open ground near the Shakthan Thampuran bus stand, Thrissur. He explained the context for the revival of *Kadamattathu Kathanar* in 2019 in the news: in 2014, Kalanilayam had attempted at the production of a more modernised play named *Hidimbi*. However, the audience could not accept the play well as it deviated from the usual pattern of Kalanilayam. According to him "They wanted the magic back" (Ramnath). This is exactly the reason why Kalanilayam decided to recreate their magic through their all-time popular play *Kadamattathu Kathanar*. The response of theatre-going audience serves as a vital asset to the dramaturgs as it provides important insights into what is more acceptable on stage. He also added that Kalanilayam had made all the necessary enhancements for the consumption of a modern audience (Ramnath). The analysis of the theatrical version of the play in 2019 will be based on the photos and posters of the play, telephonic interview with the director and the notes on the researcher's theatre experience⁸.

How did *Kadamattathu Kathanar* adapt to its changing socio-cultural environment? The provision of online ticket booking, the air conditioned auditorium and the cafeteria within the premises indicate how long *Kadamattathu Kathanar* has travelled since its first performance. The rapid pace of urbanisation has impacted upon every aspect of human living conditions. The entertainment industry also underwent huge transformation and one such change was the evolution of multiplex culture. Blais Johny states that multiplex-cinema-

⁸ The researcher had watched the play on the opening day. As she was not allowed to shoot the play, she had noted down all the points relevant to her research.

experience is a total package experience that comes with shopping, game zone, food court and so on (53). Such changing scenario in watching movies also poses threat to theatre as it cannot afford such luxuries. Just like Kalanilayam Theatres coped with the challenging circumstances of its own times with its innovative strategies earlier, the revived theatre of Kalanilayam also adapted easily to its changing environment: people need not stand in queues for a long time to get their tickets, the online booking system, air conditioned hall, cafeteria and special effects provide an experience that meet the consumer demands of the new urban middle class. The following aspects under discussion illustrate how the play fulfils the consumer aspirations of the contemporary society.

The first poster of *Kadamattathu Kathanar* was released by Kalanilayam Stagecraft on their Facebook page. Even though the serial versions, pictures, numerous skits and videos related to *Kadamattathu Kathanar* and St George Church of Kadamattom have appeared on various digital platforms earlier, Kathanar made its entry as a digital poster for the promotion of its performance for the first time through Kalanilayam. It also indicates the turn of an era. Earlier the movie marketers relied largely on paper posters for their promotional purposes and these posters were used for outdoor use. However, in the present digital era, the posters are released on various digital platforms such as social media platforms, movie and movie ticketing websites before they make their outdoor appearances. Even the posters have reached an advanced level that despite the still posters, motion posters containing a video element are also on trend. Kalanilayam also follows the latest trends of the entertainment industry and thus one could see *Kadamattathu Kathanar* adapting smoothly to the modern times. The following posters announced the comeback of *Kadamattathu Kathanar* after a gap of seven years:



Fig.11.The Poster of *Kadamattathu Kathanar* in 2019 (Image Source: “Kalanilayam Dramas.” *Facebook*, 17 Feb. 2018)



Fig.12.The Poster of *Kadamattathu Kathanar* in 2019 (Image Source: “Kalanilayam Dramas.” *Facebook*, 26 Mar. 2018)

The posters of *Kadamattathu Kathanar* demonstrate the new strategies employed by Kalanilayam to make the play acceptable to its contemporary audience. While glancing through the posters, one would easily mistake them for the posters of a Hollywood movie. The haunted

castle, the dark and mysterious forest, spooky owl, fog, the costume and appearance reminding the soul reaper image, the magic staff and so on are the popular ingredients of Hollywood horror and fantasy movies, derived largely from the conventions of horror genre, children's fantasy literature, gothic fiction and folklore. The poster has the components that attract the children and the adults alike. Such recurring tropes, images, themes and devices employed in the horror and fantasy genres are highly popular among the global audience that they have even proliferated into the consumer culture of our times. Even though "Kadamattathu Kathanar" is a Malayalam legend, the background and imageries used in both the posters do not depict either Kerala or India. In fact, they remind the viewers of a number of movies and themes such as *Dracula*, Disney movies, Halloween images, *Harry Potter* (2001), *Lord of the Rings* (2002), *Conjuring* (2013), and *The Jungle Book* (2016) and so on. A detailed analysis of the two posters illustrates how the imageries resonate with the Western cinematic sensibility.

The dark blue moonlit night depicted in the figure 11 is a popular spooky imagery. Steven Ascher and Edward Pincus, in their work on film making talks about the different kinds of lighting techniques used in movies. They state that "Lighting fixtures on movies are often gelled blue to stimulate moonlight. A pale grayish blue often looks more natural" (Ascher & Edward 517). The poster also makes use of such colour tone to emphasize the darkness and highlight the moonlight's eerie quality. The castle, another imagery used in the poster is a recurring trope in gothic fiction. One of the finest examples is Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, published in 1897 that has been celebrated by generations of horror genre fans. The castle is an important motif in the fiction as the character Jonathan Harker gets trapped in Castle Dracula and the entire plot takes place in that strange and mysterious setting. Castle always creates an eerie atmosphere with its creaky doors, long and dark passages, mouldering bricks and spiralling towers (Gould 35). The costume of Kathanar depicted in the poster is far different from the clerical clothing used by the Kathanars in Kerala. The long cassock kind of clothing

with a hood brings in several images in the viewer's mind—a sorcerer, soul reaper, wizard and so on. Even though it resembles the clerical clothing of the Capuchin priests, the faceless and hooded appearance gives an evil sorcerer's aura to Kathanar and adds to the foreboding atmosphere of the poster. In order to justify Kathanar's Christian affiliation, two signs have been added—a rosary and the fingers held in a specific way (thumb and two fingers up, two fingers down) symbolising the Holy Trinity in Catholic Faith. Sorcery and witchcraft are always associated with evil. In addition, the wall of a tomb, castle and dark moonlit night, due to their association with ghosts also have an evil bearing. Hence the statue of the angel on the left side signifies the good/evil binary and Christianity. It is also a popular binary that has been celebrated in many literary works and movies. For instance Dan Brown's famous work *Angels and Demons* (2000) employs the good angel and the evil demon binary. The palm of the Kathanar has a light complexion and reminds us of a European skin tone. On the right side, one could see an inscription written in Dutch or Latin usually found on tombs in cemeteries. The frozen trees in the background does not match the geography of Kerala. The caption "THE PRIEST WITH MAGICAL POWERS IS BACK TO ENTHRAL YOU LIKE NEVER BEFORE" in figure 11 assures the audience that the new Kathanar will offer them a more thrilling experience than before.

The second poster features Kadamattathu Kathanar in the backdrop of a mysterious forest. Mysterious forest is a recurring trope in folklore, fantasy and horror genres. The forest and woodlands in such fantasy fictions always have an enchanting character. Enchanted forest is a motif used in many popular tales like "Hansel and Gretel", "Beauty and The Beast", "The Little Red Riding Hood" and so on. A forest is a domain which is away from the paths frequented by the humans. This mysterious nature of the forest captures the imagination of the writers that they usually represent it as a place "where strange things might occur, and strange people might live, the home of monsters, witches and fairies" ("Enchanted forest"). Wild and

dangerous creatures also dwell in forests. All these features of forest generates an otherworldly feeling in the minds of the authors, viewers, listeners or readers. Many movies have employed the forest motif in their plot. The Forbidden Forest in *Harry Potter* (2001), the forests in *Maleficent* (2014), *The Jungle Book* (2016), *Tangled* (2010), Barbie movies, *Tarzan* (2013), *The Croods* (2013), *The Life of Pie* (2012), *The BFG* (2016), *Avatar* (2016), *Hotel Transylvania* (2012) and many other Disney movies are some of the examples. As the forest and part on the right side of the poster resembles the enchanted forest in the Disney and other animated movies, the one on the left side reminds one of the spooky forest imagery. The owl is a very powerful imagery used to create spookiness in most of the fantasy movies. There are several features of owl that make it spooky naturally- being a nocturnal creature, its shrieking and hooting sound at night, its ability to make its head turn 360 degrees, its noiseless flight and its piercing stare. According to the folklorist Adrienne Mayor, “people in the Middle Ages, associated darkness with demons while owls filled the night with their “hoots” and shrieks” (Leskin). According to Karla Bloem, “The hoot is often the only sign people will have that an owl is near, which can make their covert presence all the more scary” (qtd.in Leskin). Because of all these features, they have been always associated with witches and demons and considered a bad omen. This poster depicts the back view of Kathanar in a hooded clothing that resembles a magic cloak. He has a magic staff in his hand which is very different from the one we have seen in the still photo of Kathanar in figure 9. The magic staff has always been a close companion of the sorcerers and wizards over the ages. It is a magic prop that is imbued with powers. In the poster, Kathanar holds a long wooden staff with a flaming knob at the end which has an aura of magical powers. The caption of the poster “HE RETURNS WITH MORE POWERFUL SPELLS...” attracts the audience as it gives the expectations to the viewers that this time they can see more magic on stage.

Both the posters signal the return of *Kadamattathu Kathanar* and build suspense and desire to watch the play. While figure 11 has employed a Christian theme, figure 12 has employed the theme of sorcery and wizardry. This difference in themes is also reflected in their respective captions. As the first one uses the phrase “PRIEST WITH MAGICAL POWERS”, the second one uses the pronoun “HE” and the phrase “POWERFUL SPELLS” indicating sorcery and wizardry. However, in both the posters, the face of Kathanar is not revealed. The face is a mark of one’s identity. The image of faceless man is employed in many horror movies as it can evoke the human being’s fear of the unknown. Moreover, it is also an element of suspense employed by Kalanilayam to evoke the curiosity of the audience. As mentioned earlier, these two posters reflect the western cinematic sensibility and gives Kathanar, a universal heroic appeal.

The twenty first century marked an era of superheroes. Even though superhero movies have been common throughout the centuries, they have become a global obsession in the recent years. The superheroes based on Marvel and Dc comics such as Iron Man, Spider Man, Hulk, Captain America and so on; and Superman, Batman, Wonder Woman and many more respectively made their entries into big screen and set a worldwide trend. Such trends in Hollywood have reflected in the Indian cinemas over many centuries. In the beginning, the heroes of our epics, myths and legends made their entries into *Amarchitrakatha*, the graphic representation of the text founded by Anant Pai. As Ethiravan Kathiravan observes, these graphic representations of the Indian superheroes did not resonate with the Indian context as these heroes were European in their outlook in terms of their appearance and weaponry. They wore Greek shields, armours and crowns instead of Indian ones. The same tendency has been reflected in Indian cinemas too. The recent box office hit movie *Bahubali* (2015) that featured a superhero also employed many European outfits and weapons. Following the global trends and attributing European features to Indian heroes is one of the marketing devices used by the

movie marketers to attract the audience. However, one of the significant aspects concerning our superhero movies is that unlike Hollywood superheroes who always evolve in accordance with the latest technological advances, our superheroes always have a religious affiliation (29-30). This is true in the case of Kathanar as he has a Christian affiliation. Even though Kathanar is not a superhero, he is given the aura of a universal hero through Kalanilayam's promotional posters. Just like the European attributes of Bahubali, the new Kathanar in the poster, in the era of superheroes is also attributed European features and designed in the Western model- the Japanese Shinigami kind of robe, castle, enchanted forest, Latin inscription, the magic staff, and so on construct him as a Western priest. It also justifies the attribution of Kathanar's magical powers to the foreign Bishop in some of the oral narratives as discussed in the previous chapter. However, if we keep the poster aside, in the play, the role of Kathanar was performed by a Malayali actor and he was represented as a Jacobite priest in terms of his clerical clothing. Kalanilayam did not make any major changes in the script and the plot in its latest play. Hence the researcher would be discussing the aspects that underwent change over the years.

It must be noted that the appearance of the characters, costumes, stage properties and settings also underwent translation and transformation in *Kadamattathu Kathanar* (2019). The first subject of analysis will be the changes in the appearance of Kathanar in 2019. The costume of Kathanar in the oldest version of the play was white in colour whereas the latest one was black in colour with a clerical hat. It points to the fact that in the first play, Kathanar was portrayed as a Catholic priest whereas in the later performances of Kalanilayam, he was portrayed as a Jacobite priest. Except the use of the term 'Kathanar', Sankunni does not mention the religious congregation of Kathanar anywhere in the story. The legend became more popular after the publication of the print version of the legend and there was a steady increase in the number of devotees year by year. The St George Church of Kadamattom began to receive a steady flow of devotees and it gained immense popularity as a pilgrim centre

eventually. It played a crucial role in asserting the identity of Kathanar as a Jacobite priest. This could be a possible reason why Kathanar has been depicted as a Jacobite priest in the later performances of Kalanilayam. Moreover, as a black coloured robe is closer to the magic cloak used by the sorcerers and wizards, it might project him as a powerful sorcerer in a more visually appealing manner. Another noticeable change in the appearance is with regard to the magic staff, the magic prop used by Kathanar. The earlier magic staff was thin, with a small projection at the top and it was shorter than Kathanar. As the texture of the staff was so even, the material could be either steel or cane. However, the magic staff in the latest play was thick, with a serpent's head at the end. It looked like wood and was longer than Kathanar. Snake is an animal which has a lot of symbolic meanings such as healing, sex, religion, magical powers and so on. In the article "Snake and Staff Symbolism and Healing", it is stated that "snake has been venerated as an enigmatic creature with supernatural powers" (Retief & Cilliers 553). Owing to its association with supernatural powers, it has been used as a motif in association with sorcerers. For instance in Disney's *Aladdin*, the character Jafar's snake staff is a powerful symbol. Jafar who wishes to become the most powerful sorcerer in the world uses a cobra-headed staff as his magic prop. Kathanar's serpent headed magic staff had a very fierce look that resonated with the idea of evil sorcery. As the researcher watched the play, she remembered that the magic staff was used by Kathanar in the scenes following his encounter with *Malayaryans*. *Malayarayans* taught him the lessons of sorcery and equipped him as a powerful sorcerer. The same staff was used by the chief of *Malayaryans*. The following picture illustrates the difference between the first and recent representation of the character Kadamattathu Kathanar by Kalanilayam:



Fig.13. Kadamattathu Kathanar in 1965 and 2019 (Image Source: Kalanilayam Archives)

The representation of *Malayarayans* is the next aspect under discussion. Kathanar wore a white cassock which was normally worn by *semmassans* outside when he reached the cave of *Malayarayans*. In fact, the *semmassans* use both black and white, but by wearing white costume, the hero's transformation from Paulose *semassan* to Kadamattathu Kathanar can be marked in a striking manner. When he reached the abode of *Malayaryans*, he was still a junior priest as indicated by his white cassock. The stage properties used at *Malayarayan's* abode filled the space with an evil aura. The big skull with open mouth at the backside, the fierce sculptures on the wall and chief's platform, the four bone pieces in the front, three evil looking big statues and so on created an atmosphere of terror. The costume of the *Malayarayan* points out that they are tribes in the forest who are engaged in hunting. The two bull horns attached to the crown, the tiger skin clothing, and bear skin cape- all denote forest and hunting. The

tiger-claw chain and animal head attached to the statues in the background also reinstate this idea. The other *Malayarayans* in the picture with wild features and darker skin tone match with the typical representation of tribal communities in popular culture. One of the major visual highlights of the play was the group dance of *Malayarayans* with loud beating of drums in the background that reminded one of the African tribal dance. The costume, stage properties and dance and their cannibalistic characteristics reinforced and justified the cultural stereotyping of *Malayarayans* by Sankunni in a more pronounced manner. The following picture is a still from the scene in which Kathanar is held under captivity by *Malayarayans*:



Fig.14. Kathanar at the abode of *Malayarayans* (Image Source: Kalanilayam Dramas)

The dance of *Malayarayan*'s daughter, Karumbandi in the oldest and latest versions of the play indicate the changing aesthetic sensibilities of the popular culture. It marked the transition from cabaret sensation to item dance sensation in the popular film culture in India. The former costume was a tight and figure hugging one with a glossy texture whereas the latter one is brighter and more skin revealing. In fact the costume and appearance resonates with the notion of 'item number'. The following figures illustrate this shift:



Fig.15.The Dance Sequences in *Kadamattathu Kathanar* in 1965 and 2019 (Image Source: Kalanilayam Archives)

The term ‘item number’ came into linguistic currency among the urban middle class in India in the late 1990s (Brara 68). The word began to gain currency with the performance of Malaika Arora and Shilpa Shetty in *Dil Se* (1998) and *Shool* (1999) respectively in Bollywood. In Malayalam, “ezhimala poonchola” from *Spadikam* (1995) is one of the earliest songs that exhibited the characteristics of an item number. While the term cabaret implies popular entertainment especially in a bar, hotel or nightclub, the term item dance bears explicit sexual objectification of woman as the word ‘item’ denotes object. Even though cabaret and item number show several similarities in terms of being a pleasurable source of entertainment, they also differ from each other in various ways. Firstly, the actresses who used to perform the cabaret in the 1960s and 1970s were confined to such roles. As Rita Brara notes, they were typecast in their roles, both cinematically and socially and they could not reach the status of leading heroines. The heroines of the time were also not willing to do such roles (Brara 69). However, later, item dances were performed by so many leading heroines such as Aiswarya Rai, Madhuri Dixit, Lara Dutta and so on in Bollywood and Padmapriya, Ramya Nambeeshan, Swetha Menon, Jyothirmayi and so on in Malayalam films. Secondly, as the leading actresses began to take up the item numbers, as Ranjini Mazumdar notes, the night club began to lose its iconic status, “the dances were no longer located in a morally coded space, but moved into

multiple locations” (Mazumdar 90). The item numbers were soon shot in many outdoor locations and domestic spaces beyond the night clubs and hotels. Films such as *Narasimham* (2000), *Kakkakuyil* (2001), *Ravanaprabhu* (2001), *Meeshamadhavan* (2002) and many more in which the item number songs are shot outdoors are good examples. The transitions in the consumer culture in the twenty first century were also reflected in the item numbers that new metropolitan spaces such as pubs, and discotheques were also explored. The evolution of gangster movies genre in the late 1990s also provided a context for placing item numbers as it involved underworld dons, dance bars and so on (Kaur 106-107). Moreover, as Isha Jain notes, the costumes which were Western earlier began to accommodate sexualised versions of traditional Indian clothing (12). Even hybrid versions (ethnic and western) of the costumes also became part of the contemporary aesthetics of Indian cinema. Coming back to the play, it is noticeable that the earlier costume resembled more of a Western outfit whereas the latter resembles an Indian wear. The researcher remembered that the dance steps, movements, lighting, background dancers, expressions, lyrics, music and so on went in line with the norms of the ‘item dance’. Thus the analysis of the theatrical versions of *Kadamattathu Kathanar* at different points of time throws light on the continuities and discontinuities between the cabaret culture and the item number sensation that emerged at the different historical junctures of popular cinemas in India.

The subject of the next section is the representation of *Yakshi* in the performance of *Kadamattathu Kathanar* in 2019. The *Yakshi* in the latest play was different from the one that was represented in the oldest version. Even though she was clad in white saree and had long hair, unlike the play in 1965, she had not worn any jewellery or heavy make-up. A few white bangles pointed to minimal accessorization. It reflected the changing notions of *Yakshi* in the popular media over time. Ranging from traditional wears such as *set mundu* or white saree to Western wears such as white gowns, *Yakshi* has appeared in numerous costumes on big screen

and television. The depiction of *Yakshi* in 1965 was one of the earliest representations of *Yakshi* in the popular media. As mentioned earlier, after the release of the movie *Bharghavi Nilayam* (1964), many *Yakshi* based movies in Malayalam adopted the ‘white saree and long hair’ notion to depict *Yakshi*. It may be observed that in the theatrical version of *Kadamattathu Kathanar* in 1965 as well as the movie *Kadamattachan* in 1984, *Yakshi* had used heavy jewellery. As mentioned in the earlier part, the use of elaborate jewellery could have been drawn from the popular notion of *Yakshi*, represented in the tale of *Kalliyankattu Neeli* or *Panchavankattu Neeli*. This notion of *Yakshi* was so close to the one who used to wait for men on the deserted roads and asked for lime. However, due to the rapid urbanisation and changes in the social structure, the notion of *Yakshi* wearing ornaments and awaiting men on the deserted roads near the forests underwent. The forest, land full of palm trees and deserted roads have been disappearing fast with the emergence of cities and towns. Moreover, the *Yakshi* killing men without a reason as seen in many legends including that of “Kadamattathu Kathanar” was not acceptable to the modern viewers who were driven by the logic of rationality and reason. The modern audience wanted the acts of *Yakshi* to be justified. This need for justification has been reflected in many Malayalam movies ranging from *Bharghavinilayam* (1964) to *Ezra* (2017). In most of the movies, a woman is killed either through rape or some other violent way and she becomes *Yakshi* after her death in order to take revenge on her murderers. Even though this has been a theme of the *Yakshi* based movies in Malayalam for a long time, it is also undergoing change in the recent times. For instance, in *Pretham* (2016), the *Yakshi* or its counterpart, female ghost haunts the people in a resort, as they trigger the element that caused her death whereas *Ezra* (2017) follows the conventions of Western horror movies where the spirit enters the body of a character as she opens a box called ‘Dybbuk’. Even though Kalanilayam has presented the old script of the *Kadamattathu Kathanar* in front of the modern audience, they made certain changes in the appearance of the characters including *Yakshi* and *Kathanar* in

order to make it acceptable for them. Even though the earlier inhabited areas of *Yakshi* such as forest and palm trees have been recreated as in the old play, the representation of *Yakshi* on stage in terms of make-up, accessories, the way jasmine flowers were pinned to the hair and so on have undergone changes.

In figure 16, one could see a flash of fire on the side of the stage and *Yakshi* and the sorcerers in the background. Fire is a common image associated with *Yakshi* because in many *Yakshi* stories including that of “Kadamattathu Kathanar”, it is told that *Yakshi* appears in the form of fireballs. Many popular *Yakshi* movies such as *Akashaganga* (1999) and *Meghasandesham* (2001) have also employed fire to create an atmosphere of horror. Fire is one of the special effects on stage that create a great visual impact on the viewers and Kalanilayam has employed it to add to the horror-filled atmosphere on the stage. The second picture of *Yakshi* in figure 16 is taken from one of the posters of the play used for its promotional purposes. In the poster *Yakshi* is placed in the background of cemetery and a moonlit night. The ghostly impact of moonlit night has already been discussed in the poster analysis part in the beginning. The depiction of *Yakshi* in the backdrop of cemetery and Kathanar with his fingers held in such a way as to symbolize the Holy Trinity can be read as an attempt to place *Yakshi* in the good/evil binary of Christianity. In the legend of “Kadamattathu Kathanar” as well as in the actual play, *Yakshi* inhabits deserted roads and forests. She is not associated with cemetery. Cemetery is a domain that is associated with the Christian church. In the popular representations, it is the ghost which is associated with cemetery. But, the notion of ghost is different from that of *Yakshi* as ghosts usually appear as spirits of the dead devoid of a living body whereas *Yakshi* is capable doing normal things as humans do (Haridas 7). By dissociating *Yakshi* from its domain and placing it in the Christian setting and the good/evil dualism in the Christian tradition, the poster constructs an era after the Synod of Diamper which rejected

several practices of the indigenous Christianity of the times. The following pictures illustrate the appearance of *Yakshi* in the play:

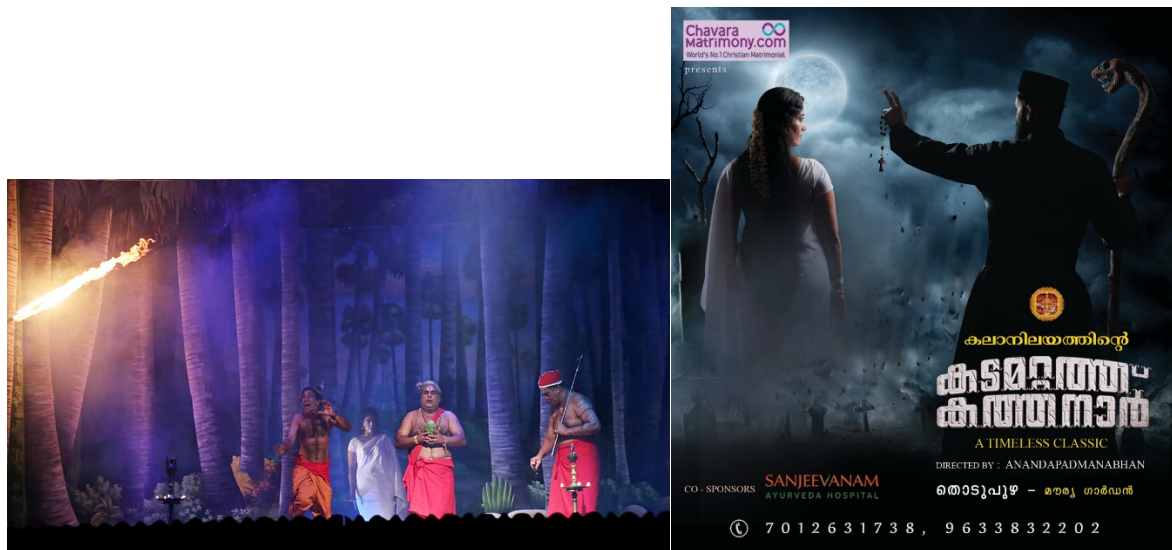


Fig.16. *Yakshi* in *Kadamattathu Kathanar* in 1965 and 2019 (Image Source: Kalanilayam Archives)

4.8. Conclusion

The chapter has explored how “Kadamattathu Kathanar” fit into the dynamics of theatre in two different cultural contexts. From its transition from a reading-text to a play-text and to a stage- text, it underwent a lot of interpolations, omissions and modifications. The first theatrical version “Kadamattathu Kathanar” communicates the new professional and commercial theatre culture of the period. The Tamil musical dramas and Parsi dramas had highly spectacular theatrical elements and ran as the precursors for the establishment of Kalnilyam Theatres by Krishnan Nair in 1963. *Kadamattathu Kathanar* became a part of the repertoire of Kalanilayam dramas as it had all the elements such as horror, fantasy and so on to make use of the enormous stage and stunning theatrical spectacle of Kalanilayam. Kalanilayam has always competed with its rival medium- film- and brought the innovative technologies, stage designs and popular elements on stage to stun its audience. The plot

structure varied from Sankunni's version in terms of the addition of a new sub-plot. The *Malayarayans'* group dance and *Yakshi's* song and horror sequences and the romance between Paulose Semmassan and Katrina added to the liveliness of the play. The *Malayarayan's* daughter's dance and costume reflected the cabaret sensation of the 1960s and 1970s whereas the *Yakshi's* appearance resembled the description of *Yakshi* in the story of *Kalliyangattu Neeli*.

With the online ticketing system, online promotions, cafeteria and air conditioned hall, the 2019 theatrical version of "Kadamattathu Kathanar" marked its entry in front of the new spectators of the contemporary era. By providing a visual experience close to that of the multiplex theatres, Kalanilayam met the consumer aspirations of urban middle class. With the images of haunting castle, enchanting forest, spooky owl, moonlit blue night, magic cloak kind of costume with hood, magic staff, cemetery and so on the online posters that announced the comeback of Kathanar resonated with western cinematic sensibility and gave him the aura of a superhero of the twenty first century. His transition from white cassock to black cassock reinforced his identity as a Jacobite priest. The *Malayarayan's* daughter's dance in the recent play marked the shift from the cabaret culture of the 1970s to the 'item number' sensation starting from the late 1990s. It pointed to the changing aesthetic sensibilities of the popular media over time. The *Yakshi's* appearance also reflected the changing notions of the popular representations of *Yakshi* in the popular media.

The examination of the theatrical translations of the play in 1965 and 2019 threw light on diverse aspects such as the emergence of commercial theatre, elements of popular entertainment of the respective times, transitions in the consumer culture and marketing devices, the changing aesthetic sensibilities of the urban middle class and so on. The next chapter will look into the film and TV serial versions of the legend and how they adapted to the demands and circumstances of their times.

Chapter 5

Kadamattathu Kathanar: Transitions in the Popular Media

Popular media plays a huge role in attributing a popular heroic image to the legendary hero Kadamattathu Kathanar. Even though the study is not concerned with a comparative analysis of different media, the dynamics of each medium cannot be ignored because the form also impacts upon the content of a representation. It may be observed that theatre, film and television exhibit some shared characteristics such as multimediality and collective nature of production. However, there are certain features that are specific to each of these media. For instance, cutting, editing, lighting, camera movement, variations in focus and so on distinguish film and television from theatre. At the same time, film and television differs from each other on the basis of a number of factors including their nature of reception and experience. A theatre going experience is very different from a television viewing experience. Hence as the legend of “Kadamattathu Kathanar” adapts to a new medium or a genre, it undergoes changes in terms of both form and content. Moreover, every representation of the legend has been shaped by its own historical and cultural conditions. As the legend passed through different historical and cultural contexts, it easily adapted to the circumstances and demands of the times. While the film version adapted to the format of the commercial cinema of its times, the serial version adapted to the format of the typical Malayalam mega serial of its times. Hence, the chapter examines the transformations undergone by the legend when it became part of the popular cinema of the 1980s as well as the mega serial genre in the beginning of the twenty first century. The present chapter is divided into two parts: part A focuses on the film version of the legend *Kadamattathachan* (1984) whereas part B centres on the TV serial version of the legend entitled *Kadamattathu Kathanar* (2004-2005).

Part A

5.1. The Dynamics of Film: A Brief Overview

The previous chapter examined the historical and cultural factors that led to the birth of the theatrical representation of *Kadamattathu Kathanar* and how it adapted to its new form and cultural conditions. Before analysing the movie version of the legend, one needs to understand the nature and dynamics of film as a potential medium of expression. As Pfister notes, “film, in its initial phases at least, was considered primarily a technological innovation that enabled theatre to be preserved photographically and thus made accessible to a wider public” (Pfister 23-24). However, as it grew and established itself as a mass popular medium, this view began to change. The distinctiveness of the cinematic expression in terms of form and content began to be appreciated. One of the major differences between a film and theatre lies in the time lag between the production and reception of a film (24). The theatre offers a live performance for the audience, on the other hand it takes a certain amount of time to bring a film to the spectator. It is because a film production involves three phases: preparation or pre-production, shooting or production and assembly or post-production. Owing to this difference, the audience of a film do not confront the materials presented on the screen directly, but indirectly through the medium of camera (25). It also calls our attention to another fact that unlike a play which is unique in each of its performances, a film offers an identical performance due to its recorded nature. Moreover, a film as a medium does not have to maintain time and space continuity unlike a play. It can employ a number of techniques such as editing, variation of focus, the use of fade-ins and fade-outs, montage, lighting (24) and so on to break these temporal and spatial orders. Hence, it can always present events out of the chronological order of the story. Basically, film is a photographic medium that makes use of moving-image technologies (Bordwell & Kristin 9). Owing to its “intrinsic capability to duplicate and distribute widely”, cinema has great commercial potential and as a business it involves three major phases-

production, distribution and exhibition (Cheriyen 3). Like any other artwork, a film also has a distinct form. Various elements work in coordination and create meaning as a whole. For instance, if one takes a particular scene, many components such as the movement of the camera, lighting, colour, music and other devices that are interdependent on each other function to produce an overall meaning (Bordwell & Kristin 39). The camera techniques allow the movie to convey subtle meanings. For instance, as observed in the previous chapter, dialogue is a prominent factor in most of the dramas as most of the developments in the plot are conveyed through the dialogues between the characters or voice overs. However, the film can capture the subtle expressions of the characters and communicate meanings even without dialogues (Orpen 86). All these features and many more distinguish the film from other media.

We have discussed briefly the formal aspects of a film and how it engages in the process of meaning-making. Next, the study attempts to give a brief idea of the narrative structure of a film. Just as the drama employs a play-text, the film has a screen-text that resonates with its visual language. Considering the characterisation, a film can actually portray a character in a more meticulous manner than a theatre. Due to the lower visibility, a theatre can only portray the loud traits of a character. However, a movie can capture both subtle and loud characteristics of a character. While the drama also employs sub-plots to add more dimensions to the plot, it has a lot of restrictions with regard to time and space. However, as the movie does not face this restriction, it explores the temporal and spatial possibilities required for the plot patterns to the maximum extent. Moreover, a film can tell a story from a number of perspectives. It can be told from the perspective of a character, an omniscient narrator, a group of characters and many more. The mobility of the camera allows the film to employ a lot of narrative styles that the movies such as *Birdman* (2014) and *Victoria* (2015) have been captured in a single shot. Thus a film can employ a wide range of narrative techniques to tell a story. In other words, a story can be presented in diverse ways in the form of a series of images in a film.

The content of the story of a film can be drawn from a number of sources ranging from folktales to literature to experiences of people. However, the makers of the films add a lot of additional elements to the story in order to serve its purpose of entertainment. When the film refers to a source text, it discards everything that does not resonate with its language and takes only whatever that goes in line with its mechanics of narration. The source text will also be subjected to additions, interpolations, modifications in the hands of its maker. As the visual language of film is different from that of a printed text or any other medium, it cannot remain completely faithful to the original in anyway. Veteran filmmaker Adoor Gopalakrishnan states that a cinema sees beyond the realm of print. It has to envision what is absent in the written text (8). For instance, if the source text refers to the house of a character, the director has to decide on the nature of that house- whether it is two-storeyed or single-storeyed, the colour of its paint, its locality, its garden and many more. As the director pays his attention to all these details, the content attains many dimensions when it reaches the screen. The director also takes liberties with the characters and scenes in accordance with the nature of the film. For instance, a mainstream or commercial cinema has its own staple ingredients to entertain its audience. As a film production is an expensive enterprise, producers will look into the commercial aspects of film and try to incorporate the major crowd-pulling elements of the specific time period. Such popular elements always reflect the aesthetic sensibilities of the middle class. A film also differs from other media in terms of its relationship with the audience. The experience and practice of watching a film also varies from time to time. The emergence of multiplex theatres in the contemporary era paved the way for the notion of the 'new spectator' (Viswanath 3289). The new film exhibition practices give scope to the filmmakers to explore more visual possibilities and experiment with their content in diverse ways. Exploring the visual language of the film is a vast area that cannot be covered in a chapter. The features and devices that are specific to film become more apparent in the analysis part.

5.2. Malayalam Cinema: A Brief Overview

The history of Malayalam cinema traces back to 1920s with the making of *Vigathakumaran* (1928)⁹, followed by *Marthanda Varma* (1931). While *Vigathakumaran* failed in theatres due to the opposition from certain orthodox groups, *Marthanda Varma* did not hit the theatre on the grounds of its copyright issues. The first talkie *Balan* (1938) and *Gnananmbika* (1940) appeared in the 1930s. The earlier cinematic ventures were mostly flops at the commercial level. The veteran film archivist and scholar P.K Nair notes that most of the Tamil producers who came forward to make films were profit-oriented. They had no passion or love towards the movie as an art form. In addition, most of the artists, directors and writers came from the theatre background. They had little idea about the visual language of the film and regarded it merely an extension of the stage (2). Until the 1950s, the Malayalam cinema industry did not get considerable attention at the national level. With the emergence of studio system such as Udaya and Merryland and the new production base in Kerala, the industry started to produce considerable number of films. By the 1950s and 1960s Malayalam cinema attained a national recognition as *Neelakkuyil* (1954) and *Chemmeen* (1965) won the Presidential and National awards respectively. Many prominent actors such as Thikkurissi, Prem Nasir, Sathyan, Kottarakkara Sreedharan Pillai and so on also made their appearances in Malayalam cinema during this period. The films of the 1960s were largely literary adaptations of novels and short stories of great writers such as Thakazhi, Basheer, Kesavadev, and so on. The 1970s witnessed a radical change in the perspective towards cinema that led to the birth of the Parallel Cinema Movement. The French and Italian new wave had impacted upon the Malayalam cinema too. The exposure to the world classics helped the young film makers to understand the visual language of film in depth. The stepping in of new professionally qualified

⁹ There are conflicting opinions regarding the date of the release of the film. For more details, see *Malayala Cinema Pinnitta Vazhikal* (The Paths Covered by Malayalam Cinema) by M.Jayaraj, pp: 34.

directors from Pune film institute played a crucial role in bringing in this change (Sreehari 1239). The 1980s to 1990s was a golden age for Malayalam cinema as it witnessed the emergence of great script writers and directors such as Padmarajan, Bharathan, K.G George, Fazil, Priyadarshan, Sathyan Anthikkad, Kamal, Siddique-Lal, cameraman such as Shaji N Karun and the evolution of superstars such as Mohanlal and Mammooty. Moreover, veterans like Adoor Gopalakrishnan and M.T Vasudevan Nair also continued their movies through the 80s. This period also witnessed the emergence of semi-parallel movie genre that blurred the boundaries of parallel and commercial films (1239). As the movie for analysis belongs to this period, other aspects will be discussed in detail further.

The legend of “Kadamattathu Kathanar” made its first appearance on big screen in the name of *Kadamattathachan*¹⁰ in 1966. The movie was directed and produced by Reverend Father George Thariyan and the role of Kadamattathu Kathanar was donned by Thikkurissi Sukumaran Nair. The second film version, under the same title and directed by N.P Suresh appeared in 1984 and starred Prem Nasir in the lead role. The announcement of the upcoming film titled *Kathanar: The Wild Sorcerer*, directed by Rojin Thomas and starring Jayasurya in the lead role has also been made by the previous producer Vijay Babu under the banner of Friday Films on 13th February 2020. For the present study, *Kadamattathachan* (1984) and the launch teaser of *Kathanar: The Wild Sorcerer* will be taken for analysis.

5.3. The Plot Structure of *Kadamattathachan* (1984)

The plot structure of the movie is drawn from both *Aithihyamala* (1909) and the play *Kadamattathu Kathanar* (1965) by Kalanilayam theatres. Paulose is adopted by an elderly local vicar of the church. He soon becomes a mentor figure for Paulose and teaches him all the liturgical rites. The sub-plot that deals with the love affair between Paulose and Katrina in the

¹⁰ *Kadamattathachan* (1966) was not accessible to the researcher. The researcher analyses the movie under the same title that appeared in 1984.

play is reproduced in the movie with slight variations. Katrina becomes Marykutty who lives under the strict restrictions of her mother. As Paulose does not return after he goes in search of the lost cow in the forest, she is forced to marry Pulimootil Kariya who is a drunkard and womaniser with a lot of wealth. Her life becomes extremely miserable after the marriage. Another sub-plot revolving around the life of Thomachan, his wife Eliyamma and the thief, Ithappiri adds humour to the story. Meanwhile Paulose is forcefully taken to the cave of a tribal community by two of its members. The movie version does not mention them as *Malayarayans*. The tribal chief's daughter, Valli falls in love with Paulose and requests her father not to offer him to the deity. Thus Valli acts as the saviour of Paulose. As the chief expects Paulose to marry his daughter, he teaches him the lessons of sorcery and makes him promise that he will not leave their place ever. However, as Paulose is grief-stricken due to his deep longing to meet his mentor, Valli helps him to escape the place. He returns to meet his father who dies peacefully after their reunion. Before his death, he entrusts him with the duties related to the church and make him his successor. Thereafter Kathanar beats the evil powers around him with his magical powers and helps his people live peacefully. He extends his help when Aliyar's family is in distress. Later, he tames down a fierce *Yakshi* who killed many people in her locality. He even wins over another Hindu sorcerer, Kunjaman Potti and proves his extraordinary magical capabilities. When the bishop asks him to abandon his practice of sorcery, he promises him that he would use it only for the well-being of others. In the end, the tribal people come in search of him to kill him. However, he sticks to his promise and does not use his magical powers to save himself. He runs to the church and prays to the Lord to save him. The church door opens and he returns to his God.

5.4. From “Kadamattathu Kathanar” to *Kadamattathachan*

When the legend of “Kadamattathu Kathanar” marked its entry into the framework of popular cinema of the times, it underwent huge transformation. *Kadamattathachan* (1984) did

not fit to either the Parallel Cinema genre of the 1970s or the Middle Cinema genre of the 1980s. It was designed for a mass audience with the staple ingredients of commercial cinema that include popular stars, melodrama, romance, comedy, action, songs and so on. Even after the emergence of the new wave cinemas in the 1970s that focused on serious and social themes, the commercial cinemas continued to exist in the industry with the films such as *Kannapanunni* (1977), *Love in Singapore* (1980), *Kolilakkam* (1981), and so on. The producers always found such ingredients as a safe play as it resonated with the aesthetic sensibilities of the mass audience. Unconventional themes and genres were always regarded as risky. Each period has its own specific commercial ingredients for the popular cinema. For instance, Malayalam cinema in the 60s, 70s and even in the beginning of the 80s had ‘pre-marital sex’ as a common element and it points out the extent of sexual segregation in the daily life in Kerala (Nair 4). Thus there were certain recurring patterns that acted as the marker of the box office hits. *Kadamattathachan* also deployed such saleable commercial formula with the inclusion of popular stars such as Prem Nasir, and Srividya, romantic, comedy and sad song sequences, dance, stunt scenes, comic interludes and so on. The study looks into the interpolation of various popular elements in the film as part of the marketing tactics and how the legend of “Kadamattathu Kathanar” adapted to the requirements of the commercial cinema industry.

The study begins with the analysis of the title of the movie *Kadamattathachan*. Even though *Aithihamala* and *Kalanilayam* used the title “Kadamattathau Kathanar”, the movie version employed the name *Kadamattathachan* for its title. Even though both ‘achan’ and ‘Kathanar’ refers to a Christian priest, ‘achan’ is a more recent and popular usage compared to ‘Kathanar’. The introductory voice over of the film legitimises the title of the movie by saying that he acquired fame through the name *Kadamattathachan*. The print and drama versions of the legend address him as ‘Paulose semmassan’ in the initial parts. However, the movie refers to him as ‘Poulochan’, the shortened version of ‘Paulose achan’. Even though the movie shows

St George Church of Kadamattom as his church, he is not presented as a Jacobite priest in the movie. The clerical clothing used in the movie is indicative of a Capuchin priest. During an interaction with Deacon Emil Kurian, whose oral version has been analysed in chapter two, he told the researcher that the church did not give permission to the popular media to use his Jacobite identity. The change in the name of the movie also points to how the popular elements find their way into movie titles of commercial cinema.

It is also interesting to note that the movie begins and ends with the image of the St George Church of Kadamattom. The opening visuals of the movie that are shown while the opening credits are rolling include the Holy cross, Kadamattom church, flow of pilgrims, *pathala kinar*, priests, and the interior of the church. All these images and the ringing of church bells in the background place the movie in a divine setting. The movie employs voice over to give an introduction to the character of Kadamattathu Kathanar. The voice over does not address him as a legendary character, instead it addresses him as Christian priest who lived in Kerala centuries ago. As it announces that the movie features the life-events of a Christian priest and he lives in the minds of the believers as a holy priest, it attempts to portray Kathanar as a saintly figure. In fact the very beginning of the movie serves as a perfect example to demonstrate how different elements of a movie such as camera movement, music, imageries, and many more generate meaning as a whole. As the first scene of Kalanilayam's play *Kadamattathu Kathanar* portrayed *Yakshi* and built the atmosphere of horror, it underlined the horror and fantasy genre of the play. However, the movie version of the legend sets the atmosphere of a Christian devotional genre through its opening visual sequences. In the drama version of the legend, the song that depicts the parting of Paulose and Katrina begins with "in the altar of love..." ("*premathin altharayil...*" my trans.) whereas in the movie, the song that depicts the parting of Paulose and Marykutty begins with "forever caring Mother" ("*nithyasahaya mathave...*" my trans.) that praises Mother Mary (*Kadamattathachan*

00:15:25-00:17:26). The replacement of the former song with a devotional song can also be viewed as an attempt to set the movie in a Christian milieu. A similar attempt can be observed in another movie, *Chottanikkara Amma* (1976) that also dealt with a devotional genre in the specific time period. The movie opens and ends with the visuals of Chottanikkara temple. As temples and churches are tangible evidence surrounding a belief, these devotional movies offer a sense of reality to the viewers. Thus Kathanar in the movie is more of a holy priest than a great sorcerer. Sankunni's "Kadamattathu Kathanar" reminds us of an era before the arrival of religious colonialism when the indigenous Christianity of the times was deeply merged with the medieval social ethos of Kerala. However, the movie dissociates Kadamattathu Kathanar from the roots of local tradition and places him in an era after the Synod of Diamper that forbade Christians from practising sorcery, black magic and so on.

The inclusion of a popular star is one of the major crowd pulling ingredients of a commercial cinema. The 1970s and 1980s were a time period that marked the gradual emergence of star system in Malayalam cinema. Actors such as Thikkurissi Sukumaran Nair and Prem Nasir are regarded as the pioneers who paved the way for star-oriented films. With regard to this, the actor who donned the role of Kadamattathu Kathanar needs special attention. The lead role of Kathanar was played by the actor who is regarded as the greatest romantic hero in Malayalam- Prem Nasir. He is also referred to as the evergreen hero in Malayalam. Before analysing the character of Kathanar in the movie, one should have an understanding of the heroic aura associated with the actor, Prem Nasir. He is widely acknowledged as the first superstar in Malayalam and holds two Guinness World Records—for playing the lead role in the largest number of films (720 films) and playing opposite the same heroine, Sheela in 130 films (Kamineni & Ruth). He has won several prestigious awards including the *Padmabhushan* in 1983. He started acting in the 1950s and rose to stardom in a short span of time. His unique acting style was new to the audience and it had all the elements to attract the youth. Even

though he handled a number of genres including romance, devotional, mythology, social causes, tear-jerkers and so on with so much ease, he is more acknowledged by the youth as a romantic hero (Kamineni & Ruth). In fact, many romantic movies especially in the 1960s and 1970s starred Prem Nasir in the lead role. He had great on-screen rapport with many actresses who played opposite him such as Sheela, Jayabharathi, Kumari Thangam, Sharadha the Travancore royal family trio Lalitha-Padmini-Ragini, K.R. Vijaya, Lakshmi, Vidhubala, Sreevidya and many more. His peculiar style of romancing around the trees even became a trend-setter in Malayalam movies. The following pictures are stills from some of the movies that gave him the halo of a romantic hero:

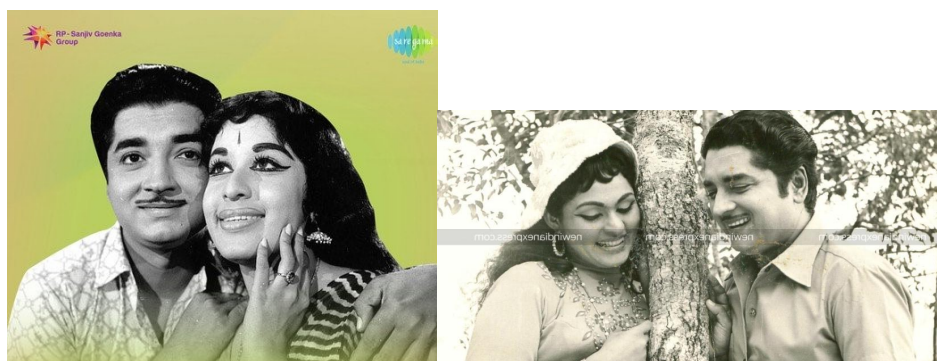


Fig. 17. The Posters of *Agniputri* (1967) and *Padmavyuham* (1973) (Image Source: *The New Indian Express*. 16 Jan. 2020)

The above mentioned romantic halo of Prem Nasir was translated into the movie *Kadamattathachan* too. It was not an action-oriented film; it revolved around the life of a Christian priest. Prem Nasir was a popular actor of the times who had the charisma, grace and talent to pull off the character of a Christian priest. While talking about the heroes in Malayalam cinema, Ethiran Kathiravan notes that it is very rare that the hero exists in the movie as a mere concept. Instead, the hero mostly functions as a hero throughout the movie and the story and other characters revolve around the hero (Kathiravan 63). In *Kadamattathachan*, this heroic phenomenon is twofold: firstly, as Kadamattathu Kathanar is a legendary hero, the story is

likely to revolve around him; secondly, as the superstar Prem Nasir plays the role of Kathanar, the movie also tends to follow the star formula of the actor. While we watch the two romantic scenes in the movie, the actor Prem Nasir becomes more visible and pronounced than the character, Kathanar. Even though the theatrical version of the legend also staged these romantic sequences, the movie version employed many additional elements to market the star brand of Prem Nasir. It can be explained through the analysis of the two romantic segments in the movie. The first segment deals with the love affair between Paulose and Marykutty. As the scene opens, Paulose escapes the the notice of his father and goes to Marykutty's house to deliver the milk. However, his real intention is to spend some time with her as it is the time when her mother is not around. When she sees him, she has a tiff with him for not meeting her the previous day. Their tiff, Paulose's efforts to convince her, and the way they patch up give a romantic build up to the scene (*Kadamattathachan* 00:03:19- 00:04:23). Such playfulness is one of the typical characteristics of the romancing style of Prem Nasir. Moreover, the sentimental love song in the movie is more tear-jerking than that of the drama version. The movie employs an additional scene in which Paulose's father asks him to forget Marykutty. At the same time, Marykutty's mother, Thresya forces her to marry Pulimootil Kariya who is a drunkard. Paulose's dilemma and Marykutty's sobs in the end of the song is depicted in a highly melodramatic manner (00:15:25-00:17:26). Such tear-jerking scenes and song sequences have been plenty in the Prem Nasir starring movies ever since the rise of his stardom.

Unlike the drama version, in the movie, the villain Pulimoottil Kariya directly encounters Paulose and threaten him. Such triangle love story sequences were a common feature of many old Malayalam movies including that of Prem Nasir. The role of Pulimootil Kariya was played by the actor M.G Soman who used to handle lead, villain and comedian roles. M.G Soman appearing as goonda and threatening the hero, Prem Nasir for loving the woman they love in common was already proved to be a successful combination before. For

example, the movie *Rajahamsam* (1974) also featured a similar combination scene. The 1980s was also a time when Soman started handling many comedy sequences. *Poochakkoru Mookuthi* (1984), released on the same year of *Kadamattathachan* features his comedy sequences. In Kalanilayam's version, the same character appeared as Uthuppu, a completely negative character who evoked disgust in the minds of the viewers. However the movie names him as Pulimootil Kariya and portrays him not only as a villainous character, but also brings out his comic aspects through the comedy song *Aliyamma pattichallo*¹¹ that features the combination sequence of Pulimootil Kariya and Ithapiri. Here the, character of Pulimootil Kariya is modified by the writer so as to serve the purpose of both action and humour.

The second romantic segment in the movie appears in the movie when Paulose is held in captivity by the tribal people. Both the movie and the play expanded the episode involving the tribal community and employed an additional character-- the daughter of the chief of the tribal people. She falls in love with Paulose at the first sight. However, this character was represented differently in both the versions of the legend. In the play, the character appears as Karumbandi whereas in the movie she is named as Valli. Karumbandi is evil in nature that she threatens Paulose that if he does not fulfil her desires, she will kill him. She even tries to harm him as he rejects her love. Seeing this, the chief asks his daughter to stay away from Paulose. He warns Paulose that his daughter is extremely dangerous that his life is at risk. The chief teaches him all the tricks and lessons of magic to defend himself from any sorts of danger. Even though the movie also adopted this segment from the play, there were variations in the plot. Valli is not depicted as an evil woman. While Karumbandi is a stone-hearted woman who is so adamant in her decisions, Valli is a kind and soft-hearted woman who is ready to sacrifice anything for her love. In the movie, the chief of the tribes teaches Paulose the lessons of sorcery for a different reason. As Valli requests him not to kill Paulose and expresses her desire to live

¹¹ It means 'Aliyamma fooled'

with him, the chief leaves him free and teaches him sorcery. In the end, she sacrifices her love and helps him to escape the place. In both *Aithiyamala* as well as the play, Kathanar escapes the cave with the consent of the tribal chief. While Karumbandi appears for a short time in the play, Valli appears throughout the scenes concerning the tribes. In other words, the movie gives more space to Valli and Paulose in the specific segment. It serves as a good example to illustrate how the plot and characters are modified in the movie to maintain the star image of an actor. Perhaps, audience of the specific period might not accept a female evil character dominating and making lustful advances towards a character played by Prem Nasir. An evil heroine powerful enough to destroy the hero does not resonate with the brand image of Prem Nasir. As Karumbandi's desire is lustful in nature, Valli's desire is romantic in nature. Moreover, Prem Nasir was the heartthrob of the female audience of his times because of his 'lover boy' appeal. Valli's deep admiration and selfless love for Paulose asserts the romantic appeal of Prem Nasir as an actor. Valli's blinking of her eyes at the first sight of Paulose and her sleepless night indicate that she was blindly in love with him (*Kadamattathachan* 00:24:26-00:24:28). The scenes involving Valli and Paulose are always accompanied with a melodious romantic background score whereas the other scenes inside the cave are accompanied with a background music that evokes terror. The outdoor romantic session of Paulose and Valli is an additional scene in the movie that make the audience feel that it is exclusively made for the actor Prem Nasir (00:33:16- 00:34:38). Most of the hit romantic songs of Prem Nasir are shot in outdoor locations that have great scenic beauty. However, the tribal people's cave provides a restricted space to depict a romantic scene. In the particular scene, Valli informs Paulose that there is a beautiful world outside and she takes him outside the cave without the notice of anyone. Valli's passionate conversation with Paulose in the background of a beautiful river and the forest, accompanied by a sweet and melodious music make the scene all the more romantic. Most of the popular films depict romance in a beautiful location which is far away from the mundane

and everyday world of the characters. Such spaces always grant freedom to the couple and the spectators also get pleasure watching the couple enjoying their solitude. The spectators are constantly exposed to such recurring patterns in the popular films of the times and they continue to demand such scenes.

The movie also employs a melodious romantic song against this backdrop featuring Valli's dance, depicted as part of her dream. P.K Nair notes that in the earlier days, dream sequences were a 'must' for the popular Malayalam cinema. "It would give them an excuse to introduce, a song, dance or a ballet as the case may be" (Nair 4). Valli's costumes throughout the movie are revealing and sexually provocative clothing that draws the attention of viewers. She and the background dancers appear in the same costume throughout the song. The song is shot in such a manner that it sexualises and objectifies the performers and caters to the voyeuristic gaze of the viewers. Even though the drama version also employs cabaret and item number in its performance, the song segment in the movie creates a greater impact on the viewers because of the camerawork. Jain finds the characteristic features of such songs in movies. The camera functions in such a way that it reduces the girl to "the sum total of her body parts, rather than portray her as a whole person. The choreography involves purposeful thrusts of the breasts and pelvis" (Jain 12). The dancing scenes in water depict the female bodies more sexually appealing as the wet clothes highlight their body projections. The camera also focuses on their chest, midriff and legs. The inclusion of such sexy cinematic performances is a marketing strategy of commercial movies as it is a great source of onscreen visual entertainment for the spectators.

In fact, if we take both the romantic segments in the movie, Paulose is the centre of romance of both the heroines. Both of them are grief-stricken as they lose their male relationship on different occasions and fall under the category of self-sacrificing women who conform to the patriarchal norms of the society. Marykutty loves Paulose unconditionally and

waits for him to return to her in hope that he would marry her. When her patriarchal mother forces her to marry the wealthy drunkard, Pulimootil Kariya and tells her that her waiting for her prince charming is pointless, she retorts that if it happens so, she would remain unmarried throughout her life. However, her voice is denied and in the end she succumbs to her mother's pressure. In Valli's case, her father supports her love for Paulose and gives his consent to their marriage. However, as Paulose rejects her love and expresses his longing to meet his father, she does not question or threaten him. Despite the fact that she saved his life, she sacrifices her love and let him go. It glorifies the hero's masculinity by reinforcing his control over women. Both of the female characters are silenced and are depicted in terms of their relationship to the hero of the movie.

The next aspect for examination is the representation of the tribal community in the movie. The attitude of the society towards the tribes in the specific time period is reflected in the movie version of the legend. In both *Aithihyamala* and the play *Kadamattathu Kathanar*, the tribal community is referred to as *Malayarayans* and is represented as cannibalistic in nature. However the movie does not refer to their name and their act of killing humans is represented as part of their rituals. They offer humans outside their community to their *Kuladevatha*¹². They are not represented as 'ugly' 'disgusting', 'barbaric', 'primitive', 'savages' who remain naked throughout their lives as in Sankunni's representation. The theatrical version in 1965 also followed Sankunni's representation of the tribes in an orientalist manner to a certain extent. The tribal dance, cruel attitude, cannibalism, and so on are some of the examples. In the play, we have already seen that the chief's daughter is named 'Karumbandi' which sounds very strange and primitive. However, in the movie, the chief's daughter is named 'Valli', which is a familiar name to the Malayalees as well as a name that is in tune with nature. While Sankunni's othering of the tribal community is represented through

¹² It refers to their clan deity.

the binary evil and ugly looking creatures/ good man, the movie represents it through *kattumanushyan*/ *nattumanushyan* in which *kattumanushyan* refers to the man of the forest and *nattumanushyan* refers to the man of the town. Even though the intensity of the ‘primitiveness’ of the tribes has been mellowed down in the movie version, certain aspects concerning the stereotyping of tribes may still be observed. These include some of the jungle stereotyping that they wore animal skin, feathers and furs, necklaces, bracelets and other accessories made of beads, feathers, tiger-claws and so on. The entire setting including the cave, properties like animal horns and skulls, fire, fan made of peacock feathers, and so on also reinforce such generalisation. Even though the chief and his daughter are portrayed as kind human beings, the evil minded character Karuppan who wants to marry Valli and hates Paulose is depicted in a different way. His curly hair, big moustache, and dark complexion as suggested by his name ‘Karuppan’¹³ make him stand out from the rest of his people. Apart from the stereotyping of the tribes, such black/white dichotomy structured around racial inequalities in the representation of villains and heroes is a common phenomenon in the cinemas across the world. Karuppan is excommunicated by the chief on the grounds of treachery. It also pinpoints how his name and dark complexion is closely tied up with his evil nature.

As mentioned in chapter two, the marginalisation of tribal communities was accelerated during the British colonial period. Sankunni’s representation of the tribes in the orientalist manner throws light on the society’s attitude towards the lower castes and tribes of the specific period. The study has pointed out in detail the social structure and unique tradition, rituals, customs and practices of the hill tribes with special reference to the community of *Malayarayans*. Just like the way Sankunni had misrepresented these hill tribes in *Aithiyamala*,

¹³ *Karuppu* refers to black colour.

the drama and movie versions also represented them according to their imagination and biased perspectives.

Next, the study focuses on the representation of *Yakshi* in the movie version of the legend. Since the release of *Bhargavi Nilayam* (1964), many movies that dealt with the theme of *Yakshi* began to appear in the Malayalam cinema. *Yakshi* (1968), *Yakshaganam* (1976), *Lisa* (1978), *Chottanikkara Amma* (1976), *Kalliyankattu Neeli* (1979), *Karimpoocha* (1981), and so on are examples. Most of these movies deviated from the popular representation of *Yakshi* in folklore and experimented with the theme of *Yakshi* in different ways. Even though *Bhargavi Nilayam* (1964) and *Yakshi* (1968) retained some of the folk elements like *pala* tree, most of the other *Yakshi* movies dealt with their contemporary living conditions. For instance, the *Yakshi* in *Karimpoocha* (1981) wore a white gown instead of a white saree. However, as *Chottanikkara Amma* (1976), *Kalliyankattu Neeli* (1979) and *Kadamattathachan* (1984) dealt with the past era, they shared some common characteristics. As the play *Kadamattathu Kathanar* was the first medium that widely popularised and solidified the notion of *Yakshi* in a particular way, these movies also adopted certain elements from the play. For instance, many of the movies that followed the conventions of the play featured the notion of ‘*Yakshi* asking lime’ at night. The *Yakshi* represented in *Kadamattathachan* is closer to that of *Chottanikkara Amma*.

Like the drama version of the legend, the *Yakshi* appears in *Kadamattathachan* in two costumes. In the first part, she wears the traditional wear *mula kacha and mundu* and appears as a beautiful *antharjanam* whereas in the last scene, she wears a plain white saree. However, unlike the play, the movie version adds another sub-plot and provides a background story for *Yakshi*. Before she turned into *Yakshi*, she was a beautiful princess named Sethulakshmi, born in a royal family in her previous birth. She loved a man of lower rank and the king objected her love affair. As the king found out that she was deeply in love with him, he ordered his men

to kill him. Meanwhile Sethulakshmi suggested to him that they should elope. But the king's men found him and killed him in front of her. In her grief and fury, she jumped into the nearby waterfall and ended her life (*Kadamattathachan* 01:29:09- 01:36:45). Neither *Aithihyamala* nor the play explains the background story of *Yakshi*. In both of these representations, *Yakshi* lures men to the forest and kills them to drink their blood. However, the movie versions that followed them represented *Yakshi* always brought a revenge element in the story. Firstly it provides a justification for the acts of *Yakshi*; secondly the thirst for revenge is an element that adds thrill to the horror genre. In *Kadamattatachan*, *Yakshi* kills people as she did not fulfil her desires before her death and her soul could not rest in peace. As the story provides a logical reason, it justifies the atrocities of *Yakshi*. The traditional attire she wears when she appears as *Yakshi* is the same costume she wore before her death. Since the drama version introduced the appearance of *Yakshi* as a beautiful *antharjanam*, wearing a lot of jewellery in order to tempt Brahmin men, many movies has followed this trend. For instance, in the movie *Chottanikkara Amma*, *Yakshi* appears in the costume of *antharjanam* and tempts Brahmin men. Another common element in both the movies is the representation of the real persona of *Yakshi*. In *Chottanikkara Amma*, when the temple priest looks at the *antharjanam*, he sees the real persona of *Yakshi*- an evil figure clad in black. A similar image is represented in *Kadamattathachan* when *Yakshi* transforms into its evil form. The setting of all the three movies is a deserted path in the forest or a countryside at night. As seen in many *Yakshi* stories in *Aithihyamala*, the target of the *Yakshi* in these movies is mostly the Brahmin men. The horror scenes in the movie *Chottanikkara Amma* had created a great impact on the audience during the specific period. It is evident from V.V Haridas's narration of his personal experience in his work on *Yakshi*. He recollected that after watching the movie, the *Yakshi*'s image started scaring him in following nights that he even stopped watching movies for a long time. He also added that after a few years he watched the movie version of "Kadamattathu Kathanar" and faced a similar

experience. He shut his eyes and peeped into some of the *Yakshi* scenes in great fear (27). Haridas' experience gives a hint to the reception of these films by the audience. It pinpoints how the movies of a specific period are led by certain horror conventions and narrative premises and conceptualize horror. While talking about global genres in cinema, Costanzo states how genre conventions act as formulas for industry decisions:

They provide familiar labels for marketing and a ready framework for structuring individual films. Think of genre as a kind of contract between manufacturers and consumers, a promise to deliver an experience more or less expected by the audience. As long as the filmmakers keep turning out the sort of horror people want horror movies will continue to be made. (210)

In other words, as seen in the representation of *Yakshi*, mimicking a successful pattern is a very common practice followed in the film industry. Similarly, *Yakshi*'s song is an inevitable element in the popular media representations that dealt with *Yakshi*. This trend continued in the Malayalam cinema for a long time. The humming in the beginning, lyrics and the melodious music also plays a significant role in setting the ambience of *Yakshi*. The *Yakshi*'s song in the play opens with the lines "*Ozhukivarunnu njan..moonam yaamam kazhinju..*"¹⁴ It indicates the popular notion that *Yakshi*'s feet do not touch the ground that flow in the air and they come at the peak hour of night. Similarly, the *Yakshi*'s song in *Kalliyankattu Neeli* opens with "*nizhalay..ozhukivarum njan, yamangal thorum*"¹⁵. It is noticeable that the movie has employed almost the same imagery in the song. The additional element that it brings is the element of shadow. However, the *Yakshi*'s song in *Kadamattathachan* does not touch upon any of these notions of *Yakshi*. The opening lines of the song announces the love that blooms in one's heart. It is the same song that depicts the love of *Yakshi* and her lover before her death.

¹⁴ I am flowing..in the peak hour of night (my tans.)

¹⁵ I flow as a shadow at the peak hours of night (my trans.)

The song tells that she has waited for him in the foggy dawns and he should let her follow him like his shadow. The *Yakshi* inhabits a specific space in the movie. After her death, the king had built a monument in memory of his daughter. The *Yakshi* roams around the remaining parts of this monument and waits for her lover every night. *Yakshi*'s flirting with Kathanar and his laugh in response also projects the romantic image of Prem Nasir in a subtle manner.

The role of the *Yakshi* was played by the famous actress Srividya. The casting of Srividya in the role of *Yakshi* is also one of the marketing techniques employed by the makers of the movie. Her popularity at the box office had already made her a popular star. Srividya was an established actress that won the hearts of the people not only with her unique acting style, but also with her mesmerising beauty. She was the one who also played the role of goddess in the movie *Chottanikkara Amma*. Her mythological appearance on screen was well-received by the audience. Her sensual beauty and sex appeal matched the parameters of the role of a seductive enchantress. Without the sub-plot, her role would have been reduced to a guest appearance. The story backs the *Yakshi*'s role played by Srividya and her role would be remembered by the audience. Her frozen image from the movie is also displayed alongside Prem Nasir in the poster for marketing of the movie. The following picture is one of the major posters of the movie:



Fig. 18. The Poster of *Kadamattathachan* (1984) (Image Source *Alchetron*. 7 June 2018)

Even though the drama and film version of the legend omitted some of the segments in *Aithiyamala*, they have retained the episode concerning the tribal people, *Yakshi* and Kunjaman Potti. As the first two segments are already discussed, the next subject for analysis is the encounter between Kathanar and Potti. It is a significant episode in all the versions because it is the episode that establishes Kathanar as an unbeatable hero. Kunjaman Potti is represented as a very powerful sorcerer in his first scene. He is seen worshipping the goddess and a floral garland and a light appears in his hand all of a sudden due to his magical powers. As his disciple is scared to go along with him to bind *Yakshi*, he tells him that he need not worry as he is going with a powerful sorcerer who has defeated the *Brahmarakshassu*¹⁶. As only a few learned Brahmins can defeat this powerful demonic spirit, the mention of his successful encounter asserts the prowess of Potti. In *Aithiyamala*, Potti does not appear in the *Yakshi* scene. But, the drama and film placed him in the *Yakshi* scene. Kunjaman Potti and his assistant go to the forest to bind the fierce *Yakshi*. The combination of a powerful Brahmin and a timid and stupid disciple in a *Yakshi* scene was also a common pattern in many movies during that time. The drama version had already used such combination scenes and it had won the applause of the audience. The horror movies which came later also followed such combination scenes to recreate the comic effect. For instance, *Kalliyankattu Neeli* (1979) also employed a guru-disciple combination in the *Yakshi* scene. While the guru walks in front, the disciple shivers in fear. In *Kadamattathachan*, in almost all the combination scenes, Potti calls his disciple *ebhyan* (stupid). Moreover as Potti fails to tame the *Yakshi*, the disciple runs and hides behind a tree in great fear. The people are shocked at the fact that the powerful sorcerer, Kunjaman Potti could not defeat the *Yakshi* and finally they decide to call Kathanar for help.

¹⁶ Brahmarakshassu is a fierce demonic spirit of a Brahmin who was engaged in evil practices in his or her life and died an unnatural death. Only Brahmins had access to sacred learning during the specific time period. They used to impart their learning to their disciples. However, those who misused the knowledge for evil purposes would die an unnatural death and turn into a Brahma Rakshassu. Brahma Rakshassu is so powerful as it has the powers of both a Brahmin and a Rakshassa. Only a few powerful learned Brahmins can defeat them and give them salvation.

In *Aithihyamala*, Potti decides to insult Kathanar as his fame as a powerful sorcerer began to spread everywhere. In the movie and drama version, Potti decides to take revenge on Kathanar as he tamed the *Yakshi* whom Potti could not bind. The drama and film versions connect these two episodes to provide a logical reason for the chain of events and make it interesting for the audience.

The movie also adds an additional sub-plot revolving around a Muslim family to highlight the public appeal of Kathanar irrespective of religion. Kathanar's friend Aliyar seeks his help to conduct the marriage of his daughter and nephew. But some thieves attack his house and take away his gold. Aliyar is killed in the encounter. As his daughter and nephew find it difficult to handle the situation and approach Kathanar, he offers his help and conducts their wedding in a grand manner. The inclusion of *oppana*¹⁷ adds colour to the festive occasion and makes the scene very visually appealing to the viewers. The *oppana* song also involves the dream scene of the bride romancing with the groom. Thus the movie employs the 'dream and romantic song' pattern of the cinematic tradition of the times twice in the movie. The addition of the sub-plot centring on the Muslim family can also be a marketing tactic to appeal to the religious sentiments of various religious groups. P.K Nair writes that during those times the supporting characters were duly represented from three major groups—Hindu/Christian/Muslim. Such representation occurs out of the silly misconception that in order to attract crowds from a certain religious group, "there must be a character representing that group in the story" (Nair 4).

Another sub-plot involving the love triangle between Eliyamma, Thomachan and the thief Ithappiri adds humour to the story. While the theatrical version of the legend added one sub-plot featuring the love affair of Paulose and Katrina and a few other characters, the movie

¹⁷ It is a traditional Muslim art form.

version included many additional sub-plots including that of *Yakshi's* background story, Aliyar's family, humorous love triangle story and so on.

Why does the movie employ so many sub-plots to back the story? Firstly, it underlines various temporal, special and visual possibilities the film can explore in comparison to the play. As a dramatic scene-change requires change of background settings, costume, make-up and so on, drama tends to maintain the homogeneity of the scene to a certain extent. However, due to the gap between the production and reception of a film, the crew can go to different locations and shoot at different timings as required by the story. Other visual possibilities can be explored through the techniques of camera. This ability of the film to fulfil the narrative function allows it to weave as many sub-plots as possible and add more dimensions to the story.

Secondly, even though the movie *Kadamattathachan* falls under the label of a Christian devotional genre, the makers of the movie have definitely looked into the commercial prospects of the film. The addition of sub-plots give scope to explore diverse themes like romance, humour, action, sentiments and so on that can contribute to the marketability of the film. The mainstream cinemas often employ certain formulaic patterns and visual clichés to satisfy the varied tastes and interests of the viewers. A commercial movie always introduces various sub-plots as a linear plot does not give scope to depict the formulaic patterns of popular cinema. *Kadamattathachan* begins in a devotional tone, then moves to the romantic scene involving Paulose and Katrina. With the appearance of villain, a stunt sequence is depicted in the following scene. The movie features a sentimental song in the next scene as there is no scope for the union of Paulose and Katrina. Then the movie introduces humour by presenting the love triangle story of Eliyamma, Thomachan and Ithappiri. In the following plot that revolves around Paulose and the tribal people, the movie replicates the same formulaic pattern that involves terror, romance, hero's fight with villain and sentimental sequences. The next scene centres on the Kathanar's magic, followed by his reunion with his father. After another scene

involving magic, the plot switches to Aliyar's family. The same pattern involving love affair between Kunjali and Beeyathu, action and sentimental scene surrounding the death of Aliyar is repeated. The next part depicts horror with the introduction of the murderous *Yakshi*. The movie then cuts to the *Yakshi*'s background story that again replicates love, villainous father and loss of love. After a comic interlude, Kathanar binds the murderous *Yakshi* and proves his skills. After another comic interlude, Kathanar wins over his opponent, Kunjaman Potti. The villains come in search of Kathanar in the end. However, as he had promised the Bishop that he would not utilize his magical powers for his own needs, he succumbs to the Lord for help and he is saved. The movie ends with the same opening visual imagery of the Kadamattom Church.

Even though both the drama and movie version of the legend touch upon four acts of Kathanar's journey—the ordinary world of Paulose, his call to adventure, his series of encounters and his return to the Lord, the movie employs four sub-plots in the same pattern and a comic interlude. These four sub-plots repeat the same pattern that involves romance, action, sentiments, followed by a comic interlude. The movie also features a festive song, comedy song, romantic song and a sentimental song at different points. Among the four love stories, three of them feature female characters lamenting for the loss of their love. These additional sub-plots that centre on romance overshadows the legendary character of *Kadamattathu Kathanar*. Thus when the legend entered the mainstream cinema, it operated according to the commercial rules of the industry. While talking about the reception of *Kadamattathu Kathanar* on big screen, M. Jayaraj states that the film did not receive the extraordinary reception that the theatre version had (417). One reason could be that the people who watched the oldest version of the play did not remember the plot or characters. The most registered aspect in their memory was that it was a stunning visual experience. The theatre made maximum use of the stage techniques and made the magical deeds of Kathanar on stage

a memorable experience for the viewers. It was the theatre spectacle of the magic of Kathanar that made him a popular heroic icon. However, as the movie introduced so many sub-plots, stunt sequences and humour, Kathanar and his magic were subsided. The addition of these sub-plots could have been employed by the movie for various reasons. The sub-plots concerning Marykutty and Valli deal with Paulose and it makes him the centre of romance. The inclusion of Aliyar's sub-plot makes Kathanar a democratic hero and gives space to include the popular festive elements. *Yakshi*'s sub-plot not only justifies her act of killing, but also strengthens her character.

Thus *Kadamattathachan* employed various sub-plots and operated according to the star formula of Prem Nasir and commercial rules of the industry. In order to understand how the legend adapted to a new medium and attained new dimensions, one must understand the dynamics of popular cinema during the 1980s. The inclusion of popular stars, songs, dance, dream sequence, melodrama, inner drama, sexually provocative dance scenes, romance, action, and so on were a 'must' for the popular Malayalam cinema of the times. But, how did these external interpolations shape the text? It may be observed that the hero forms a star constellation in which he stands at the centre and various sub-plots and characters revolve around him. However, in many instances, these sub-plots become standalone performances that are loosely connected to core narrative of the legendary hero. As the movie follows the star formula of the actor Prem Nasir, it becomes apparent that in the movie version of the legend, the actor Prem Nasir overshadows the character of *Kadamattathu Kathanar* in many instances. C.I Paul, the actor who played the role of Kathanar in Kalanilayam's play never dominated the character of Kathanar in his performances. It was the character of *Kadamattathu Kathanar* that won the hearts of the audience. While the play was spectacle oriented, the movie was commercial formula oriented and placed greater stress on the image of the actor than the character. Thus it may be interpreted that when Kathanar entered the movie version, the star

value attained more priority than the character. Moreover, with the appearance of numerous characters and sub-plots and other extraneous elements, it became a crowded world. It is one of the reasons why the movie could not recreate the impact of the play and make box office records.

5.5. From *Kadamattathachan* to *Kathanar: The Wild Sorcerer*

After a gap of 36 years, the legend of *Kadamattathu Kathanar* is about mark its entry on the big screen for the third time in the history of Malayalam cinema. While the first two film versions titled *Kadamattathachan* starred the veteran actors, Thikkurissi Sukumaran Nair and Prem Nasir, the contemporary movie version stars Jayasurya to play the lead role of Kathanar. As the movie has not been released yet, the launch teaser of the movie will be taken for analysis. A still from the launch teaser is illustrated below:



Fig. 19. A Still from the Teaser of *Kathanar: The Wild Sorcerer* (Image source: The Hindu Net Desk. 20 Mar 2020.)

Kadamattathu Kathanar makes its reappearance on a big budget 3-D film in two parts worth a budget of 75 crores. The film, directed by Rojin Thomas is expected to be a great fantasy thriller. The film, which was earlier announced under the banner of Friday Film House

has been later taken over by Gokulam films. The animated launch teaser premiered on 14th February, 2020 revealed the new look of Kathanar and received wide reception from the audience. The actor Jayasurya who dons the role of Kathanar posted on social media that “Kathanar, I believe, will be a stunning 3-D experience and the biggest movie of my career” (The Hindu Net Desk). The newspaper reports point out the fact that the movie, scripted by R Ramananad “will have Kadamattathu Kathanar in a never seen or heard avatar, though it will be based on the popular stories” (George). The shift of the movie title from *Kadamattathachan* to *Kathanar: The Wild Sorcerer* suggests that the new movie representation of the legend places greater emphasis on magic and fantasy. Another promotional highlight of the movie is that it comes from the makers of the Malayalam movie *Philips and the Monkey Pen* (2013) that employed elements of children’s fantasy and was a box office hit.

The marketing and distribution techniques of a movie has undergone tremendous changes over time. The release of teasers and trailers for the promotional purposes of the theatrical release of movies is a contemporary phenomenon. A teaser is shorter than a trailer and mostly lasts for around one minute. An appealing teaser can pull the crowd to the theatres as well as fetch the movie successful financing if it is not completely made. In order to serve these purposes, trailers and teasers are carefully crafted with engaging elements and technical perfections. While a trailer shows some of the important parts of the movie, a teaser shows only the highlights of the movie. The study looks into various elements employed in the trailer and examines how it presents the new Kathanar in front of the contemporary audience.

The launch teaser bears similarities with the posters of the Kalanilayam’s play, *Kadamattathu Kathanar* (2019) in terms of the usage of Hollywood fantasy motifs. With the techniques, effects, motifs, and other fantasy devices, the launch teaser also caters to the norms of Western cinematic sensibility. The use of English words in the title – *Kathanar: The Wild Sorcerer*--also renders Kathanar a universal heroic appeal. The animated launch teaser relies

heavily on digital visual effects to provide the audience an experience that is similar to that of the Hollywood blockbusters in the contemporary era. Just like the posters of the latest play, the movie employs motifs such as enchanted forest, dark blue moonlit night, magic staff, and so on to make the world of Kathanar visually stunning. However, the teaser involves other extraneous elements such as voice over, magical chants, waterfall, lightning, black panther, ships, bats, sound and lighting to add depth to the imaginary world of Kathanar. The motif of enchanted forest, dark blue moonlit night and magic staff have already been discussed in the previous chapter.

The teaser opens with the line “use headphones for better audio experience”. This instruction itself becomes the marker of the high quality sound experience that the movie offers in the contemporary digital era. Earlier the teasers were premiered in the theatres and television. However, with the emergence of online platforms and portable video players such as mobile phones, laptops, iPads and so on, the audience of the teasers have changed from “mass spectator to individual participant, from unwilling recipient to willing consumer, and from passive viewer to active controller, able to pause, fast-forward and advance images frame by frame” (Johnston 3). The instruction on the teaser is meant for this new audience who can watch the clip individually using his or her headphones. The video begins and ends with the magical chants uttered by a male voice. Even though this magic formula uses words like *Kadamattom*, *kurishu* (cross) and so on, it does not create an overall meaning. The impact is created through the ritualistic way it is recited and it signifies the idea of sorcery as suggested in the title of the movie. A magic formula is a powerful auditory element to conjure up the idea of magic, sorcery, wizardry, fantasy, and horror. With the magical chant and the sound of the cricket and other spooky noises in the background, the camera moves forward through a thick forest and focus on a waterfall. The entire teaser is shown in a dark blue and ash colour tone suggestive of night. The forest, waterfall and spooky noises in the background points to the motif of

enchanted forest, found in the fantasy literature and movies of the West. The forest brings in the idea of ‘strange’, ‘uncanny’, and ‘fear’ and builds up a mysterious atmosphere. As forest is a place away from the paths frequented by humans, nobody knows what takes place inside a thick and deep forest. In this way, it is a source of mystery and the writers make use of their imaginations to fill up the curiosity of humans. As mentioned in previous chapter, the fear of the unknown have made people believe that forest is the abode of monsters, wild creatures, witches, robbers and all sorts of supernatural things. The movie of Kathanar has also explored these possibilities of the imaginary world of forest throughout the teaser. The waterfall, black panther, birds, bats, lightning and thunder and the lonely church create a foreboding atmosphere.

The husky female voice over in the teaser also contributes to the construction of a fantasy thriller genre. The teaser touches upon four binaries that are expected to be the highlights of the movie—Man vs Wild, Man vs Man, Man vs Kingdom, and Man vs Supernatural. When the voiceover mentions the dark, thick forest full of wolves, tigers and leopards, ‘Man vs Wild’ appears on screen. When it mentions the roaring robbers, ‘Man vs Man’ idea is brought on screen. When it mentions a royal kingdom, ‘Man vs Kingdom’ and when it mentions the blood-sucking vampire in the darkest paths, ‘Man vs Supernatural’ are written on screen. Thus it is expected that the movie brings in a lot of extraneous elements in the popular legend of “Kadamattathu Kathanar” to make it fit to its big-budget 3-D canvas. Even the caption in the end says “AN EPIC COMES IN DUOLOGY 3D”. It points out the fact that the movie has been populated with an array of fantastical, horror and action elements to raise the popular ‘legend’ to the status of an ‘epic’. In the era of superheroes, the movie attempts to elevate the status of *Kadamattathu Kathanar* from a legendary hero to an epic hero to give the character a universal appeal. The mention of ‘Man vs Kingdom’ in the teaser against the backdrop of ships also hints the scope of a sweeping canvas and spectacle of the movie.

The appearance of Kathanar has also undergone tremendous changes in terms of costume and look. Kathanar has a scar mark on his left forehead that extends to his eyebrows. Facial scar has been a powerful sign employed in many popular movies across the world since the silent era. The famous Hollywood characters such as Harry Potter, Joker and many more have facial scars. Scars act as an important element in characterisation because characters with scars always have a background story that deals with pain, adventure, fight and survival. This highly successful visual sign is employed in Kathanar to signify his adventurous life in the wild forest. The costume of Kathanar also reminds us of a worn out island dress or a waist cloth as seen in many Hollywood movies. Another powerful visual element shown in the teaser is the magic staff, a heroic prop that is also seen in Kalanilayam's play. While Kalanilayam deployed a serpent headed magic staff, the teaser deploys a more sophisticated magic staff that has a meticulously crafted tiger head. A black panther is also seen alongside him in the end.

The font style of Kathanar written in Malayalam in the end also draws the attention of the viewers because of its peculiarity. The beginning letter 'ka' of Kathanar in Malayalam is replaced with a different font that is not Malayalam. However, the font bears similarities with the runic language system used in the fantasy TV series, *Shadowhunters* (2016). The below figure illustrates the specific font:



Fig.20. The runic language font (Image Source: Shadow Hunters Runes. *Jakpost*, www.jakpost.travel/so/shadowhunters-runes/.)

Shadowhunters are “appointed warriors on Earth of the Angel Raziel. They are appointed specifically to control and preside over the demons and supernatural creatures that

reside in our world” (“Shadowhunters”). The specific sign shown in the picture stands as an angelic symbol to fight against the demonic and evil powers. Considering the meaning of the specific rune sign, there is a possibility that the movie must have adapted this sign in the title to create an effect using the binary angels/demons.

Just like the Hollywood superhero movies based on Marvel and DC comics and others, the Indian superhero movies also heavily rely on three major ingredients—big budget, themes such as action, fantasy or science fiction and high technology. The teaser of the upcoming movie *Kathanar: The Wild Sorcerer* also underlines these aspects and reflects the changing aesthetic sensibility of the popular cinema. The major commercial elements of *Kadamattathachan* was the interjection of popular stars, various sub-plots, songs, romance and dances in the movie. However, as the new *Kathanar* is expected to be constructed in the Hollywood pattern, it might make use of large scale digital effects. Since the 1990s, Hollywood has an array of movies to its credit that have made use of high digital effects. *Jurassic Park* (1993), *Hollow Man* (2000), *Lord of the Rings* (2001, 2002, 2003), *Avatar* (2009), *Life of Pi* (2012) and so on are some of the examples. In the case of earlier Malayalam movies, mostly horror movies and 3-D films have made use of such visual effects. But recently many movies in Malayalam such as *Pulimurugan* (2016), *Kayamkulam Kochunni* (2018), *9* (2019) and so have used CGI (Computer Generated Images) animals and high digital effects to provide a high quality visual spectacle. *Pulimurugan* (2016) was a huge box office hit and received wide applause from the audience because of the grand action sequences featuring superstar Mohanlal and CGI tiger. However many film critics have criticised the high use of digital effects on the grounds that it heralds the death of cinema due to the lack of narrative depth, imagination, serious realism and characterisation in favour of “gaudy, meaningless spectacle” (Whissel 3). At the same time Stephen prince argues for “an understanding of digital technologies as an expanded toolbox, available to enhance both realistic films and cinematic fantasies” (Prince

183-225). As mentioned in the previous chapter, the new multiplex culture also plays a crucial role in “shaping itself as a forum that encourages and promotes an entirely new genre of film making and watching” (Viswanath 3289). Thus the reappearance of the legend of *Kadamattathu Kathanar* on big screen in the contemporary digital era becomes a tool to mark the changing aesthetic sensibilities of Malayalam popular cinema and indicates how the changes in digital technology determine the nature of translation of the legend.

Part B

Until the 1990s, the film industry served as the key source of entertainment in India. However, with the advent of television, cable and satellite channels, cinema began to be complemented with other sources of entertainment such as TV serials, music, reality shows, children’s programmes, magazine programs and many more. The legend of *Kadamattathu Kathanar* soon made its way into TV serials and adapted to this new independent entertainment industry. The study looks into the serialised version of the legend entitled *Kadamattathu Kathanar*, directed by T.S Suresh Babu that was aired on the television channel, Asianet from 2004 to 2005. The title role of Kathanar was played by the actor Prakash Paul. It belonged to the horror and fantasy genre and enjoyed great viewership across the state. At a time when the small screen industry was not familiar with high digital visual effects, the serial version of *Kadamattathu Kathanar* employed graphics and animation. As it was a huge success, Asianet re-telecast it on its allied channel Asianet Plus in 2016. In the same year, it appeared on Hotstar, an Indian OTT (Over-the-top) platform owned by Novi Digital Entertainment, a subsidiary of Star India. The study looks into how the legend adapted to the dynamics of TV serial in the twenty first century.

5.6. Television and Viewing Practices

Before moving to the analysis of the serial version of the legend, it is necessary to brief the television scenario in India and the new viewing practices brought about by it. Television made its appearance in its experimental forms in the United States and Europe in the 1920s. However, it made its advent to India in 1959 when the government purchased the transmitter from Philips Company on concessional rates. With UNESCO's grant and US' provision of some television sets, the first television service, on an experimental basis began on September 15, 1959. Initially, television was not regarded as a medium for entertainment. It laid emphasis on educational aspects and 66 tele clubs were established for community viewing. All India Radio (AIR), along with Education Department of Delhi Administration started broadcasting specially designed educational programmes for students and teachers.

Owing to the lack of resources, the expansion of television stations in India was a gradual phenomenon. The second television station in India was established in Bombay in 1972, followed by Srinagar, Amritsar and Pune in 1973 and Calcutta, Madras and Lucknow on 1975. The year 1975 witnessed a big step in the history of television in India when she embarked on the Satellite Instructional Television Experiment that brought television sets to Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Orissa (Kasbekar 146). In 1976, the authority of broadcasting programmes on television was shifted from All India Radio (AIR) to an organisation called Doordarshan, controlled by the government of India. When the Prime Minister Indira Gandhi came into power for the second time from 1980-1984, she recognised the power of a television in image building and made efforts to use it as a political tool. The transition from black and white TV set to colour television and the broadcasting of National programme aired from the national capital to the entire nation every evening were phenomenal changes that came into effect during this period. The live telecast of Asian Games from New Delhi in 1982 was a milestone in the Indian television history. Moreover, in the

government's attempts towards the expansion of television, it expanded the network to serve at least fifty percent of the population in India by 1984. The television era in Kerala that began with the onset of Doordarshan was launched by the then chief Minister K Karunakaran in 1985. With the phenomenal growth of the new urban middle class in towns and cities, personal television sets began to outnumber the community television sets. This class who began to experience the new luxuries such as car, refrigerator and so on began to favour entertainment over education (149). This demand for entertainment pressurised Doordarshan to broadcast entertainment programmes besides the education, health, and literary ones. Initially it relied on the importation of foreign serials¹⁸ such as *I Love Lucy*, but later they were restricted on the grounds of high cost and the fear of the cultural elites that they would destroy the Indian cultural values (150). It called for the creation of indigenous serials and the first experiment in this direction was *Hum Log* (We, the People) in 1984. It revolved around the everyday life, tensions and conflicts of a joint family and enjoyed wide viewership. The success of *Hum Log* led to the commercialisation of television in India. It led to the creation of further indigenous serials and by 1987 Doordarshan telecast around forty TV serials (151). The success of these serials led to the creation of new experimental genres like mythology. The epics, *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* were telecast in Doordarshan in the following years and they enjoyed an unprecedented success. While *Ramayana* serial had 78 episodes and was telecast on Doordarshan from the year 1987 to 1988, *Mahabharata* had 93 episodes and was telecast from the year 1988 to 1990. *Mahabharata* was more popular and commercially successful than *Ramayana*.

Since 1991, there have been revolutionary transformations in the television history of India. In this phase, the government of India granted permission to the private satellite channels

¹⁸ A television serial is a genre that “creates a sustained narrative world populated by a consistent set of characters who experience a chain of events over time” (Mittel 10).

and opened new avenues for the viewers. “While the live coverage of gulf war by CNN led to a revolution in broadcast journalism, the launch of Star TV in 1991 resulted in the spread of satellite television in Indian cities and towns” (Rani 10-11). The emergence of these new satellite channels marked the golden period of television in India. The private cable television channels soon spread to cities, towns and even rural areas and television became a highly popular medium. According to the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting:

...in 1995 India had 40 million television households and 250 million television viewers. The position had changed dramatically since then. In 2003, the television ownership had grown to 86 million of the 202 million homes, i.e., 42 percent set penetration. (qtd. in Rasool 13)

With the emergence of television, the viewing context and visual experience underwent tremendous changes. Just like cinema, television also has unique and specific features of its own and offers a viewing experience different from that of a cinema in an exhibition hall. C.S Venkiteswaran notes that it is not just the size of the screen that gets reduced, but the contours of the viewing experience also shrinks to the corner of the home. In this way, it loses the ‘publicness’ of a cinema exhibition. When it moves from a public space to a private space, it loses its common character. Being a public space, theatre calls for a heterogeneous audience. People from all walks of life irrespective of their class, gender, caste, and religion assemble in a cinema hall freely and form a heterogeneous group (Venkiteswaran 97). Scholars such as Shaji Jacob hold the view that cinema halls act as a public sphere (Johny 51). Venkiteswaran states that however, one of the unique aspects of the audience of a television is their homogeneity. Such homogenous audience mostly constitute families or groups of friends. While a cinema screen confronts a heterogeneous and ‘short-term’ audience, the television screen confronts a homogenous and continuing audience. While the cinema theatre targets a crowd, a television targets individuals (97).

Annie Friedberg also sheds light on some of the principles of television spectatorship. The spectatorship of a cinema relies on a dark room with projected luminous images whereas television is a light source instead of a projection and does not need a dark room. Secondly, while the former depends on the immobility of the spectator in a cinema hall, the latter allows the mobility of the spectator and gives scope for multiple parallel activities such as child care, chopping vegetables and so on. As the spectatorship of cinema relies on a fixed gaze, television allows for a distracted gaze and one can engage in other activities as well (Friedberg 174-175). Television also shares some of the aspects which have been discussed in relation to the new media audience. It also allows for the shift from “mass spectator to individual participant”, from unwilling participant to “willing consumer” and with the remote in hand, from passive viewer to active controller of what she or he wants to see (Johnston 3). Another unique feature in relation to television and audience is “its capacity to serve the function of cinema, theatre, newspapers, sports arena and concert hall all rolled into one” (Karthika 1322). Thus a television offers a wide range of choices to its consumers. In another study, Venkiteswaran talks about a new ‘brand conscious’ community in the age of globalisation. Whatever reaches in front of them becomes a commodity that comes in front of a consumer—one could either accept or reject it. In this way the television provides more entertainment choices for its consumers. Moreover, it has more power to unify its audience than a cinema as people belonging to a place watch the same programme at the same time (Venkiteswaran 112).

According to Venkiteswaran, a movie screening in a cinema hall offers an uninterrupted spectacle whereas a television relies on a continuous flow of diverse materials and keeps on interrupting its audience. Its screen itself is crowded with advertisement logos, news scrolls, channel logo and other statistical figures. Moreover it is so dynamic and constantly engages with our present. Its live telecasts break the temporal and spatial boundaries and mirror its contemporary age. However, cinema captures and ‘mummifies’ its respective time period. It is

the reason why black and white films could be enjoyed in its nostalgic mode. However television does not succumb to such nostalgia and keeps on contemporising its visuals (99-100). Moreover, as the television has a fixed broadcasting schedule, people adjust their daily life activities in accordance with the timings of their favourite programs. In this way, television structures the lives of the viewers and becomes an important part of their lives.

Television that is mostly kept in the living rooms of the houses had a social function. It brought the families together in the evening, thereby allowing them to spend more time together watching, commenting and discussing their favourite programmes. With the emergence of television, middle class families and women in general abandoned the cinema halls and preferred their favourite programs. While programs related to sports and news catered to the male audience, studies on gender and television illustrated the ways in which “an increasingly commodified televisual culture targets housewives and middle-class domesticity through talk shows, serials, and advertising” (Lukose 50). Thus the comfort and convenience of home, a wide range of choices, the flexibility of time, multi-tasking and so on offered by television posed a serious competitive threat to film industry in India since the 1990s. The emergence of cable television and VHS (Video Home System) to DVD in 1993 and 1995 that made movie-watching very flexible and convenient also contributed to the decline in viewership of movies in theatres. As the expansion of television networks in Kerala was gradual, it experienced these changes around the late 1990s. However, gradually the film industry entered into a symbiotic relationship with satellite television channels. They opened up new revenues for filmmakers to promote and market their films and acted as new sources of revenue by paying large sums for the telecast rights of their movies (Ganti 256). Today the television industry has registered an explosive growth and is one of the major mass media of India. The following statistics illustrates the massive expansion and penetration of television into the lives of the Indians:

India has 183 million television households and more than 100 million household have pay television. Viewing households increased by 3.17 in 2017. According to TRAI's 2017-2018 report, Indian television industry is growing with 12.24 percent. Indian television industry's total revenue in 2018 was Rs 734 billions, it is estimated that it will reach to 862 billions in 2020. (Singh 131)

With the emergence of digitisation of television, the TV viewing practices underwent great changes. As television has a specific broadcasting schedule set for its content, it has a rigid character. As Simons states, such broadcasting schedules determine when (time), what (content) and where (place) to watch. However, with the emergence of digitisation, "the interrelationship between these three dimensions disappears" (Simons 219). As television could be consumed on laptops, mobile phones and other portable devices, the viewers could easily choose the time, content and place to watch. Thus the alternative platforms for viewing television content offer more flexibility and affect the viewing patterns of the viewers. The active viewer gains control over the television content. Thus the emergence of OTT (over-the-top) streaming services challenges the specific characteristics of television and paves the way for new viewing habits.

5.7. *Kadamattathu Kathanar* on the Small Screen

The previous section discussed the television scenario in India and how it infiltrated into the lives of the Indians and affected their ways of living. It has also touched upon the spectatorship and the nature of experience of television. The present section deals with the ways in which the legend adapted to the genre of television serials or soap operas. In 2004, *Kadamattathu Kathanar* appeared on Asianet, the second private channel in South India. The previous section talked about the emergence of TV serials in Hindi in the 1980s. In his study on serials, Shaju discusses the emergence of soap operas in Malayalam. As the Hindi serials largely catered to the North Indian audiences, they could not resonate well with the audiences

of other regions. Thus, TV serials were soon replicated in regional languages in India. Even though they conformed to the general format of Hindi serials, the setting, themes and characters were contextualised in accordance with the region. Just like the Malayalam movies relied on adaptations of literary works in the beginning, Malayalam TV serial also depended upon adaptations in its formative stage. Doordarshan was the first channel to telecast Malayalam TV serials and the first among them was *Vaitharani* that was aired on weekly basis from 1986 to 1988. It was an adaptation of a radio play by the renowned playwright T.N Gopinathan Nair. The serials in the beginning were telecast only on a weekly basis and had a few episodes. Other serials like *Rohini* by Rajasekharan and *Varam* by G.S Vijayan in the same year received warm reception from the audience. Doordarshan always followed the 13-episode format for its serials for a long time as it covered thirteen weeks that constitute quarter of a year. Unlike the present-day serials that portray the luxuries and aspirations of the middle class, the serials in the early days portrayed down to earth life of their characters. With the arrival of private channels such as Asianet and Surya TV in 1993 and 1998 respectively, the Malayalam TV serials attained a new face. They drew family audiences especially women in such a way that these Malayali audiences were glued to their TV screens in the evenings to watch their favourite serials. In the beginning, Asianet followed the pattern of Doordarshan and telecast serials on a weekly basis. However, later it switched to the Monday to Friday format for serials and extended their episodes which in turn gave birth to the genre called mega serials. *Sthree*, directed by Shyam Sunder in 1998 was the first mega serial in Malayalam that set a landmark in the history of Malayalam TV serials. It enjoyed great viewership and became a trendsetter in the field of Malayalam serials (P.P 18-20). Another serial that won excellent viewership across the state was *Jwalayayi* produced by superstar Mammooty in 2000.

Like Hindi serials, Malayalam serials also revolved around the melodramatic and sentimental contents and still continue to do so. Family occupied a central space in the popular

Malayalam serials until the present. Christina Mary Georgy's study on Malayalam serials touches upon the common themes that they deal with: "a) conflict between mothers-in-law and their daughters-in-law; b) the quest for the illegitimate child; c) extra-marital relationships and many more" (Georgy 136). This trend continued to dominate the Malayalam serials for a long time. Just like the movies repeat the trends and conventions, the serials also mimic the successful patterns.

However, Shajiyem's horror serial *Nizhalukal* aired on Asianet set off a new trend in the year 2000. Even though it was a huge success, fear invaded the domestic spaces and many viewers stopped watching such serials. . However, this trend did not last for a long time, the serials returned to their usual melodramatic and sentimental themes. The vice president of the Asianet programmes, Sreekantan Nair explained the sudden death of the Malayalam horror serials despite their success. He said "Kids started losing their sleep. Naturally the parents started distancing themselves from the horror serials... The reason was that those serials started getting more and more violent. The young and the old started having nightmares regularly" (Horror makes primetime). The poor quality of the horror serials also contributed to the decline in viewership. After a gap of two years, Asianet came up with another experiment with horror serial entitled *Kadamattathu Kathanar* in 2004. It was not completely horror as it also dealt with fascinating elements such as fantasy and magic. It turned out to be the top grossing horror serial during its time. At the same time Surya TV aired another horror serial titled *Ayilyam Kavu* to counter the supernatural/horror serial *Kadamattathu Kathanar*. During that time, Asianet and Surya TV were the major channels that dealt with serials and because of the huge success of their serials, they devoted their prime time to serials. These two horror serials were also aired at their prime time. Even though *Ayilyam Kavu* could not make a big hit, *Kadamattathu Kathanar* received excellent viewership and was one of the top serials on the

TRP chart. Owing to its huge success, it was aired again on Asianet Plus and Hotstar (OTT platform) in 2016.

5.8. Analysis of *Kadamattathu Kathanar*

The serial version of *Kadamattathu Kathanar* was first aired by Asianet from 2004-2005. However, similar serial versions starring the same actor, Prakash Paul were telecast by Jaihind TV and Surya TV in 2008 and 2011 respectively. The present study looks into the first serial version of the legend telecast by Asianet. The serial was scripted by T.S Suresh Babu and directed by T.S Saji. It drew the attention of large number of family audiences and played a crucial role in constructing *Kadamattathu Kathanar* as a popular hero. However, owing to the vastness of the area, the analysis will look into those aspects which are relevant to the study. The serial version is currently available on the OTT platform Hotstar in six seasons. The six seasons unfolds into 21 episodes, 22 episodes, 23 episodes, 28 episodes, 36 episodes and 125 episodes respectively.

The serial *Kadamattathu Kathanar* is entirely different from the earlier representations of Kathanar. Although it mentions certain plot elements and characters such as *pathalam* (underground), Mar Abo, underground king's daughter, and so on that are found in other versions at some points, it does not portray or engage with those elements directly. While the film and theatre version have employed only a few sub-plots, the serial version has employed multiple characters, plots and sub-plots that stretches to six seasons. The first season centres on the story of Vamanam Tharavadu¹⁹, which is haunted by a perilous *Yakshi*. The second season revolves around the evil sorcerer, Chadayan who kidnaps young girls with the help of his assistant Durgamma to perform virgin sacrifice. The third season deals with the evil spirit that haunts the family members of Kumkumathu Kolothu. The fourth season centres on three

¹⁹ It refers to ancestral home.

plots: the first one deals with the attack of the evil force, *Odiyan*²⁰ on the villagers; the second one deals with the evil spirit that haunts the members of the Vadakkan Veedu (house); and the third one deals with the lives of the fishermen community in Chambakkara. The fifth season also revolves around three plots: the first plot deals with the tensions and conflicts of an Anglo-Indian family that stays at a haunted bungalow. The second plot deals with the story of Mariamma and her daughters who are haunted by two evil spirits. The third plot deals with a demon that kills the people of a village. The sixth season is the biggest season that employs plenty of plots and sub-plots. It connects the serial as a whole as characters from other seasons reappear in it. The first plot deals with the reappearance of the deadly spirits in other episodes. The second plot deals with the story of Ilayidom Kottaram (palace). The third plot deals with the story of Kunnathu Tharavadu whereas the fourth plot deals with the fourth plots deals with the life of Krishnan and his family. The fifth plot deals with the Thrippangottu Illam that is haunted by two evil spirits and the sixth plot centres on the evil presence in Chandanamangalam family. The seventh plot deals with two inter-related plots- the evil presence that haunts Nambiar's family and the abduction of the blessed girl, Kathamabari by evil forces. The last plot deals with the arrival of the human personification of Lucifer to destroy the world. Even though the serial employs multiple plots and sub-plots that exist independently, the character, Kadamattathu Kathanar is the connecting thread that binds all these plots and unifies the serial as a whole. As the legend adapted to the genre of the soap opera, it turned into an open-ended narrative that resists closure. According to Albert Moran, a soap opera "works with a continuous open narrative. Each episode ends with a promise that the story line is to be continued in another episode" (qtd.in Georgy 135). This is true in case of the serial under study

²⁰ A sorcerer from lower castes practising witchcraft who has the powers to take any form he desires. He usually takes the form of a bull and gives an illusionary effect to his victim at night. When the victim approaches odiyan, he kills him or her instantly. Odiyan usually targets the women during their pregnancy because he gets the illusionary power from the amniotic fluid of an unborn human foetus.

as even the last episode of a season does not have a closure; it begins the next plot in the second half of the last episode and provides a link for the second season.

Unlike print, cinema or theatrical representations of the legend, the serial version stretches a scene as long as possible in order to make it run for a long period and make the maximum profit. For instance, in season six, when Kathanar crosses the river with the children on a boat, the scene is dragged till the boat reaches the other side of the river (“A Scholar Challenges the King” 03:02- 05: 53). Similarly the ritual ceremonies performed by the sorcerers in all the seasons are also prolonged as much as possible. Moreover, the first few minutes of an episode presents the recap of the previous episode. The serial also makes use of a reservoir of templates that include repeated motifs, patterns, plot elements, character types and sets in all seasons. Moon, snake, blood, heavy wind, fire and so on are some of the repeated evil motifs used throughout the serial. In most of the plots, people approach Hindu sorcerers first and when they fail to battle the evil forces, Kathanar is called for help. Mepradan Potti and Madavana in season one; Keezhettu Thirumeni and Kulamana Madathil Potti in season three; Brahmasri Killimangalam in season four; Nathan in season five; and Kavilpuram , Agnisarman, and the reappearance of Madavana and Killimangalam in season six are the repeated character types in the serial. The blood-sucking *Yakshi*, spirit possession, attack of the demons, evil sorcery and so on are some of the recurring themes in all the seasons. Even though these repeated themes are deployed in all the seasons, they are presented in a whole new environment in each plot. For example, in season four, the spirit possesses the child, Kunjava who belongs to a Hindu Brahmin family, Vadakkan *Veedu* (“Kathanar Meets the Kids” 12:05- 18.02) whereas in season five, the spirit possesses the child, Allen who belongs to an Anglo-Indian family (“Allen Befriends the Talking Doll” 08:21- 22:26). Other media such as print, film and drama appears as a complete piece of material in front of the audience. However, the TV serial, especially the mega-serial can keep on adding new plots and sub-plots one after the other if it

becomes a hit on the TRP charts. For instance, the first mega-serial in Malayalam *Sthree* (woman) aired on Asianet was initially intended to conclude with 260 episodes. However, as it topped the TRP charts, its makers kept on adding the sub-plots and stretched it to 390 episodes (Usha 14).

The leading character of Kadamattathu Kathanar was played by the actor Prakash Paul. Even though he had shown his face in a few serials before, he was not a familiar face for most of the Malayali television audience. However, with his unique style, height, appearance, peculiar way of walking, costume, hat, and magic stick, he won the hearts of the audience very soon. They accepted him as Kadamattathu Kathanar and acknowledged that he was well-suited to that role. Gradually, the character of Kathanar overpowered the actor Prakash Paul. In an interview, the actor said that he is still addressed as Kathanar by the people. Most of them did not know his real name. Even if he corrected them while they talked to him over phone, they repeated the same mistake in the end. Thus he realised that he had become one of the characters that remained in the minds of the viewers even after years (“Praksh Paul on Kadamattathu Kathanar”). Television as a medium has also played a key role in the close identification of Prakash Paul with the role of Kathanar. Robert Kubey observes that it is because of the “regularity and familiarity—the everydayness--of television and the way we watch in the intimate confines of our homes and bedrooms” (308). Due to this familiarity, the viewers tend to forget the fact that the performer of Kathanar is an actor. However, one disadvantage of such regularity, familiarity and the manner of watching television is that the actor will be subjected to typecasting, which in turn limits the career options of an actor. Prakash Paul was typecast as Kathanar and he was called to play the role of Kathanar in two other serialised versions of the legend aired on Surya TV and Jaihind channel in the following years.

With the addition of so many sub-plots in the serial version of the legend, the character of Kathanar acquired new traits and dimensions. This is also one of the reasons behind the

reverence and immense popular appeal of the character in the serial version. Unlike other representations, Kathanar in the serial engages in the everyday lives of the people and proves to be more friendly, democratic and down to earth. He not only fights the evil forces and protects the villages from falling prey to the clutches of the villains, but also resolves the conflicts and issues faced by families and individuals. Kathanar's diverse levels of engagements in the serial are worth interrogation. In many instances, he acts as a saviour of a large community. For instance, Kathanar saves the village from the clutches of the evil sorcerer Chadayan in season two. He saves the village from the attack of *Odiyan* and resolves the problems of the fishermen community of the Chambakkara beach in season four. In season six he saves the village from falling prey to Satan. Similarly, when other sorcerers fail to ward off evil spirits in families, he appears as a powerful sorcerer and binds the evil forces. In this way, he resolves the issues of families such as Vamanam, Kunkumathu, Vadakkan Veedu, Nandanam, Chandanamangalam, and so on (*Kadamattathu Kathanar*). He also lends a helping hand to individuals whenever they need help and acts as a divine figure with his miraculous acts. For instance, he saves drowning Muhammed from the sea ("Thamburan, Chandravathy Feel Wary" 04:57-10:17) and gives life to Ipe who was bitten by a snake ("Kathanar saves Ipe" 05:25-11:00). In all other media representations of the legend, Kathanar helps people whenever he is approached by them. But in the serial version, Kathanar not only helps people when they approach him, but also walks into the scene even if he is uninvited. For example, when there is a fight between the people in the Chambakkara beach, he walks into the local fight and resolves the issue ("Kathanar Counsels Kora" 00:43-14:15). In such cases, he also acts a mediator. He also visits the homes of his villagers frequently and enquire about their well-being. He also extends his help if they face any difficulty. When Eli chedathy struggles to run the family and look after her three daughters after her husband's death, Kathanar arranges Ipe

to find a suitable guy for her eldest daughter (“Eli Chedathi is in Distress” 09:05-12:44) and sends them vegetables (“Saramma to Kill Ritamma” 09:45-11:37).

Kathanar is also a hero who not only helps out the needy, but also punishes the wrongdoers. In season one, when Ammu mocks at Panchali and warns that if she talks like a parrot, she would cry like a crow. Panchali feels sad about her remark. However, in the next moment, Ammu starts crying like a crow. Later, she apologises to Kathanar and gets back her voice (“Ammu Apologises to Kathanar” 06:32-17:18). Similarly, when a group of men who are engaged in bathing an elephant pass sexist remarks on Panchali, Kathanar looks into the elephant’s eyes and makes it turn violent. In the end, they apologise to Kathanar and he calms down the elephant (“Ammu Apologises to Kathanar” 00:07- 17:40). Similarly, in season four, when the thief Kochappi threatens Kathanar and asks him to leave the place and run, he himself runs towards the sea. After apologising to Kathanar, he is able to control his body (“Kathanar’s Magical Powers” 03:30- 08:15). In season six, Kathanar turns a man blind as he kidnaps small children and take out their eyes for using them for beggary (“Paru Gets Kidnapped” 01:42- 08:42). However, Kathanar’s magical acts are based on his own sense of right and wrong. Lakshmikutty and Ipe are constructed as good-hearted characters who always remain loyal to Kathanar. When both of them are bitten by snake and die at two different points, Kathanar gives back their lives (“Kathanar saves Ipe” 05:25-11:00; “Lakshmi is bitten by a Serpent” 03:20-18:44). However, when one of the men of Potti tries to trick Kathanar and creates a scene of mock snake bite, he dies accidentally. Even after his friends plead with him to help them, Kathanar tells them that he is helpless (“Potti Plots Against Kathanar” 05:30-18:20). Similarly, Kathanar cures the illness of Krishnan’s wife and daughter and makes the burn marks disappear from *Odiyan*’s body in no time (“Odiyan Narrates His Ordeal” 16:40-17:50). However, when the ailing Achu who used to torture his mother frequently comes back and apologises to his mother, Kathanar does not cure his illness. He tells him that he would recover from his illness

with the love and care of his mother (“Kathanar’s Warning” 06:00-11.30). It is understood that Kathanar has his own sense of justice and uses his magical capabilities for noble causes only. Thus even though Kathanar has magical and miraculous capabilities, the manner in which he uses them is completely his choice.

Kathanar is also a hero who fights against the injustices in the society. In season one, when Kathanar finds a group of upper caste women not allowing the lower caste women to use the common well, he instructs them not to practise untouchability. However, as they do not listen to his words, he makes the well disappear from the place (“Kathanar’s Magical Powers” 10:03-13:17). Similarly when a teacher refuses to teach Krishnan’s kids on the grounds of their caste and class, Kathanar punishes him and he loses his ability to speak (“Neelakandan’s Accident” 03:45-08:00). In both cases, Kathanar forgives them only after they apologise to him and correct their attitude. He also punishes Kora for beating Pathrose badly for questioning his exploitation of the poor (“Kathanar Counsels Kora” 00:43-14:15). In another case, he punishes the money lender Ananatharaman for squeezing the money out of the poor (“Kathanar Impresses the Villagers” 10:15-17:40). As both of them feel guilty about their acts, Kathanar asks them to give all the profit they earned through corrupt means to the poor and the needy. In such instances the character of Kathanar attains a socialist tone.

Kathanar also protects the weak and the misfortunate and fights against the problems of common man. When Kuttiyamma’s son beats her and snatches her gold chain in front of the villagers, Kathanar stops him and takes Kuttiyamma to his home. He provides her good food and shelter and guards her with love and care that she does not want to leave his place (“Kathanar’s Warning” 06:00-11.30). Similarly when Raman loses all of his family members, Kathanar brings him home and takes care of him (“Raman to Live with Kathanar” 01:32-02:31). Moreover, in the absence or death of the man in the family, Kathanar takes charge and fulfils the responsibilities. Mariamma saves every penny of her hard work for the marriage of her

daughter. When a guy and his family come to see her daughter, Kathanar takes up the role of the eldest member in the family and discusses the matters (“Luka Abducts Kochuthresia” 08:08-12:28). Similarly, in the absence of Lakshmikutty’s father, Kathanar acts as a fatherly figure for her and visits her frequently throughout the episodes of season two. He also guards her from the evil powers such as Chadayan and Durgamma (“Kathanar Rescues Lakshmi” 00:00-03:50). As mentioned earlier, he arranges Ipe to find a suitable guy for Mariamma’s eldest daughter too. These instances points to the fact that Kathanar in the serial not only fights the evil powers, but also handles the real world issues and social responsibilities.

The Kathanar in the serial version is also fond of children. A major part of season two features the friendship between Kathanar and Lakshmikutty. They frequently visit each other and exchange food items. As Lakshmikutty’s father is missing, Kathanar is portrayed as a fatherly figure for her. Kathanar becomes highly emotional and cries when Lakshmikutty dies after being bitten by a snake. However, later he makes the snake take back its venom from her body and saves her life (“Lakshmi is bitten by a Serpent” 03:20-18:50). Kathanar also makes friends with the children of Vadakkan Veedu and gives snacks and sweets to them frequently through his magic in season four. In season five, Aleena becomes greatly fond of Kathanar. In season six, an entire episode is devoted to Kathanar and his group of children engaging in a debate with a scholar who challenged Keetillakara landlord. In the end, when he makes up his mind to leave Kadamattom, the villagers request him not to leave them. However, it is when the children plead to him, his heart melts and changes his decision. It makes him a kids-friendly hero and appeals to children who form a considerable section of the family audience.

The long running serial also provided scope for the viewers to explore the character of Kathanar at a personal level. The viewers know that Kathanar spends his leisure time for reading and gardening. When it comes to food, he prefers beef over vegetarian dishes. Whenever he has to eat vegetarian dishes for a long time, he complains to Manga about it (“Eli

Chedathy in Danger?” 17:04-18:30). Through the entire season, viewers also learn that the hat and magic stick are the inevitable belongings of Kathanar. Even if he has to walk hundreds of kilometres to resolve an issue, he is ready to do it without any uneasiness. One will also come to know that his greatest weakness is children. He plays with them; gives snacks and sweets to them; and makes balls for them (*Kadamattathu Kathanar*). In season six, when the evil sorcerer Rougandharayanan creates an earthquake to kill Kathanar, he falls and suffers from deep head injury. However, he does not use his magical powers to save himself. There he is a dying ordinary man who lays unconscious on the ground. He is found by Malu accidentally and she informs it to her uncle Sravanan. He is in a critical condition and Sravanan and Malu takes care of him for several days (“Raugandharayanan’s Trap” 00:15- 15:07). Moreover, in the end of the last season, when the villagers throw stones at him and ask him to leave the place, he is in deep pain just like any other normal human being. He does not use his magical capabilities against them. He decides to leave the place without any complaint (“Lucifer Misleads the Villagers” 09:50- 12:49). Thus when the audience gets to know the character of Kathanar very closely, it makes them so emotionally and sentimentally bound to him.

At times, Kathanar endows the common people with supernatural powers and make them win their opponents. In season three, when Madhavakuruppu loses to Bhanu in gambling and he is imprisoned by her, his wife and daughter Paru begs her to set him free. However, Bhanu challenges Paru to gamble and win over her. Kathanar gives complete support to Paru to participate in the game. When the confused Paru starts playing, he endows her with magical powers and she wins the game (“Bhanu’s Evil Plan” 00:00-06:15). Similarly Kochukunju is in deep love with Pennamma. However, her father, a famous wrestler in the village, puts forth a condition that he should beat him in wrestling. Kochukunju, being very thin and fragile loses his confidence and feels that he will not get Pennamma in his life. However, Kathanar asks him to participate in the match. As the match starts Kathanar infuses his magical powers in him and

helps him win the match (“Black Magician at Work” 03:47- 15:07). Similarly when Manga is tortured by a gang of robbers, he gives her superpower and she beats and overpowers all of them (“The Boy who Saves Mariamma” 00:00- 09:50). Thus Kathanar also helps the average people to enjoy heroic moments in their lives. The triumphs of the ordinary people with the help of Kathanar makes him a more audience-friendly character.

It is also interesting to note that at certain points, the figure of Jesus is transposed into the character of Kathanar. One such example is Kathanar walking upon the sea and saving the drowning Achankunju. It reminds one of the biblical story of Jesus walking upon the sea of Galile and saving the drowning Peter (“Achankunju Gets Drowned” 17:00-20:08). In another instance, just like Jesus was beaten and whipped by his enemies, Kathanar is whipped by the evil powers and he almost dies. However, a divine angel is sent by God and he comes back to life (“Kathanar is Saved By an Angel” 02:30-05:04). In the last season, he also dreams of carrying the cross and being whipped and beaten by his enemies indicative of the suffering of the Christ. Kathanar feels an intuition that it is time to start a new journey and the road will be full of thorns and obstacles. It is during this journey he falls down and meets with an injury (“Raugandharayanan’s Trap” 00:15- 15:07). Moreover the villain he encounters in the last part of season six is none other than the Satan, Lucifer. According to the Biblical story, when the angel, Lucifer learns from God about his plan of the creation of man in both the “image and likeness of God”, he feels that man would rise above all the angels and rules the creation with God. Hence he rebels against God and tries to persuade other angels to rebel with him by sowing the doubts of doubt and destruction among them. (Peros ch.5). In the same manner, Lucifer makes his entry in the last part of season six and teams up with other evil spirits and sows the seeds of doubt and destruction in the minds of the villagers that they turn against Kathanar (“Lucifer Misleads the Villagers” 09:50- 12:49). Furthermore, in the same season, when he goes to ward off the spirit from Vasudevan’s family, he realises that the spirit is so

powerful that he may have to even sacrifice his life. He kills the demon with his own blood and dies. However, this time also he gets divine help and gets back his life. His further statement that the Lord retrieved his people, giving his own blood makes his act symbolic to the life of Christ (“Kathanar Visits Appu”). Thus Kathanar is portrayed as a Christ figure who is ready to sacrifice his life for the entire humanity. The fact that he uses his magical powers for the benefit of mankind and not for his own advantage makes him a more venerable personality. The transposition of Jesus into the character of Kathanar is also a marketing strategy of the serial to appeal to the Christian audience.

However, it is interesting to note that in the last season, all the deadly evil forces destroyed by Kathanar unite and return to destroy Kathanar. At this point, the serial brings a new accent in the portrayal of Kathanar. He transforms into an action hero. The evil sorcerers Chadayan and Vettiayala beats him to death. But as he comes back to life with the help of a God sent angel, he takes a big wooden rod and beats Vettiayala and Chadayan and destroy them (“Kathanar Hits Vezhala Guru” 00:00-15:30). Although it is not expected from a Christian priest, such popular action hero elements of the times are also observed in the serial version of the legend. A similar kind of narrative pattern could be observed in the American superhero movies such as *Batman* series. It employs the idea of multiple villains who have been destroyed by Batman team up to fight against Batman in the further series. For example, in *Batman: The Movie* (1966), Batman encounters four villains- the Penguin, the Joker, Catwoman and the Riddler. In *Batman* (1989), the Joker appears again and in *Batman Returns* (1992), the Penguin and Catwoman join hands to fight against Batman. Moreover, the Penguin makes plans to kidnap and murder all the first born children of Gotham due to his childhood abandonment (Hines). The villains destroyed by Kathanar such as Chadayan, Durgamma and Neeli in *Kadamattathu Kathanar* also team with other sorcerers like Vettiayala and Lucifer in the final season and make their reappearances in the further seasons. Moreover Chadayan teams with

Durgamma and plans to kidnap all the eighteen years old virgin girls of the village who are born in twenty seven star signs in Malayalam in order to do human sacrifice for his deity (“Chadayan’s Evil Plans” 13:58-18:00). Even though *Batman* series and *Kadamattathu Kathanar* do not have direct connections in terms of the plot or context, popular heroic elements and narrative patterns of the times can influence in the translation of other heroic stories. In the earlier versions of *Kadamattathu Kathanar*, Kathanar had to fight with only one enemy at a time. However, in the serial version, Kathanar has to deal with multiple villainous evil characters at a time. Analysing these changing narrative patterns, one could infer that the villainous scheme of multiple enemies teaming up to fight against the hero became an acceptable factor in Malayalam through the narrative patterns popularised by Hollywood comics and movies such as *Batman*. Moreover, in the same season, Neeli and Kathanar encounter is presented in a highly adventurous manner as he flies in the air to chase Neeli (“Neeli Attacks Panchali” 02:30-10:45). This particular concept also reminds one of the two super hit serials *Jai Hanuman* featuring the Hindu deity Hanuman, aired on DD Metro from 1997-2000 and *Shaktimaan* featuring an Indian superhero from 1997-2004. The flying Hanuman in the similar manner (The Pure Knowledge 00:00-01:38) was greatly admired by children and they used to imitate his flying style²¹. Shaktimaan’s flight was also drew great attention of the viewers. In *Kadamattathu Kathanar*, Kathanar fights against his own fake persona created by the evil powers. In the same manner, Shaktimaan fights with the similar looking villainous Shaktimaan in the episode one hundred and seven (Ultra Bollywood 00:00-17:34). In the last season, when Kathanar chases Neeli, she flies and kidnaps Panchali on her way (“Neeli Attacks Panchali” 00:00-05:00). In the same manner, when the evil Shaktimaan is chased by the real *Shaktimaan*, he kidnaps the female character Geetha Visvas on his way

²¹ The serial was telecast during the childhood days of the researcher and she remembers the children in her school imitating the flying style of Hanuman.

(00:00-17:34). The female characters are rescued in the end by both the heroes. Thus *Kadamattathu Kathanar* adapts the popular narrative conventions and patterns of other super hit TV serials of the times. The following figures give a glimpse of the flight scene of the three popular heroes of mentioned above:



Fig. 21. A Still from the Flight Scene in *Kadamattathu Kathanar* TV Serial (2004-05)

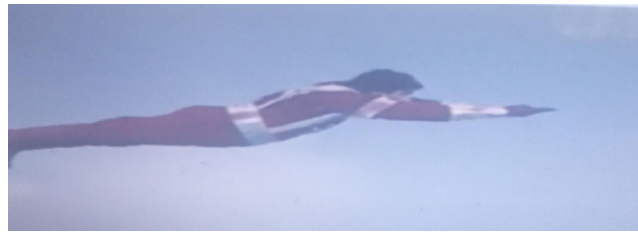


Fig 22. A Still from the Flight Scene in *Shaktimaan* (1997-2004)



Fig.23. A Still from the Flight Scene in *Jai Hanuman* (1997-2007)

One of the significant changes that may be observed in the content of the serial version of the legend is its shift of focus to the domestic sphere. Most of the prime time TV serials target an evening family audience and hence they are mostly family-based dramas that revolve around the tensions and conflicts in a family. *Kadamattathu Kathanar* also deals with diverse plots that centres on families in Vamanam Tharavadu, Kumkumathu Kolothu, Vadakkan Veedu, Kunnathu Tharavadu, Chandanamangalam, Nandanam Tharavadu, Chambakkara

beach, haunted bungalow and many more. The serial does not touch upon or begin with either the childhood of Kathanar or the source of his magical powers. He is already an established holy priest in the village of Kadamattom. All these families face problems caused by evil spirits or any other forces and they approach Kathanar to resolve their issues. Apart from the problems caused by the evil forces, other conflicts between the family members are also added in these plots to fit the legend into the frame of serial formula. As discussed in the general nature of Malayalam TV serials, the three common themes found in the conventional Malayalam serials are: a) conflict between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law; b) extra-marital affair and c) illegitimate child (Georgy 136). *Kadamattathu Kathanar* also incorporate these themes in its various family based plots. For instance, the conflict between Devika thamburatti and Ambika reflects the conflict between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law. Devika taunts Ambika frequently as she is not capable of conceiving a child (“Ambika Finds a Child” 01:15- 06:55); Kulamana Potti’s relation with Bhanu entails the theme of extra-marital affair (“Bhanu and Her Problems” 01:00- 20:00) and the story of Marthandan who is killed by thirumeni’s men for questioning his illegitimate birth touches upon the theme of illegitimacy (“Marthandan Narrates His Story” 00:00- 14:45). The fight between sisters-in-law also surfaces in the plot featuring Satyabhama and Nalini in season six (“Bhargavan is No More” 10:15- 12:10). Thus like the other popular Malayalam serials, *Kadamattathu Kathanar* also presents the stereotypical representation of women, whether it is the role of wife, sister-in-law, or mother-in-law.

Indian TV serials are always known as tear-jerkers (Ranganathan & Usha 75). Plenty of such tear-jerking scenes and melodramatic elements may be observed in the serialised version of the legend. These melodramas focus on various kinds of domestic issues. For instance, when a family passes through a tragic circumstance such as the death of a family member, the mourning scenes and sentimental background music lasts for longer time than that

of cinema. The funeral ceremony of Keshu, Ramu and Madhavi in season one (“The Demon Attacks Achu” 12:30- 15:00), Seetha lamenting the loss of her daughter Lakshmikutty in season two (“Lakshmi is bitten by a Serpent” 03:20-18:50), Ambika crying over her mother-in-law’s harassment in season three (“Ambika Finds a Child” 01:15- 06:55), the family members mourning the death of the kids in the family- Ambotti and Kunjunni- in season four (“The Demon’s Atrocities” 02:20-03:40) , Emily crying over her son Allen’s death in season five (“Allen is Dead” 04:50-07:15) and Mythili’s highly emotionally charged dialogues and tear-jerking sequences related to her lost son in season six (“Jathavedhan Is Enraged” 02:27-04:11) are some of the examples. It is interesting to note that even the legendary hero *Kadamattathu Kathanar* also undergoes such melodramatic sequences in the serial. In season six, the evil forces, Chadayan, Mandana and Vettiyala Vezhala plan to defame Kathanar, they convince Chacko that it was Kathanar who killed his brother Thoma. Enraged Chacko goes with the villagers and showers abusive words on Kathanar and curses him. Hearing this, Kathanar leans against a pillar and weeps. In the following scene, Kunjouseppu emotionally persuades Kathanar to have food in a highly sentimental manner (“Chacko Chettan is Manipulated” 07:440-15:07). The background music, the close shots of Kathanar’s face and the following scenes create a melodramatic atmosphere of a typical Malayalam serial.

When *Kadamattathu Kathanar* made its entry into serial, the representations of gender also underwent huge transformation. In the film and theatre versions of the legend, most of the male characters were dominating and authoritative. Pulimootil Kariya and Udhuppu were the typical patriarchal husbands in the movie and theatre versions of the legend. However, in the serial, the male characters, especially most of the husbands are passive and less dominating. When Devika thamburatti taunts Ambika, she goes to her husband and cries (“Ambika Finds a Child” 01:15- 06:55). Similarly when the father-in-law taunts Bhanumathi, she goes to her husband and cries, complaining about her plight (“Is Appu Possessed?” 15:40-18:33). In both

cases, the husbands are passive listeners and do not do anything to improve their situation. They console their wives and seem to be caring and loving. The tear-jerking female characters such as Mythili, Satyabhama, Mariamma, Eli chedathy and so on suffer all along their lives, but are rewarded in the end for being the epitome of ‘feminine virtues’ such as docility, submissiveness, and self-sacrificing nature (*Kadamattathu Kathanar* 1-6). As the TV serials mostly cater to the women audience, the central protagonists and antagonists are always women. Even though *Kadamattathu Kathanar* is the hero, women characters are given a lot of prominence in many plots in comparison to other male characters. More dialogues and conversations are given to the female characters including the antagonists. In season one, more exchanges happen between the female members of the Brahmin household such as Thatri, Madhavi, Panchali, Janaki and so on. Moreover, instead of one *Yakshi* as represented in other media, the first season features five *Yakshis*—*Yakshi* who misleads Keshu, *Yakshi* in the guise of an old woman, *Yakshi* who drinks the blood of Madhavi, *Yakshi* who appears as boat woman and Neeli. These *Yakshis* come together when they target the sorcerer, Mepradan (“Neeli Kills Mepradu Thirumeni” 05:21-13:50). Similarly, Durgamma is an important evil character in season two. Even though she works for the male evil sorcerer Chadayan, it is she who injects poison in his mind and made him kill his father and imprison his brother for power (“Durgamma Misleads Chadayan” 00:00-20:16). She is portrayed as an epitome of jealousy, evilness, and meanness. Her character is in contradiction to Seetha who is a docile, submissive and self-sacrificing character who fits into the frame of an ideal wife throughout the season two. Season three also gives more importance to the dialogic exchanges between Devika thamburatti and Ambika. Later, when the spirit possesses Ambika, the docile woman turns into the antagonist and attacks her enemies. Season four gives prime importance to the female child Kunjava who is possessed by the spirit. Season five features a family that includes Eli chedathy and her three daughters. This plot that touches upon the theme of how a self-sacrificing mother

who struggles to raise their daughters is also a female centric one. Season six also features several female-centric plots. In the story of Chandanamangalam family, majority of the characters are females and the character that turns into a ghost after spirit possession is also a female character (“Kathanar Versus Gouri’ 00:00-14:58). Another story revolves around the struggles of a family to protect their blessed daughter Kathambari who brings prosperity to their village (“Raugandharayanan’s Plan” 07:00-09:50). Such female protagonists and antagonists also perpetuate certain feminine values through their representations. As the submissive female characters who suffer all along their lives are rewarded in the end, the bold and evil characters are punished by Kathanar in the end. Through the intervention of Kathanar, Mythili gets back her lost son, Seetha’s husband returns and they reunite, Mariamma and daughter gets back their lost gold, Peace in Eli chedathy’s and Bhagirathy Muthassi’s family is restored, Ambika is blessed with a child, and so on happen in the end (*Kadamattathu Kathanar* 1-6). However, Durgamma, Mandana, Devamaji and so on who defy these stereotypes of women are destroyed by Kathanar in the end. In fact, in the serial version of the legend, the evil female characters have more prominence than the male evil characters. The major male evil characters include Chadayan, Vettiyala Vezhala, demons, Rougandharayanan, Theramban, Nagadathan, Odiyan, and Lucifer, while the female evil characters include four *Yakshis*, Neeli, Kalyani, Durgamma, Mandana, Thirumala, and Devamaji. Some of them team up with the male evil sorcerers to attain more power. Even though some of the evil spirits are male, when they enter the body of female characters, evil acts are done by them. Spirits of Marthandan and Manikyan entering the bodies of Ambika and Rosamma in season three and five respectively are examples. Thus when the legend was translated into the framework of the popular Malayalam serials of the time, its thematic content underwent changes in such a way as to cater to its predominant audience. Even so many grandmother characters are introduced

in the serial in order to cater to the women audience of all ages. Thathri, Bhagirathi, Margaret, the grandma in Nambiar's family and so on are examples.

The TV serials also give scope to examine how the contemporary society revisits legends and myths. The serial *Kadamattathu Kathanar* has attempted to construct past in a realistic manner by creating a traditional setting. However, even though it attempts to convey historical authenticity through these elements, it does not recreate a particular historical period as such. Instead it reimagines past in its own ways and tries to stitch together so many traditional elements to create the feeling of antiqueness. In its attempt to reconstruct the past, it uses material conditions that connote the past such as bullock carts, copper vessels, palm leaf manuscripts, palm leaf balls, lamps, traditional costumes such as *mulakacha* and *mundu*, old phrases and terms, traditional settings and many more. However, it adapts history without paying attention to the context. In season six, Kathanar tells Fr Abel that he was adopted by Mar Abo at Kadamattom. According to the Travancore State Manual records, Mar Abo reached Kerala in the eighth century (qtd.in. Ninan 298). At the same time, in season three, Madhava Kuruppu mentions the fight between Cochin Raja and Kozhikode Zamorin to Udaya Varma. However, the rivalry between Calicut Zamorin and Cochin Raja broke out more intensely from the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries (Boland-Crewe & David 144). Again, Kathanar in the serial version appears in the clerical clothing used by Capuchin priests. However, Capuchin priests arrived in Kerala in the seventeenth century ("The Capuchin"). Therefore, tracing the historicity of the serialised *Kadamattathu Kathanar* is a futile act. Such poorly researched script and making of the serials that reimagine the past often leads to plenty of historical inaccuracies. Historical inaccuracies also surface in the portrayal of material conditions of the past. For example, the church shown in episode 18 of season two is a modern one; *Yakshi* wears nail polish in season one, Kathanar wears shoes while all other characters walk barefoot, modern floor tiles can be seen in episode 22 of season three, and so on. While the *Yakshi* in

season one comes in the costume of an *antharjanam*, the *Yakshi* in season six appears in the typical white saree costume popularised by Malayalam films in the twentieth century. Similarly, many of the houses shown in the serial have roof tiles. However, before the nineteenth century, only palaces and temples had the rights to use tiles for roofing (Bhaskaranunni 87). Similarly, until the nineteenth century, Namboothiri²² men used to just wrap a bath towel around their waist when they were at home (62). However, in films and serials, the Namboothiri men are misrepresented as they wear gold chains, so many finger rings, ear rings, long *mundu* and *veshti* and so on. In fact, they were much simpler than how they were represented. Thus it is very obvious that the serial portrays the past in accordance with its imagination and creates a fictional history.

However, while representing the past through the recreation of the material conditions, the serial forgets the fact that the attitudes and values of the past were different from that of the present. The inclusion of the fights between daughter-in-law and mother-in-law in season three, sisters-in-law in season six in the format of the contemporary melodramatic TV serials as mentioned earlier is a good example. Similarly, in season three, Bhanu tells her maid that she was born into a Brahmin family, however, on the charges of adultery, she underwent *smarthavicharam*²³ and was excommunicated (“Bhanu and Her Problems” 01:00- 20:00). In a study based on the role of women in Brahmin community in the 18th and 19th century Travancore, Ginu Geroje states that the excommunicated woman always has an ill fate because she was compelled to seek refuge in the house an *avarna*. They could marry only Mappilas or Ezhavas (George 40). However, in the serial, Bhanu engages in gambling, makes a lot of wealth

²² It refers to the name of a Malayali Brahmin caste.

²³ The term *Smarthavicharam* derives from two words- ‘Smartha’ and ‘Vicharam’. The former refers to the Vedic judge whereas the latter refers to the caste trial. This elaborate ceremony was conducted by *Smarthans* in which the Namboothiri woman and her male adulterers were under trial. If she was found guilty, she and her fellow male adulterer were excommunicated from their community. The last *Smarthavicharam* in Kerala was conducted in 1918.

and Kulamana Potti who belongs to Brahmin caste marries her and takes to his house as his wife. Thus it can be inferred that even though the serial sets its plot in a bygone era, its characters speak and think in the contemporary manner.

The serial also employs popular tales, characters and myths in the serialised version of *Kadamattathu Kathanar*. In season six, a poor character named Krishnan often tells his children and wife about his childhood friendship with Kathanar. However, when they ask him to meet him, he says he is not sure whether Kathanar remembers him. But when his wife and daughter suffer from a deadly disease, he decides to meet Kathanar with a small pack of *aval* (flattened rice) in his hand. Kathanar recognises him and he feels extremely happy. Soon he goes with him and cures his wife's and daughter's illness. This story reminds one of the popular story of Krishna and Kuchela ("Krishnan Visits Kathanar" 05:05-15:08). Similarly, in another plot in season six, Keetillakara landlord calls Kathanar to beat a scholar in a debate session. Kathanar goes with a group of kids and engage in the debate. The entire episode is full of questions and answers and the king wins finally with the help of Kathanar and his team ("Kathanar Defeats the Scholar" 00:00-10:40). Such interesting debate sessions in king's court are also observed in the popular tales such as *Birbal Stories*, *Thenaliraman Stories* and so on. In another plot in the same season, the advisor of the king prophecies the birth of a hero who will be born to King Vairajathan's sister Indrani and her husband Atmavedhan. He orders his men to kill all of them. However, they manage to escape, but lose their baby. In order to save the baby, it is set adrift in a river by the maid before she gets killed. Later he is raised by his surrogate parents. But in the end he unites with his parents and is honoured as the future king. The prophecy of the birth of the child, baby set adrift in the river, surrogate parents raising the child, his reunion with his parents, and receiving honours in the end is a universal pattern found in many stories across the world such as that of *Jesus*, *Moses*, *Oedipus*, *Hercules* and so on. In the work "The Myth of the Birth of the Hero" Otto Rank identifies the same kind of thematic pattern in the classical

mythological hero. The story of Karna in the Indian tradition also bears such plot elements. Karna was born to the Sun God and Kunti. However, as Kunti was a virgin, she set the child adrift on a river in a basket. Later, he turns into a leading warrior in the army of Kauravas (qtd.in Cumming 13). The inclusion of such popular tales and themes in the serial serves three purposes: Firstly, the audience is already familiar with them; secondly, it creates a sense of 'pastness' and thirdly, mimicking a successful pattern is common in films and TV serials as it is already approved by the audience.

Another interesting aspect of the serial version is that it has also incorporated Hindu deities such as Ganapathy, Shiva, Sri Krishna and Murukan along with Kathanar. In season one, when the Hindu sorcerer Madavana returns after meeting Kathanar, the *Yakshi* Neeli tries to attack him on his way. He runs in panic and finds refuge in the statue of Lord Ganapathy nearby. The divine rays set a ring of fire around *Yakshi* and saves Madavana ("Madavana Meets Kathanar" 14:15-18:10). In season two, Sree Krishna saves Lakshmikutty from Chadayan and Durgamma as she is a pious devotee of him. In another instance the temple priest curses Lakshmikutty and then he is not able to open the temple door. Kathanar asks Lakshmi to open them. The villagers are surprised to see the door opening as Lakshmi prays. Later, Thirumeni apologises to Lakshmi and seeks forgiveness from God ("Thirumeni is Guilt-ridden" 00:00-20:36). In season five, Kathanar provides shelter for Manga at his home and allows her to worship Sri Krishna at his place and later he scolds Kunjouseppu for disturbing Manga's prayer and in the season six, Sri Krishna saves Manga from the evil powers ("Lord Krishna Saves Manga" 00'00-02:30). In the same season, Raman takes refuge in Lord Shiva when the evil powers overpower him and he gets his life back ("Raman to Live With Kathanar" 10:00-12:07). In the final episode of the serial, the character Bhattathiri who comes to help Kathanar turns out to be Lord Subrahmanya ("Kathanar Fights Lucifer" 02:12-13:13). Thus in the climax of the serial, Lord Murugan saves Kathanar and takes over the situation. It can be inferred that the

serial also caters to the needs of the Hindu audience who constitute a considerably large section of the TV audience and boosts its commercial prospects. Moreover, it also reflects the vested interests of the production company of the serial. The serial was produced by Sree Subramaniam Enterprises Company owned by Subhramanian Karthikeyan and Subrahmanian Murukan. The company known as Merryland and owned by P Subrahmaniam, was one of the major production companies in the Malayalam film industry in its early days. It was popular for producing mythological films such as *Bakhta Kuchela* (1961), *Sreerama Pattabhishekam* (1962), *Snapaka Yohannan* (1963), *Kumara Sambhavam* (1969), *Sri Guruvayoorappan* (1972), *Swami Ayyappan* (1975), *Sri Murukan* (1977) and so on. After the death of P Subrahmaniam, his sons S. Karthikeyan and S Murukan took over the company and later they ventured into the production of TV serials. Even in this field, they focused mainly on devotional serials such as *Krishna Kripa Sagaram* (2005), *Swami Ayyappan* (2006-2007), *Sri Krishna Leela* (2008), *Devimahathmyam* (2009-2012) and so on. Thus it is obvious that Merryland has been highly popular for the production of mythological films and TV serials. P. Subrahmaniam was a very firm devotee of the deity Murugan or Subrahmanian that even the logo of Merryland displays Murugan and his peacock. Hence, it is no wonder why the serial has integrated Hindu deities and brought Sri Murugan as a saviour of Kathanar in the end. In a way, Merryland was making an announcement of their comeback in the production field. Moreover, it is also a good marketing strategy as it caters to the interests of Hindu as well as Christian audience at the same time.

5.9. Conclusion

Thus *Kadamattathu Kathanar* underwent tremendous changes when it was translated into the format of a popular TV serial. Unlike other media representations of Kathanar, the serial does not focus on the evolution of the character of Kathanar. It does not touch upon his childhood, his life as *semmasan*, the source of his supernatural powers, and his transition from

Paulose Shemmasan to the renowned sorcerer *Kadamattathu Kathanar*. Instead, he is already an established Christian priest with miraculous capabilities in the serial. The serial adds diverse kinds of plots, sub-plots and characters and places Kathanar in these diverse settings. Kathanar acts more of a thread that connects all of these plots. Even though the central focus is not on the growth of the character of Kathanar, serial has played a crucial role in constructing him as a popular hero. The character has attained several other traits and dimensions in the serial version: he is a miracle-working Christian priest, he overpowers the evil spirits and sorcerers, he acts as a saviour of many families and villages, he acts as a mediator whenever there are fights among the villagers, he punishes the wrongdoers, he turns into an action hero at one point, he endows ordinary people with supernatural powers and help them accomplish things in life and many more. In all other representations, the *Yakshi* who is domesticated by Kathanar is *Panayannarkavu Yakshi*. However, in the serial version replaces *Panayannarkavu Yakshi* with another popular *Yakshi* in Kerala, known as Kalliyangattu Neeli. It is one of the reasons why many of the people in Kerala still think that Kathanar tamed Kalliyankattu Neeli. The serial has added many tear-jerking elements in the plots to fit the legend into the format of the Malayalam mega serials of the time. It is interesting that despite the emotional scenes of the women characters, tear-jerking scenes of Kathanar also appear in the serial version. The serial has also incorporated popular tales and myths such as the story of *Krishna and Kuchela*, themes from *Thenali Raman* and Birbal stories, and so on. The inclusion of such familiar tales not only helps to create a feeling of ‘pastness’, but also reproduce the successful pattern of the earlier mythological serials. Even though the serial has attempted to construct a past era, it does not portray any particular historical context. Instead, it reconstructs the material conditions of the past such as bullock carts, palm leaf manuscripts, copper vessels, old buildings and so on to create a feel of antiqueness and ends up in creating a fictional history. Another important aspect is that the serial has also integrated various Hindu deities such as Sri Krishna, Shiva, Murugan

and so on in its plots in order to meet the interests of its production company, Merryland that has been popular for producing Hindu mythological films and serials. Moreover, it also caters to the Hindu audience that form a considerably large section of the television audience. Thus the serial constructed *Kadamattathu Kathanar* in a way that caters to the demands and interests of the television audience. With the addition of so many plots, sub-plots and characters in the serial version, the legend became more and more fragmented.

Chapter 6

Conclusion

6.1. Inferences

The study has examined the transformation undergone by the legend of “Kadamattathu Kathanar” in accordance with its changing socio-cultural environment. The opening chapter put forth the aims, objectives, significance and methodology of the study. The theoretical framework clearly established the fact that translation is a transformative act. The chapter also provided a detailed survey of the definition and concept of a legend and examined the nature of *aithiyam* as envisaged by Kottarathil Sankunni in his work *Aithiyamala*.

The second chapter examined the historical imprints carried by the legend of “Kadamattathu Kathanar” and how it transformed into a modern legend when Kottarathil Sankunni transcribed it in his work *Aithiyamala*. It carried the traces of the indigenous Christian tradition that was prevalent in Kerala before the arrival of the Portuguese missionaries. The *malpanate* system, the notion of a Christian priest practising sorcery and his associations with supernatural beings such as *Yakshi* and *Chathan*, the indigenous style architecture of Kadamattom church modelled on Hindu temples, the artists of the folk art form *padayani* performing the role of Christian priests in temples and so on- all these aspects of the legend pointed to an era when the indigenous Christian tradition was deeply merged with the medieval social ethos of Kerala that was firmly rooted in superstitions, witchcraft, sorcery and so on. It also touched upon the Synod of Diamper held at Udayamperoor in 1599 and the newly imposed rules and regulations brought about by it. The study also shed light on various indigenous elements that are part of the folk belief systems in Kerala such as *Pishachu*, *Pootham*, *Chathan* and *Yakshi*. The study examined the wide range of notions of *Yakshi* represented in the legend such as *Yakshi* as beautiful seductress, *Yakshi* as blood-sucking evil figure, *Yakshi* who is scared of iron, *Yakshi* who can be tamed and domesticated using sorcery,

and *Yakshi*'s association with sacred groves. The study found that these folk notions of *Yakshi* in Kerala also carried the traces of the concept of *Yakshi* in Buddhist and Jain traditions that had existed in Kerala centuries ago. The study also looked at the political imprints carried by the legend such as the rivalry between the Dutch and the King of Cochin in the seventeenth century.

Even though the legend of "Kadamattathu Kathanar" carried the traces of the past, when Kottarathil Sankunni transcribed it in *Aithihamala*, it exhibited some of the traits of colonial modernity. The study touched upon the question of the nation and the folk in the beginning of the twentieth century. The urge to reinvent the past was created by the nationalist and regional consciousness that emerged in India as part of a counterbalance to colonialism. Hence Sankunni's construction of "Kadamattathu Kathanar" reflected diverse aspects of the period such as influence of English education, scientific temperament of the modern era, emergence of the new literary and politically self-conscious class, formation of public sphere, and the dynamics of print and press. The chapter then moved on to analyse how the idea of aesthetics of the English modelled journal, *Bhashaposhini* magazine determined the nature of the transcription of the legends. The specificity and accuracy in time and place and giving specific identity to the characters could be viewed as an attempt to rationalise and legitimize the legend. Moreover, through the use of an elitist and polished language to transcribe the legends and the adoption of modern form of writing such as essay to fit to the language of the press, the folk was appropriated into an upper caste/class discourse. Even though the legend was modified to meet the aesthetic standards of the magazine, the folk was still regarded as casual materials of little importance. The harsh criticism received by Sankunni which he mentioned in the preface to *Aithihamala* points to the elite nature of the literary works that appeared in *Bhashaposhini* during the specific period. Furthermore, Sankunni's representation of the *Malayaraya* hill tribes as exotic stereotypes revealed how the caste prejudices and the demands and interests of

an English modelled journal influenced the nature of transcription of the legends. Sankunni's exposure to English journals, magazines and literary works also could have influenced his representation of Kathanar. Even the kind of sorcery Kathanar practises in Sankunni's version of the legend was different from the concept of sorcery and witchcraft practised by the indigenous Christians of the times. Rather, it reminds one of the saint miracles familiarised by the Bible. Moreover, the terms used by Sankunni such as *indrajalam* and *mahendrajalam* were recent concepts in magic compared to sorcery that date back to centuries. Thus Sankunni's transcription of the legend was not an exact reproduction of the oral version of the legend he collected for his work. The legend underwent transformation in terms of content, form, context, reception and paves way for the creation of values- literary, linguistic, political, commercial and educational (Thomas & Arulmozi 53). In an attempt to examine the transformation of "Kadamattathu Kathanar" into a modern legend, the chapter shed light on the traces of history carried by the legend as well as how transcription becomes a transformative act.

The third chapter dealt with the oral versions of "Kadamattathu Kathanar" collected from Kadamattom and Panayannarkkavu as the story of the legend spreads over these two regions. It examined how the legend gets transformed as it adapts to its local and immediate needs and generate new variants. After giving a brief overview of the nature of oral narratives and an integrated plot structure of the collected oral versions, the study analysed how the perception of Kathanar in the respective regions determined the nature of the translation of the legend. The narratives from Panayannarkavu perceived Kathanar as a great sorcerer whereas those from Kadamattom perceived him more as a holy priest. As the versions from Panayannarkavu deposited the character of Kadamattathu Kathanar to a Hindu plot related to *Panayannarkavu Bhagavathy*, the study threw light on how the legend interacts with the customs, rituals and beliefs of other religious traditions as well as unveils new folk notions of *Yakshi* that have not been mentioned in the previous studies. Next, the study explored how the

geographical peculiarities of each region play a crucial role in generating numerous variants of a legend. The prominence of palm trees and dense forest in the oral narratives of Panayannarkavu and Kadamattom respectively pointed to this fact. These versions also indicated how the story and its characters underwent changes over time. The Church also created a new version of the legend of “Kadamattathu Kathanar” by tying the story with Mar Abo, a bishop from Persia and attempted to attribute the miraculous powers of Kathanar to him. Analysing the versions from Kadamattom, the study also illustrated how the church appropriates the legend for its own vested interests and manipulates and creates physical evidences for its promotional purposes. As some of the local versions also involved criticism of the church, it also illustrated how the legend narration intervenes in the contemporary politics of the church.

As the act of narration was not merely a story transmitting act, it communicated the narrators’ judgements, assessments, values, worldviews, beliefs, and so on in spite of their didactic and cautionary dimensions. All the oral versions conformed to Linda Degh’s observations on legend in terms of their tendency to “report, inform, explain, teach, advise, warn, help or enlighten” (“Legends” 487). In order to convince the listener, the narrators provided verifiable facts and objects and personal experiences. It was also interesting to note how the versions constructed by the popular media infiltrated into the oral tradition and intervened in these folk narrations. In spite of the intervention of the print, theatre and filmic versions of the legend, other popular legends like “Kayamkulam Kochunni” also influenced the narration of the legend. These versions also touched upon the nature of orality as the narrators employed repetitive phrases and expressions, exaggeration, additions, alliterations and other formulaic expressions to encourage fluency as well as to render credibility to their stories. Furthermore, the occurrences of numerous paradoxes and swapping of characters also modified the characterisation and plot of the legend. The study pointed out the fact that

Sankunni's version was one among the countless oral versions of the legend. The analysis of oral versions proved to be the best tool to study the transformation of "Kadamattathu Kathanar" as each narrator became the creator of his or her own version and made his or her own creative interventions and cultural interpolations. Hence each story became unique and the oral text enjoyed multiple lives. As the legend of "Kadamattathu Kathanar" continues to create multiple legends while it interacts with other local belief system and the specific landscape of a region, the study illustrated the folk mind's capacity to generate multiple narratives out of a given folk narrative. The chapter added depth to the understanding of how folklore generates folklore and shed light on the phenomenon of folklore which is so dynamic and ever-evolving.

The fourth chapter examined the transformation undergone by the legend of "Kadamattathu Kathanar" when it became part of the repertoire of Kalanilayam Theatres and the historical imprints carried by it. The chapter discussed how a readable text was translated into a performable text to fit the needs of the theatre from the point of view of dramaturgy and translation. After exploring the dynamics of theatre and a brief history of Malayalam theatre tradition, the study looked into the point of time when Kalanilayam Theatres made its entry in the tradition of Malayalam theatre. It was the period when the organisations such as Kerala People's Art's club, Kollam Kalidasa Kalakendram, P.J Theatres of P.J Antony, and Kalanilayam heralded a period of professional and commercial theatre. Kalanilayam's enormous stage size of 4500 square feet, the auditorium that could accommodate 750 people, innovative technology including thrilling visual and sound effects, and the collaborative artwork of around 150 technicians created a stunning theatre spectacle that competed with the Malayalam cinematic experience of the times. Being a commercial theatre, Kalanilayam functioned to serve its dramaturgical purpose of entertainment and the legend of "Kadamattathu Kathanar" was placed in the wide canvas of Kalanilayam as it had all the crowd pulling elements such as fantasy, magic, horror and so on. Kalanilayam made a lot of

interpolations including the *Yakshi*'s song sequences, *Malayarayans*' tribal dance sequences, comic interludes, Poulose and Katrina's romantic scenes, the additional setting of hell, and many more to make it a perfect piece of entertainment for the crowd. In fact it had all the ingredients of the popular cinema of the times. The addition of new sub-plots to cater to the diverse interests of the audience led to the introduction of many new women characters in the plot. One could observe submissive and self-sacrificing females such as Katrina who reflected the victimised female characters, frequently represented in the popular media of the times. Moreover, through the portrayal of *Malayarayans* in a stereotypical manner, Kalanilayam reinforced the cultural stereotyping of *Malayarayans* as depicted in *Aithiyamala*. The inclusion of the cabaret dance number performed by the daughter of the chief of *Malayarayans* shed light on the cabaret sensation of the movies of the 1960s and 1970s. The representation of *Yakshi* in the play resembled the 'white saree *Yakshi*' image popularised by the movies of the times such as *Bhargavi Nilayam* (1964). Moreover, unlike the *Yakshi* represented in the popular media of our times, the *Yakshi* in Kalanilayam's play was heavily accessorised with jewellery. This idea could have been drawn from the most familiar notion of *Yakshi* familiar to Malayalees, i.e., *Kalliyangattu Neeli* whose story in which jewellery was a significant element. The play received very good reception and played a crucial role in constructing Kathanar as a popular hero.

Even though Kalanilayam employed the same script when it brought back its popular play *Kadamattathu Kathanar* on stage in 2019, the play underwent tremendous transformation as it was presented in front of the contemporary audience. The online promotional activities, online ticketing system, air conditioned auditorium and cafeteria in the premises indicated how Kalanilayam also adapted to the consumer demands of the new urban middle class. The study has analysed the online posters of the play and examined how the hooded robe of Kathanar, the European skin tone, the use of fantasy tropes such as mysterious forest, castle, magic staff

and owl resembling the Disney animated movies, the inscription written in Latin and so on resonated with the Western cinematic sensibility of the contemporary era. Even though the character of Kathanar in the play was a Christian priest from Kerala, he was represented as a Western priest in the promotional posters. While the clerical clothing of Kathanar in the oldest version of the play portrayed him more as a Catholic priest, the recent version of the play asserted his identity as a Jacobite priest through the changes in the attire. Even though the *Malayarayans* were represented in the same stereotypical manner as the oldest versions, one of the significant changes in this episode was the dance sequence of *Malayarayan's* daughter. The transition from cabaret to item dance in the play indicated the changing aesthetic sensibilities of the popular cinema. Further, the study provided possible reasons including the changing trends in consumer culture for such shifts. The representation of *Yakshi* also underwent changes in terms of costume and accessories and reflected the changing notions of the representation of *Yakshi* in the popular media. Thus the study examined what kind of treatment and transformation the legend of “Kadamattathu Kathanar” underwent in the hands of Kalanilayam as it attempted to serve its dramaturgical purpose of popular entertainment.

The fifth chapter examined the construction of *Kadamattathu Kathanar* by the popular media in Malayalam. It was divided into two parts: the first part examined the film version of the legend and the second part explored the TV serial version of the legend. The first part looked into the movie *Kadamattathachan* (1984) and the teaser of the upcoming movie *Kathanar: The Wild Sorcerer* and analysed the transformation undergone by the legend when it became part of the commercial cinema industry of the respective time period. *Kadamattathachan* had all the staple ingredients of the popular cinema of the times such as the popular stars like Prem Nasir and Srividya, melodramatic elements, comic interludes, songs, dance, romance, and action. The movie version set the tone of a Christian devotional genre and represented him as a Capuchin priest as the Church did not give permission to use his Jacobian

identity. It portrayed him more as a holy priest rather than a sorcerer. The study touched upon the brand image of the actor Prem Nasir, who is widely acknowledged as the first superstar as well as the popular romantic hero in Malayalam cinema. It pointed out that the romantic halo of the actor was translated into the film and examined how the movie tended to follow the star formula of Prem Nasir. The construction of the female characters such as Marykutty and Valli also resonated with the star image of Prem Nasir as he was the centre of romance in the respective segments. One could also notice other popular elements of the commercial cinema during the times such as dream sequences. The scenes concerning Valli and Beevathu portrayed such dream sequences. The study analysed the commercial necessity behind the inclusion of sexy dance performances to provide great source of on-screen visual entertainment for the spectators in the light of the dance sequence featuring Valli and other background dancers. The movie version of the legend was also engaged in the cultural stereotyping of the tribes through the depiction of animal skin clothing, accessories made of beads and feathers, cave, animal horns, skulls and so on. Unlike the *Aithihyamala* and theatrical versions of “Kadamattathu Kathanar”, the movie provided a background story for the *Yakshi*. The study pointed out how the *Yakshi* movies popularised the notion of a revenge element and provided a rational explanation for a woman turning into *Yakshi* after her death. It also showed how other popular movies of the same period such as *Chottanikkara Amma* (1976) and *Kalliyankattu Neeli* (1979) shared some of the common aspects with *Kadamattathachan* in the representation of *Yakshi* and discussed the horror conventions and narrative premises used by the popular media of a specific period to conceptualize horror. The inclusion of another sub-plot featuring a Muslim family in the movie could be regarded as a marketing strategy to attract the crowds from all the major religious groups. Thus the movie had all the popular ingredients of the commercial cinema of the specific period including the popular stars, romance, action, humour, melodrama, horror conventions, and other visual clichés. Moreover, when the superstar Prem Nasir played

the role of Kathanar, the movie followed the star formula of the actor and as a result the actor overpowered the character. The chapter then moved on to analyse the launch teaser of the upcoming movie, *Kathanar: The Wild Sorcerer* and pointed out how various elements employed by it- the fantasy motifs, devices, techniques and digital effects- catered to the norms of Western cinematic sensibility. As the teaser was launched on a new media platform like YouTube, it also touched upon the changes in the contemporary digital era in terms of filmmaking and spectatorship.

The second part of the chapter examined the TV serial *Kadamattathu Kathanar* that was telecast on Asianet from 2004-2005. After giving a brief overview of the history of television scenario in India, changing viewing patterns and the emergence of TV serials, the study analysed the transformation undergone by the legend when it adapted to the genre of a mega serial. *Kadamattathu Kathanar* belonged to the category of horror serial genre and was one of the top serials on the TRP charts. While the movie version of the legend employed a few sub-plots, the serial version employed multiple sub-plots that spread over 255 episodes. One of the major transformations brought about by the TV serial version of the legend was its shift of focus from public to domestic sphere. As most of the serials were family dramas, all these sub-plots dealt with the story of different families and Kathanar was the thread that connected these standalone sub-plots. The serial did not touch upon the life of Kathanar before his priesthood. He was an already established holy priest who came for help when each of these families faced a trouble. Kathanar attained various traits and dimensions in the serial version that he not only fought against the evil forces, but also acted as a saviour of many families and villages and a mediator whenever there were fights among the villagers. He also punished the wrongdoers; turned into an action hero at one point; endowed ordinary people with supernatural powers and helped them enjoy heroic moments in their lives and many more. The study found that it was the serial version of the legend that popularised the notion that Kathanar tamed the

Yakshi, Kalliyangattu Neeli. In most the other versions, it was Panayannarkavu *Yakshi*. Furthermore, it employed many tear-jerking elements in the plots to fit the legend into the format of the Malayalam mega serials of the times. It was interesting to note that despite the emotional scenes of the women characters, tear-jerking scenes of Kathanar also appeared in the serial. It also employed other popular tales such as *Krishna and Kuchela* and themes from *Thenali Raman Stories* and *Birbal stories* in order to evoke a sense of past in the minds of the audience. The serial also employed the popular action hero narrative patterns from Hollywood superhero movies such as *Batman* and Indian superhero serials like *Shaktimaan* (1997-2005) that belonged to the same period. It discussed how the serial attempted to reimagine the past for its contemporary audience. It did not address any specific historical context, rather it created a fictional history and evoked the feeling of antiquity through various material conditions of the past such as bullock carts, palm leaf manuscripts, traditional attires, copper vessels and so on. It also integrated various Hindu deities such as Sri Krishna, Shiva, Lord Ganesha and Murugan to not only cater to the Hindu audience that form the majority of the TV audience, but also to meet the vested interests of its production company Merryland. The actor Prakash Paul who played the role of Kathanar received great reception from the audience in such a way that his image was solidified in the minds of the viewers. Unlike the film version, the character overpowered the actor in the serial version that even the contemporary memes and trolls use his image for depicting Kathanar. Even though the legend became more fragmented in the serial version, it played a crucial role in constructing Kathanar as a popular hero.

The sixth chapter summarises the transformation undergone by the legend when it became part of the colonial modernity, oral tradition, the commercial theatre culture of a period, the popular cinema of the 1980s, the mega serial genre, and the commercial cinema of the contemporary era. It may be observed that each re-representation of the legend generated a new version of the legend. Moreover, each of its re-representations retained certain features of the

legend and it was those features that contributed to the translatability of the legend. Among all the versions of the legend, the one that received a cold reception from the audience was the movie *Kadamattathachan*. As it employed several romantic sub-plots, the character of Kathanar lost its significance. However, when one analyses the most successful versions of the legend i.e. the theatre and serial versions of the legend, it may be observed that these versions placed a greater emphasis on horror and magic. Both of them appeared under the category of horror/fantasy genre. Thus it must be observed that it is the supernatural element that excites the readers, listeners and viewers of all the respective periods and makes the legend break its boundaries and move ahead. However, all the legends in *Aithihyamala* that deal with *Yakshi* and the theme of sorcery do not get re-represented again and again. It is the unique combination of a Christian priest, *Malayarayans*, his practice of sorcery and the supernatural beings such as *Yakshi* and *chathan* that makes the legend so fascinating. The heroic qualities of Kathanar are also worth mentioning here. An outsider coming to rescue the people from their misery has a selling value at all times and spaces. “Kadamattathu Kathanar” and “Kayamkulam Kochunni” are two among the few legends in *Aithihyamala* that get continuously re-represented at various points of time. Both of these legends feature heroes who protect the people at times of their crisis in different ways. Thus the heroic qualities of Kathanar and his supernatural premise are the essential features that mark the continued life of the legend of “Kadamattathu Kathanar”.

The study finds that the legend undergoes transformation in each of its new version. Drawing insights from the theories of Roman Jakobson, Walter Benjamin and Jacques Derrida, the theoretical framework of the study states the view that translation is nothing, but a transformative act. Walter Benjamin states that a translation is not “meant for the readers who do not understand the original” (15). Instead, it has a life in its own right (19). Hence every production cannot be regarded as a re-production of its earlier production. In this sense, each medium looks for the imaginative possibilities, well-suited to its own mechanics and treats the

legend in a manner that is relevant to the dynamics of the specific medium and its cultural environment. With regard to the *Aithihyamala* version of the legend, the demands of the press and the aesthetics of the *Bhashaposhini* magazine of the specific period played a crucial role in determining the nature of the transcription of the legend. The author, publishers, and readers had a significant role in the process. As the oral narrators of the legend modified and reformulated their narratives in accordance with their immediate surroundings, the narrator, listener, and participants also attain significance. Similarly the translations involving intermediality such as theatre, film, new media and TV serial involve literary, performance and technical components and the aesthetic sensibilities of the respective age formed an integral part in transforming the legend. The banner of Kalanilayam was a key deciding factor in determining the nature of the theatrical translation of the text as it was one of the pioneers of the commercial theatre in Malayalam and hence the director the playwright who formed the dramaturgs played a key role in translating the legend into a stage text. As the film *Kadamattathachan* was released in theatres at a time when the star system had been slowly evolving in the Malayalam cinema, the actor became one of the determining factors of the translation of the legend. In the serial version, with the addition of several Hindu deities and sub-plots, the producer had a central place in determining the nature of the translation of the legend. In all the above discussed translations that dealt with intermediality, the audience also greatly influence the nature of the translated text. Even though these agents of translation—author, publisher, narrator, director, playwright, actor, producer, script writer, readers, listeners, spectators, and many more come into play in various re-representations of the legend, it is impossible to attribute a sole agent to the translation of a text. As discussed in all the chapters, each translation is a cultural product of its age.

Walter Benjamin observes that each translation of the text is derivative, yet independent (11). It must be noted that each translation of the legend of “Kadamattathu Kathanar” is

independent yet interdependent. This is also in line with what the folklorist Richard M Dorson observes in relation to orality and print. He states that “printed and oral texts do not necessarily compete with each other but may act in conjunction, in a mutually stimulating camaraderie” (466). With regard to the legend under study, the oral narratives does not cease to exist even after the legend was translated into different media. Even after adapting to various media, it proves to have enormous capacity to evoke conversations and discussions and is very much alive in the everyday life of the people. They interweave their memories and imagination with the popular versions and construct new narratives. Thus translation becomes a mutually transformative process.

Benjamin states that “the task of the translator is to liberate the language imprisoned in a work in his recreation of that work” (22). Each translation explores new possibilities of the legend that it liberates the legend from the tyranny of fixity and allows it to play out its immense possibilities. As more literary, performative and technical components are added at various points of time, the canvas and contours of the legend grows wider and it attains more dimensions. All the re-representations of the legend mark the stage of continued life of “Kadamattathu Kathanar”. As the poststructuralist theories have pointed out, the original survives through its multiple versions (Gentzler 145). Each of these texts is in continuous conflicts, negotiations and compromises between them. Thus, translation can be perceived as that zone where conflicting worldviews and changing cultural contexts transform the text into myriad versions.

The legend under study conforms to the folklorist Linda Degh’s view that “Legends do not seem to wither under the impact of urban life... they appear to be the hardiest of folk narrative forms not only in adjusting easily to modern conditions but by generating new types based on the most up-to-date issues of contemporary life” (77). Owing to this quality of the legend of “Kadamattathu Kathanar”, it generates numerous variants in accordance with the

changing socio-cultural environment and survives through its translations. The study demonstrates how translation studies with a folkloristic perspective is a contribution to study how translation becomes an act of transformation in the most effective manner.

6.2. Limitations of the Study and Scope for Further Research

The unavailability of all the primary sources was one of the challenges faced by the researcher during the study. Even though the oral, print, film and TV serial versions of the legend were accessible to the researcher as complete texts, the theatrical representation of the oldest versions of the legend were available to the researcher in the form of archival materials that include photographs, newspaper reports and posters. However, the researcher could not omit the theatrical representation of the legend for this reason because all the archival materials provided by Kalanilayam offered fresh insights into the analysis of the trajectory of the legend. Hence the researcher has made the maximum use of all the available primary data in order to make her findings reliable.

Moreover, the study was not inclusive of all the re-representations of the legend of “Kadamattathu Kathanar” that have appeared so far as it would be very extensive and exceed the framework of the research. Other print versions including graphic representations; videos documentaries, trolls, memes, skits, and comedy shows are yet to be explored. Furthermore, the upcoming big budget 3D movie *Kathanar: The Wild Sorcerer* in two parts is expected to explore the imaginative and visual possibilities of the legend in a broader framework. Hence the study opens up new avenues for further studies.

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Appendix A

Glossary

Aithiyam	An umbrella term for legends, myths and lores in the Malayalam tradition
Angadi	Market
Apsarasu	A celestial nymph in Hindu mythology
Chakyar koothu	A classical art form of Kerala
Chathan	An evil spirit
Chunnambu	Lime
Ebhyan	Stupid
Guru	Teacher
Illam	The house of a Namboothiri
Indrajaalam	Magic
Kallu	Stone
Karkkidakam	The last month of the Malayalam calendar
Kathakali	A classical art form of Kerala
Kattumanushyar	Wild-men
Kavu	Sacred grove
Kottaram	Palace
Kozhikuruthy	Cock sacrifice
Kozhukatta	A sweet snack made of rice flour, jaggery and grated coconut
Kuladevatha	Clan deity
Kurishu	Cross
Malayarayan	A hill tribe that spreads across the Kottayam, Idukki and Pathanamthitta districts of Kerala.
Malpan	A master or a teacher
Mantram	A sacred utterance
Mantravadham	Sorcery
Muthassi	Grandmother; an old woman
Muthukuda	Ceremonial umbrella
Narakam	Hell
Nattumanushyan	Man of the town
Nazhika	A unit of time
Neyyappam	A sweet fritter made of rice flour
Odiyan	A sorcerer
Padayani	A folk art form in Kerala
Pana	Palm tree
Pathala guha	Underground cave
Pathala kinar	Underground well
Pishachu	An evil spirit

Podichoottu	A mysterious speck of light associated with supernatural beings
Sangeetha-nadakam	Musical-drama
Shasta	The name of a Hindu deity. Ayyappan is also known as shastavu
Shiva	A Hindu deity
Sthree	Woman
Thali	Wedding chain or string
Thekkan Pattu	Ballads of South Travancore
Tharavadu	Ancestral home
Varathan	An outsider
Veedu	House
Yajnam	A ritual involving <i>mantras</i> performed in front of a sacred fire
Yakshi	A supernatural being

Appendix B

The Legend of Kadamattathu Kathanar- Summary

Poulose was born as a single child in a poor family. He lost his parents at a very young age and was taken care of by an old vicar of the church. Recognising his intelligence and polite behaviour, he taught him everything including languages like Syrian and the liturgical rites. He met all the requirements of a priest which earned him the title *semmassan* (deacon) and was later known as Poulose *semmassan*. One day the old vicar's herd of cows went missing and Poulose *semmassan* along with the other men went in search of the cows. After reaching the forest, they went out in different directions in search of the cows. Unfortunately, as it was getting dark, *semmassan* was lost in the forest. Suddenly a gigantic figure seized him and took him to a cave. The leader of the group addressed himself to Poulose as *Malayarayan* (member of a tribal community in Kerala). He kept him in his custody for a long period and taught him the lessons of their magic tricks and mantras. The leader became fond of him in course of time. One day Poulose looked very sad and the leader enquired the reason behind his grief. Poulose revealed that he missed his beloved Kathanar desperately and wanted to meet him. With the permission of the leader, he applied his learnt tricks to the watchmen and left them unconscious under his spell.

He ran from the cave and reached near a hut in a village. He met the old lady who was living alone in the hut and asked her for something to eat. Unfortunately, there was nothing left in the kitchen. He asked the old woman to check whether at least a grain of rice was left in the vessel. She found a small grain of rice and wondered what the *semmassan* would do with it. He put the grain to boil in a pot in the kitchen. To her surprise, the pot was filled with rice within a short span of time and they sat together and ate until they felt full. He left the house after taking a nap. The old vicar had become very weak and was surprised to see *semmassan*. He felt extremely happy to see him and hugged him. The vicar had thought that *semmassan* would have been attacked by any wild animal and was no more. When he asked him where he had been all these while, he answered that he was held in captivity by some of the people in the forest. Suddenly the sexton came running from the church and informed them that some gigantic figures were destroying the church. *Semmassan* understood that they were the people from the cave who came in search of him. He went there and applied some tricks which made them all lie down on the floor motionless. His magical power stunned everyone including the old vicar. Later Poulose *semmassan* was raised to the position of *Kathanar* and he soon came

to be known as “Kadamattathu Kathanar”. Soon the old vicar died and Kadamattathu Kathanar took up his duties. His fame spread across the world and people started approaching him for his service.

Once there was a *Yakshi* in a forest area that stretched between Trivandrum and Padmanabhapuram. She used to disguise as a prostitute and wait for the men on the wayside. She lured them into the forest and sucked the blood out of their body. When other Hindu sorcerers could not tame her, the people approached him for help. Kathanar went to the forest and saw her on the wayside. She tried to persuade him with her enchanting smile and asked him if he had carried lime with him. He smeared the lime on an iron nail and stretched it to her. As she touched it, she became powerless and he tamed her. She was taken to an old woman’s house in order to assist her in the house hold works. One day the old woman was combing the *Yakshi*’s hair and she found the iron nail struck into her crown. She was shocked to see it and pulled it out. Suddenly the *Yakshi* was released from the spell of the Kathanar and she disappeared. The old woman was frightened and informed Kathanar who went in search for her. *Yakshi* took a boat and reached a place called Panayannarkavu. Since there was no boat, Kathanar took a plantain leaf and applied a trick. The plantain leaf served the purpose of a boat and he reached the other side of the river. He confronted the *Yakshi* and on her request, he allowed her to reside at Panayannarkavu and later she came to be known as *Panayannarkavu Yakshi*. In another incident, Kathanar had an encounter with Kunjamanmadathile Potti (a Hindu Brahmin). Even though Kathanar and Potti seemed to be on good terms, there was a rivalry going on between them in terms of their magical powers. One day Potti invited Kathanar to his house and went there. Both of them started applying their magical tricks in order to exhibit their magical prowess. In the end Kathanar won the battle and Potti admitted his failure.

Once, a Bava (patriarch) from Jerusalem visited Kerala. He visited several places and finally reached the Kadamattom church. Kathanar presented several exotic food items to him which were only available in European countries. The Bava was extremely delighted and added that he would have felt better if there was grapes too along with the gifts. Hearing this, Kathanar took a grape and buried it in the courtyard of the church. All of a sudden, clusters of grapes sprouted from the seed and the Bava tasted them. They were perfect in taste as well as appearance. Even though, he was quite satisfied with Kathanar’s magical tricks, he warned him that such practice was not suitable for a Christian priest like Kathanar. Kathanar promised the priest that he would not use it for any evil purpose.

Once, the King of Cochin summoned Kathanar to help him fight against the Dutch. Kathanar gave him a magical arrow and told that if he shot the arrow at the Dutch camp, his problems would be resolved. As he followed his instruction, the soldiers at the Dutch camp turned insane. They started fighting and killing each other and the issue was resolved. Similarly, while performing an art form associated with the temple called *Padayani*, one man dressed up as Kathanar began talking nonsense in order to mock him. Kathanar happened to watch this and applied his magic tricks. The man began to beat himself forcefully that he was on the verge of his death. Everyone tried to help him in vain. At last, his fellow artists begged Kathanar to save his life. Kathanar applied another trick and released him. In the same way, Kathanar had performed plenty of miracles later and this practice came to be known as “Kadamattathu sambradayam”. He had written plenty of books on magic tricks in a language unfamiliar to the public.

Appendix C

Transcription of the Oral Narratives

1) Beena's version of "Kadamattathu Kathanar"

Beena was a great devotee of Kadamattom church. She was a house wife who was 42 years old. She came from Thrissur with her friend Liya. As Liya was hesitant to speak, the oral version of Kadamattathu Kathanar was narrated by Beena. Her version of the legend was passed on to her by her mother. The conversation was done in a casual manner as follows:

Researcher: *Chechi*, I am studying on some of the legends in Kerala. Kadamattathu Kathanar's legend is highly popular. Do you know the story of Kadamattathu Kathanar?

Beena: Yes, where are you coming from?

Researcher: Kodungallur. I came here to collect the stories related to Kathanar.

Beena: Story is like...Achan was herding the cattle. When he was herding the cattle through the forest, 3, 4 cows were found missing. They were in a group. So, some people went to this side and some people went to the other side in search of the cows. They went to different directions. Achan went and went and went and he got lost in the forest. It was dark too. He walked for some more time and then he saw a light and he stopped there. When he went inside, there were people with evil powers. They were people living in the forest. When he reached there, they tied him up and decided to transform him into one among them. They taught him their mantras and asked him to stay there. He could not escape from there by any means. So he decided to stay there. The main guy had a daughter. When he talked to her with warmth, she felt some feelings for him. Means...it is not a different kind of feeling. Achan finished learning all the mantras and in order to make sure he was in his room, they used to call his name often. And he had to reply to their call. That was the rule. After he learned all these mantras, he calculated the time to escape from the place and taught all the items in the room to respond to their call. Then, with the help of this girl, Achan escaped from the place. At this time, each item in the room responded to the call of these people. However, in the end, they stopped responding and these people opened the door to check the room. They found that Achan was missing. Then, they took heavy metal chains and their paraphernalia and went in search of him. By that time, Achan was far away from them. He ran in great speed and climbed up the well of Poyedam church (she showed the direction of the church) and reached here. At that time, the church door was closed. He cried and prayed "please, help me, my Lord". Then the door opened

on its own and he went inside. At that time, the door closed on its own. Then these people reached there and in their fury, they started beating the back wall of the church. They beat and the wall split into two and the imprints of the heavy metal chains were there.

Researcher: Are the imprints still there?

Beena: No, now it is not there. When the church was painted and maintenance was done, it faded. Among priests, the seventh lesson is learning mantras. But they don't use these divine mantras for other purposes. But people started using it for evil things. Actually we should not use them like that. So from there Achan went through underground tunnel and disappeared. That is the legend. However, as he knew many mantras, he had also done a lot of good things. Actually we are supposed to worship only God. But he had great powers. When we need something, people say "go to Kadamattom and pray, your wish will be fulfilled". I don't know how, but the church has great powers. Our call will be heard. The majority of the people who come here are Hindus because they are the people who use mantras and all. We used to offer cock to the church every year even though we stay at Thrissur. Once we decide that we will offer a particular cock to Kadamattom, that cock attains a special kind of beauty.

Researcher: Do you still offer cocks to the church?

Beena: Now, we don't offer it.

George: Any problem?

Beena: There is no problem. But if we decide to do an offering, it should be done without fail. Once we decided to offer a cock to saint George. But our neighbours caught and ate it. But what happened afterwards was, a snake that entered their house was not leaving. The big black cobra coiled around something and was not moving. Hearing this, my family told that "it was the cock offered to the church. So things like this will happen". At last many snakes...five-eight snakes entered their house. Then there is a shed kind of tea shop in their compound. There was a jasmine plant there. A big black cobra coiled around it and sat like this (she showed it through her hand gestures). Everyone was scared to kill it. My chachan went and asked them "there was a cock that was offered to Kadamattom here, it is missing. If somebody catches it things like this will happen". Next time our neighbours offered a cock to Kadamattom and after that they are ardent believers of this place, they are greater believers than us. Everyone has different kinds of beliefs. But once we decide to offer a cock, it must be done. God has not

asked us to offer. But if you offer, then you should do it. If you don't do it...the church has great powers. It is proved that the church has great powers.

George: Are you from Thrissur?

Beena: My house is at Thrissur. Many people there believe in the powers of the church. They even shiver when they hear the name of Kadamattom church. When I go to Kothamangalam church for Bhajans, people ask "where are you from?" If I say, "from Kadamattom church", they say in shock "ayyo, Kadamattom church?". It is a shock for them, but not for us. My actual home is at Valakom, this story is told by my mother. All the problems started when there was division in the church.

Researcher: Wasn't the church closed for some time?

Beena: Yes, it was closed for 10-15 years.

Researcher: When did it re-open?

Beena: Everything is there in that book. Now, things are fine.

2) Emil's Version of "Kadamattathu Kathanar"

Emil was a deacon who belonged to Kadamattom and fell under the age group of 25-35 years. The researcher was referred to him by Fr. Prince Mannathur, a professor at MSOT Seminary, Vettickal. He provided two versions of the legend during his narration. One was the version of the church and the other was the local version of the legend. The interview was done as follows:

Researcher: We were sent by Fr. Prince Mannathur. I wanted to know about the legend of "Kadamattathu Kathanar"

Emil: I will tell whatever I know...

Researcher: That is fine.

Emil: This Idukki church and Mattanchery church were in the hands of the Catholics. Idapally was the church between Idukki church and Mattanchery church. However, now Idapally is in the hands of the Catholics. During that times Catholics were very less in our area. But after the Synod of Diamper and the arrival of Aleixo de Menezes, the Catholics took away these churches from Syrian Christians. Likewise, many churches were Syrian Orthodox churches before. Kuravilangadu and Arthunkal churches were also Syrian Orthodox churches. They also came to take away Piravam church, but they could not do it. In between, people came from

Idapally and tried to take away Kadamattom church also. Kadamattom church belonged to Syrian Christians. The image in the church is the proof of that. We don't have that image... Actually there is a Father named Abo who was buried at Thevalakkara. He came from outside. It is believed that he came from Persia. There were two people who reached Kollam. Some people say it is AD 822 and others say AD 827. Above the church's madbaha, there is a picture. It is said that it is the photo of Father Abo. It is the only photo we have. When he came during that period, there was a family here. In that family, only a widow and her son were the only members. It is believed that that was the family of Kadamattathachan. When he reached there, he asked for something to eat. As there was no food left, they told only a few grains of rice was left. He said to put a few grains to the pot... it was a thing of wonder. They found it as a miracle. During that time there were Karthakkanmar who were the rulers of the land. They had sorcery and other evil practices. Karthakkanmar's king's daughter, had an eye problem. When somebody told if she was brought to Mar Abo, she would recover, they brought her to Mar Abo at Thevalakkara. He cured her illness. The king pointed to a hill and said he could worship his God there. So, in Kadamattom, full place belonged to the church. But when there were land encroachments, church lost everything. Father Abo built a church there. The widow's son's name was Paulose. ...Even my name was Paulose. He prepared him for priesthood and made him a deacon. When there was a situation for Father Abo to leave the church, he entrusted the duties with Paulose and raised him to the rank of a priest. He asked him to look after the church and left. That is what history says... One day Paulose was conducting the holy mass and he came to know at that time that his Father was no more. He finished the prayers and started off from there. But somebody told him his funeral rites were over. He was in tears and reached near his tomb. That time Father Abo's hands rose from the tomb. Those hands were wrapped in silk cloth and kept near the Persian cross. No church in Kerala has this kind of wall. It is called *aanabhithi* (elephant wall). Its history is that when the church was about to be demolished.... Isn't there a film called Amen? When the film begins, they talk about a saint riding on a horse and a church. That church is supposed to be our church. It talks about the history of Kadamattom church. When they started demolishing the church...the Portuguese soldiers.... The saint's army reached there. During that time, there was *aanabhithi* for the church so that it could not be destroyed easily. History says it is the fourth church. When it was demolished once, the tomb of Mar Abo rose up from the ground. It is also said it is the tomb of Marthoma IX. All these are normal histories. But there is another history which says that Achan went to the well. Do you know that history?

Researcher: What is it?

Emil: Achan was herding the cattle... It is clearly shown in that film. While he was walking...Did you see that well?

Researcher: Yes, we went there.

Emil: Actually, the well was not at that place. The actual well is below the *madbaha* of the church. The cattle entered into the well. There are so many evil spirits in the well...*Pishachukkal*. Actually that is not the case. I don't have time to take you people there. From here there is a path that leads to a hill. When you reach there, you can see... The local people say that there are leopards there. There is a big land there. When you climb up, you can see a rubber plantation. There are four portals there. If you take one, again it leads to four ways and then again....It was a big forest there. He reached the place of Malavedans. They also know some sorcery and other tricks. Everyone is a sorcerer. When he reached there, they tried to kill him. But they felt, there was something divine in him. So they decided to allow him to stay with them. They used to call him "Kadamattom". They used to call "Kadamattom"... "Kadamattom"...as he came from Kadamattom. All the mantras were...but they told, he had to forget all his close friends, family and relatives and then only it can be learnt. He told "I can forget everyone except my mother. I can't forget her". So they told "no problem, you need not forget your mother. But forget everyone else and be one among us. So he learnt sorcery and all... But one day he wanted to go back to his place. So they used to call him "Kadamattom" every time and he had to respond to their call. It is said that the head's daughter requested her father not to kill him... So when they call "Kadamattom", he responds to the call. Every ten minutes they used to call him. So if he does not respond, it means he is not there. Then he taught all the things in the room such as cot, bed and so on to respond to their call. After he taught them the *mantra*, they started responding to their call one by one. First cot responded....then next one...like that. Within 10 mins, he ran and escaped the place and reached Kadamattom church. There was a large door called *aanavathil* (elephant door). Do you know its speciality? It had eight locks. So that time, the door was closed. It did not open. When the door was about to open, they had reached closer. So, he said, "mother, I haven't forgotten you. Please save me". The mother he meant was the Mother Mary. He reached inside. They beat the church wall with heavy metal chain. There are two emblems there. It was not possible to paint on that part. However, later it was covered with several coats of paint. It is said that there are cracks on the wall. All these are histories. After knowing he had escaped,

they beat the church walls and left. Did you see that old building, *naalukettu*? It has some speciality. There is a room behind it which can be opened using 8 locks only. There were valuable things like one or one and half kg gold there. When there were rifts between different sects, some people stole them and took them to their homes. An Orthodox Christian family was also involved. Some people also took away some palm-leaf manuscripts. They are bringing it back these days because if you play with Kadamattom church, the church will fight back. My baptised name is actually Paulose. If we have any problem, we just call one name, “Punyala...” (saint). The matter related to this well is that many evil practices still happen here. They cut the head of the cock....it is something similar to *chathan seva*. If we do that, what happens is...whatever we wish would happen, but the people who engage in these activities will not die easily. Only when somebody takes over these activities, he would die. That is the case. You know that condition, right? One cannot even get up from bed. Another history is that Kadamattom church came after Piravam church. Have you been to that church? It is a great church. It is situated above the river. If anyone does something to the church, the water will enter the church. So no one has tried to destroy it. These are some of the historical details.

3) The Versions of “Kadamattathu Kathanar” by Madhurima and Rasak

The two versions were collected from Panayannarkavu. Madhurima and Abdul Rasak, who were the narrators belonged to age group of 70-80 years. Madhurima was a retired teacher and Rasak was a businessman. It was carried out in the manner of an open discussion. Susan Joseph who referred the researcher to them was also part of the discussion.

Madhurima: What do you want to know regarding the story? Where are you coming from?

Researcher: I want to know more about the legend of “Kadamattathu Kathanar”. I am coming from Kodungallur. It is for my research.

Madhurima: Actually he had a wife. His wife was at home. This girl.... When he went for some sorcery related activity, he learnt that she had some problem and he could find a solution. He had a feeling... and he brought her home. He told his wife “you have to look after this child, do not allow her to go anywhere. You can give her the usual food we eat. Do not give meat or fish”. She said ok.

Susan: Was it because she had any specific problem?

Madhurima: We don’t know anything. Kathanar brought a child home. If somebody comes to our home, won’t we give him or her food? So she stayed there. This child had a long hair. So

she combed her hair. During that time, there was no practice of plating the hair. People used to run the fingers through the hair and tie it at the end. She was combing and combing and combing... suddenly she felt something on her scalp. Something like a thorn... She was the one who was combing her hair, right? So she told “my child, there is something struck on your head” and she pulled it out. When she pulled it out, she just flew up...flew up in no time. She flew up the sky in the form of a bird. After she became a bird she flew towards our side. That woman was looking at the bird flying away and she noted the direction towards which it was flying. After sometime, when Kathanar came, he asked “where is the child I brought here?”. Then she replied “it flew away in the form of a bird”. When he asked the direction, she showed him the direction. Within no time, he went after her with a cane in his hand. He was a great sorcerer. He walked and walked and walked... Our temple’s west side, I told you...the other side of that...the other side of that....It is a river...Pamba river. When he reached near the Pamba river, it was full of water. How will he cross the river? There was no way. Then he asked “has anyone come here?” The boatman told, a little while ago a woman had gone to the other side of the river, no one else had come. He also added that her hair was left open. He looked around. Meanwhile the boatman locked the boat and left the place. The boat is a small one...not a ‘developed’ one as we see today. He did not do what to do. He has this habit of keeping a small knife tucked into his waist. He opened the knife and cut a plantain leaf. When he put it in water, it transformed into a flat board. He got on that and reached here. You have to think about his magical powers. He reached this side of the river. When he looked around, Yakshi was at the sacred groves. She was with her Mother. But he was scared to enter, thinking what would happen if he did so. As he had a stick, nothing would happen to him. Anyway he came here and did some things and consecrated her near the goddess. He told the people “do not let her free. Let her be the Yakshiyamma and stay with the goddess. Here, the deity is a great goddess. She is Bahdrakali who has different shades of character. At times she is calm. Even we behave so, isn’t it? Sometimes, we are calm, sometimes we are angry... Sometimes, when someone is angry we will say “why are you behaving like Bhadrakali?”. She is consecrated here in her furious state. So when we consecrate her outside, we have to do certain rituals related to it. Otherwise, no one can stay here. The Brahmins are still scared to come here. All these stories happened a long time ago...even before I was born. Everything is written in *Aithiyamala*. Anyway, some rituals were done and they consecrated her outside. When we perform rituals, we would be able to know whether the consecration was done in a satisfactory manner. During the Amavasi of Karkidaka month, no one dares to go out. During that time, nobody in this area is seen outside after 7.30. All are scared. In the east, there is a large banyan

tree and a temple nearby. She goes there and returns at this time. I think she has connection with other temples. I don't know where she goes.

Rasak: She comes from Panayannarkavu...

Madhurima: Yes, she may wander like that. Anyway, I don't know.

Researcher: Are people still scared to go out?

Madhurima: During the Amavasi, I tell my son "Eda it is going to be nine o'clock. Don't go out". He says "no Amma, I am scared".

Rasak: My father has told me that this achan is not married. He took the girl to his mother. Yakshi was creating trouble in some place. So they called him and he went to that place. He caught and nailed her and transformed her into a normal woman.

Madhurima: She is the one who flew up, right?

Rasak: Yes, she was a ferocious Yakshi who had destroyed that place completely. That is the reason why he went there.

Researcher: Any idea which place is that?

Madhurima: No *mole*... there is no way. It is not mentioned in books.

Rasak: During my childhood, my father told this story to me. He told it is near river Pamba. Thus Yakshi started destroying that place completely...As she told, no humans dare to go outside. After dusk, nothing will work out.

Madhurima: If somebody goes outside, their nails and hair would be the only things left.

Rasak: Yes, only nails and hair would be seen below the tree. So when these people enquired about someone....I think this happened during the period of Marthanda Varma...when they enquired, they came to know that there is a priest like this and they approached him. He went there and tamed her. He transformed her into a woman and brought her here.

Madhurima: Like a small child. She can't be brought in the form of an adult woman. Anyway I forgot whether it's wife or mother. Everything is in *Aithihamala*.

Rasak: He asked his mother to look after her like her own daughter.

Madhurima: She was looking after her very well.

Rasak: There was no problem because he had driven a nail into her head. Nail, isn't it?

Madhurima: Yes, nail.

Rasak: After some days, this Yakshi who was very clever impressed the mother and said, "mother, my scalp is itchy, could you please comb my hair?".

Madhurima: When she parted and parted her hair, she felt something and pulled it out.

Rasak: Achan has not told her about it too. Will she be able to digest it if he told her? Will she be able to sleep after that? Can he tell that she was Yakshi who was being tamed by him? He only came to know about it after it was pulled out.

Madhurima: Let me complete... Then he reached this side of the river on a plantain leaf. When he reached here, she was here. He was a great sorcerer, far better than our sorcerers. Anyway, she flew away when he came. He said Yakshi "if you want to stay here, you can sit here, but you should promise me".

Rasak: She sat on one side of the palm tree.

Madhurima: She flew away and sat on that palm tree.

Researcher: Are palm trees still there?

Madhurima: All of them have gone. There are small, small palm trees here.

Rasak: That is how Panayennarkavu originated.

Madhurima: Panayannarkavu...

Rasak: He started counting palm trees and reached here. He understood that she was sitting on a palm tree. So he counted palm trees one by one and made her come down from the palm tree on which she was sitting. That is how Panayennarkavu originated. After coming down, she was made to sit with Amma.

Madhurima: He made her promise that she would not trouble anyone.... Anyone who comes here.

Rasak: He made her sit next to Amma.

Madhurima: If we do not do the things required for these deities, they will show their true colours. Once a year they need to quench their thirst for blood. That is why we conduct Kuthiyottam. Every year we conduct Kuthiyottam means...human sacrifice is also done. This

human sacrifice means the child who performs Kuthiyottam will not be seen as a good omen. He won't be invited for the beginning of any ceremony. It is because his blood is taken by the goddess. The son in this family has performed Kuthiyottam. So nothing bad will happen to him. He is abroad...in Gulf. On that day, people will come to the house with procession and take the boy to the temple. After the boy reaches there, he turns into a different person. The tool is in amma's divine hands. It is like a needle. We give a golden thread to them. They will put it through the needle and they will do piercing. Then they will take him to Yakshiyamma and the place where the goddess sleeps. After this ceremony, the boy becomes free. It is done once a year.

Researcher: When is it done?

Madhurima: It is done on the day of Vishu. Kuthiyottam is the main event of the day. The only thing the boy's life is not taken....rest of him are taken by the Devi. After that nothing will happen to him. He is not seen as a good omen. He cannot be invited for the beginning of any ceremony. It won't be nice if he comes first. If we do it....you know?... There won't be any single drop of blood loss from his body. Even if any accident occurs, he will be safe. Nothing will happen to him. Everyone in this family...even my eldest brother had done this. Younger one also did. My son also....Did you see my daughter? Her son also did this...All the men in our family are taken for Kuthiyottam. My son, when he is about to leave for Gulf, says "I am not scared of anything. The mother of the temple is with me. Nothing will happen to me". All these properties of the temple were simply lying like that...Even when the govt gave it to the temple, no one knew what to do with it or who its actual heirs were. Actually only our families were the ones living nearby the temple...During that time men used to dry the paddy from the fields and women used to collect it and crush them. During that time there used to be only rice, no curries. In our house there was a lady who eloped with a guy. After that, the particular family suffered a lot. Now only three members are left. One is that Appukuttan...The Pulaya community used to take care of the paddy fields. Now, they have organisations...that time, there were no organisations. All these places from that end to this end belonged to the temple. But after the act, people could buy land, but all these lands belong to the Mother. Even when we harvest pepper at home, first we give it to the temple. Then only we take it for our own consumption. Even for feasts, we give mangoes to the temple. SO many people visit this temple...They know Kadamattathu Kathanar's relation to the temple.

Rasak: After the release of that movie, people came to know that there is a temple here..My father was also a great sorcerer. That is how he came to know about these stories. He told it to us when we were children. He told about the Panayennarkavu...story.

Madhurima: Everything is there in Aithihyamala.

Rasak: As I told, she came here and sat on a palm tree. Achan made her come down using his powers and took her to this goddess.

Susan: So, can I ask something? Did Yakshi come to this place thinking that the Devi would rescue her from Kathanar?

Madhurima: Yakshi is another persona of Devi. We also act in our lives as queen, servant and so on. So Kathanar wanted her in that form. So Devi made her in the form of Yakshi. Devi wants everything. Even now, people are scared of Devi. This Yakshi....After dusk no one goes out.

Researcher: Has anyone said that he or she has seen Yakshi?

Rasak: All those things happened long back. My father was a brave man. All these people were sorcerers, no one could harm them. They used to keep things for them and invoke them. A strange woman comes. She has hair till knee length.

Madhurima: The back part of Yakshi is hollow.

Rasak: They won't show back part.

Madhurima: That is why they let open their hair. We will get scared if we see that.

Rasak: When they come my father used to give request to them asking they should not harm a particular person and they would listen to it. Only sorcerers can see them. They appear as women. They always walk forward. They cannot turn back and go. They go in the reverse manner if they want to go backwards.

Madhurima: You people should not get scared at night. If you get scared, just tell "Devi, we are children... it's our studies, our life, our life..." and hold her legs. She is the Mother, she loves us.

Rasak: As we told, even if we belong to any religion, there are some things which are invisible and cannot be explained. So we should understand those things.

Madhurima: We have to believe it to some extent because it's our experience...

Rasak: My father has told me. He used to do these kinds of things. He has also told me another incident. Once he sent a Yakshi back and while she was going... there was fire in the hearth because rice was cooked. It was the time when my mother had delivered a baby who was my elder brother. So as she was going back, in her anger, she took some fire from the hearth and threw it on my mother's and brother's bodies. She was invisible. My mother has also told me this story. My brother's body still bears those marks. There are situations like this. Sometimes when we sent her back, she won't like it. But my father has no other choice. My father was also a great sorcerer. All these places were full of palm trees. I will take you people to the sacred groves...

Madhurima: It is a powerful sacred grove. Please see it from outside. Don't go inside...

3) The Oral Versions of "Kadamattathu Kathanar" by Varghese and Kunjavaran

The narratives were collected from the Kadamattom church premises. Varghese, an engineer belonged to the age group of 45-55 years old whereas his father Kunjavaran belonged to the age group of 70-80 years old. After taking the appointment through phone call, the researcher's friend George Sebastin also went along with her to collect their versions.

Varghese: How did you come to know about us?

George: Kurian K Thomas directed us to you.

Varghese: My father is very old. But he will tell whatever he knows. Where are you studying?

Researcher: That is enough. I am studying at Hyderabad Central University. Kadamattathu Kathanar is part of my research.

Kunjavaran: This happened in a period when the attacks of Pishachukkal was at its peak.

So Achan has tamed these spirits. We don't know much about it.

Varghese: Achan does not have any successor. He was not married.

Kunjavaran: Poyyedam church lies in the place where Achan had stayed. The legend says it is the well through which Achan had disappeared into the underground. I have drunk water from that well during my childhood. It is a fact. A family used to live there. It was their well. After the church took away the well from them, they were made to vacate to some other place. In order to please Achan, people bring liquor and pour into the well. Then they drink there, light candles.... All these sorts of superstitions are still happening here. The local liquor and cock is

a continuation of the Hindu tradition and it doesn't suit the Christian rituals. It is a known fact. If we decide to do an offering for the next year and do not keep the promise, snakes will enter that person's house. ..there is something like that. Or he will see nightmares. Anyway that person will do it secretly sometimes. There is no doubt that it is a superstitious practice. People say, you give an offering to Kadamattom church and your problems will be resolved. It is a very easy thing to do—to give liquor and cock, and this person does not have to pray (in a sarcastic tone). People have difficulty when we ask them to pray. There are so many money-minded people who live in these premises. They make a living out of spreading these false beliefs. Kottarathil Sankunni talks about it in Aithiyamala.

Varghese: Most of the people living here will agree with our statements. This is a superstitious practice. And regarding the crack on the church wall, there are cracks on the wall for almost all the old buildings. Even if we look at old temples, we can see cracks...If one gets proper education....like people in our generation think in a rational way.

Researcher: Why do you think so?

Varghese: The people who believe in real faith do not believe in all these things. No one believes in cock sacrifice and all...Moreover, he is not declared as a saint. It exists as a legend. And regarding the wall thickness, the wall was immensely thick and strong. During those days, this place was a thick forest. There were elephants and other wild animals. Hence in order to protect the church from elephants, they might have built strong walls.

Kunjavaran: When the renovated the front porch, these people of the church got some pieces of bones. It is because during those times, the bodies of the priests were buried inside the church. When they broke the madbaha and renovated the church, they found these old bones. So somebody...some priest told it is the bone of Kadamattathachan. All these people cooked up stories like that made it his bone. They want to increase the income of the church. They have that intention. SO they declared it as the bone of Kadamattathachan. These legends are made by people in whichever way they feel like. The present well is the third well which is called as *pathala kinar*. The first one was at the place where Poyyedam church was built. The second one was a different one and this one is the third one. In order to believe that Kadamattathachan had practised magic, we only have the support of these legends.

Varghese: Was there actual Kalliyangattu Neeli? How about Naranathu Branthan? I have been to the mountain at Pattambi. All these are legends. There are no facts and figures as proofs.

People also say once Kathanar was praying and his ring fell off. That time he understood Mar Abo died...

Kunjavarán: Some women who have been possessed by spirits come to the church. They do something here and ward off the spirits. Earlier it was a practice here. Now we can't find. Earlier, yes people used to come to get rid of Pishachu.

Varghese: Now the field of psychology is very advanced. Earlier, when somebody turns mad, people used to say she or he was possessed by Pishachu.

Kunjavarán: People believe that Achan learnt mantram from Pishachu. At last he returned to church and took refuge from them. He prayed to St Mary. Pishachukkal walked around the church and started beating with heavy chains. He was blessed by Mother.

Varghese: This is the story we hear around. I think there is a film also...I haven't seen. But you will get the story.

Appendix D

An Overview of the TV Serial *Kadamattathu Kathanar* (2004-05; Re-telecast 2016-17)

Season 1	Date	Subject	Remarks
Episode 1	28/03/2016	Madhavi goes into labour. Keshu takes her to vaidyan and he gets killed.	The introduction of a demon
Episode 2	29/03/2016	Yakshi kills Madhavi and Ramu	The first appearance of Yakshi in three forms
Episode 3	30/03/2016	Mepradan visits the family	The revenge element is introduced.
Episode 4	31/03/2016	Mepradan binds Yakshi	The concept of multiple Yakshis
Episode 5	1/04/2016	Neeli kills Mepradan	The Hindu sorcerer is unable to defeat the Yakshi
Episode 6	4/04/2016	Madavana meets Kathanar	The first appearance of Kathanar
Episode 7	5/04/2016	Kathanar's magical powers	Kathanar fights against caste discrimination
Episode 8	6/04/2016	Kathanar reaches illam	Kathanar cures illness
Episode 9	7/04/2016	Kathanar wards off evil creatures	Portrayal of snake as evil spirit
Episode 10	8/04/2016	Neeli appears as Panchali	Yakshi's ability to come in disguise
Episode 11	11/04/2016	Ammu apologises to Kathanar	Kathanar punishes the wrongdoers
Episode 12	12/04/2016	Kathanar calms down the elephant	Kathanar's ability to deal with violent animals
Episode 13	13/04/2016	Mankamma ditches Neeleswaran	The comic sub-plot in the episode
Episode 14	14/04/2016	Neeli surrenders to Kathanar and narrates her story	Kathanar's first encounter with Yakshi
Episode 15	15/04/2016	Neeli meets Kannappan	Flashback as another sub-plot

Episode 16	18/04/2016	Kannappan marries Neeli	Inter-caste marriage issues
Episode 17	19/04/2016	Neeli is burnt alive	Common pattern in Yakshi movies
Episode 18	20/04/2016	Kathanar tames Neeli	The idea of domesticating Yakshi
Episode 19	21/04/2016	Kathanar replaces the well and untie the robbers	Kathanar's forgiving nature
Episode 20	22/04/2016	Nagiyan instructs Chadayan and Nathan	Thread to the next season
Episode 21	25/04/2016	Neeli escapes	The specific plot element is taken from <i>Aithihyamala</i>
Season 2		Subject	
Episode 1	26/04/2016	Durgamma misleads Chadayan	Introduction of evil female character
Episode 2	27/04/2016	Chadayan is taught special mantras	Character development of Chadayan
Episode 3	28/04/2016	Chadayan kills guru	Character development of Chadayan
Episode 4	29/04/2016	Chadayan becomes an evil sorcerer	Character development of Chadayan
Episode 5	30/04/2016	Practice of virgin sacrifice	The idea of human sacrifice and sorcery occurs in film, theatre and serial
Episode 6	2/05/2016	Durgamma plots to kidnap Lakshmikutty	Introduction of Hindu deities
Episode 7	3/05/2016	Kathanar counsels the temple priest	Christian priest vs Hindu priest
Episode 8	4/05/2016	Thirumeni expresses his desire to Seetha	Seetha portrayed as an ideal wife
Episode 9	5/05/2016	Durgamma abducts Devayani	18 year old virgin girls are targeted
Episode 10	6/05/2016	Kathanar rescues Devayani	Introduction of new demons
Episode 11	7/05/2016	Demon haunts the villagers	Black cat as a sign of evil

Episode 12	9/05/2016	Kochukunju wins the match	Kathanar attributes heroic qualities in ordinary people.
Episode 13	10/05/2016	Kathanar transforms demon into dog	The reference of Satan
Episode 14	11/05/2016	Durgamma kidnaps Lakshmi	Tear-jerking scenes of typical Malayalam serials
Episode 15	12/05/2016	Kathanar rescues Lakshmi	Kathanar as a saviour of Lakhmikutty
Episode 16	13/05/2016	Temple door opens	Srikrishna blesses Lakshmikutty
Episode 17	14/05/2016	Durgamma sends a serpent to kill Lakshmi	The recurring evil motif of serpent
Episode 18	16/05/2016	Kathanar saves Lakshmi	High melodramatic elements
Episode 19	17/05/2016	Chadayan disguises as Kathanar	Similar narrative pattern in Shaktiman
Episode 20	18/05/2016	Kathanar confronts Chadayan	Kathanar vs evil sorcerer
Episode 21	19/05/2016	Chadayan is defeated	Kathanar defeats the first evil sorcerer
Episode 22	20/05/2016	Kathanar unites Seetha with her husband	Addition of melodramatic elements and happy reunion
Season 3		Subject	Remarks
Episode 1	21/05/2016	Ambika is taunted by Devika thamburatti	Conflict between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law
Episode 2	23/05/2016	Ambika is possessed by evil spirit	Theme of spirit possession
Episode 3	24/05/2016	Keezhettu Thirumeni visits illam	Repetition of narrative pattern
Episode 4	25/05/2016	Demon attacks thirumeni	Historical reference of the Kings of Cochin and Kozhikode
Episode 5	26/05/2016	Kulamana Potti refuses to help Udaya Varma	Conflict between Hindu sorcerer and Kathanar
Episode 6	27/05/2016	Ambika turns violent	Milk turns into blood

Episode 7	28/05/2016	Marthandan narrates his story	The theme of illegitimate child
Episode 8	30/05/2016	Madhavakuruppu loses to Bhanu in gambling	The serial's construction of the past by bringing old games
Episode 9	31/05/2016	Bhanu narrates her problems	The reference of Smarthavicharam
Episode 10	01/06/2016	Shankarakuruppu resorts to gambling	Melodramatic moments of mother and daughter
Episode 11	02/06/2016	Kuruppu loses to Bhanu	Dice game evokes the past
Episode 12	03/06/2016	Kuruppu is imprisoned	The loser has to work as a slave
Episode 13	4/06/2016	Bhanu challenges Paru	Kathanar comes for Paru's help
Episode 14	6/06/2016	Paru loses to Bhanu	Kathanar infuses magical powers to Paru
Episode 15	7/06/2016	Paru defeats Bhanu with the help of Kathanar	Kathanar helps ordinary people enjoy heroic moments in life.
Episode 16	8/06/2016	Potti invites Kathanar to his home	Kathanar vs Hindu sorcerer
Episode 17	9/06/2016	Kunju Ouseppu is deceived by Potti's demon	The recurring motif of demon
Episode 18	10/06/2016	Kathanar recovers his stick	Magic stick as prop
Episode 19	11/06/2016	Potti deploys a demon	Recurring motif of demon
Episode 20	13/06/2016	Potti fails to trick Kathanar	Boat reference from Aithiyamala
Episode 21	14/06/2016	Kathanar defeats Potti	Competition between Kathanar and Hindu sorcerer
Episode 22	15/06/2016	Kathanar wins over Potti	Second Hindu sorcerer is defeated
Episode 23	16/06/2016	Potti apologises	The concept of Odiyan
Season 4	Date	Subject	Remarks

Episode 1	17/06/2016	Odiyan attacks villagers	The representation of Odiyan
Episode 2	18/06/2016	Kathanar confronts Odiyan	The portrayal of feudal era
Episode 3	20/06/2016	Brahmasri Kilimangalam refuses to do Pooja	Third Hindu sorcerer in the entire season
Episode 4	21/06/2016	Evil things begin to happen at Vadakkan house	The recurring motif of blood
Episode 5	22/06/2016	Kathanar meets the children	Kathanar's affection for children
Episode 6	23/06/2016	Thirumala's spirit possesses Kunjava	The theme of spirit possession
Episode 7	24/06/2016	Kunjava frightens Seetha	The recurring motif of snake
Episode 8	25/06/2016	Kunjava kills Ambotti	Revenge element
Episode 9	28/06/2016	Kunjava kills Kunjunni	Melodramatic elements
Episode 10	29/06/2016	Kathanar visits the family	The next family approaches Kathanar
Episode 11	30/06/2017	Thirumala narrates her story	The representation of Malayarayan
Episode 12	1/07/2016	Thirumala's revenge	Kathanar consecrates the spirit
Episode 13	2/07/2016	Kathanar binds Thirumala	Kathanar conquers the evil power
Episode 14	4/07/2016	Kathanar counsels Kora	Kathanar resolves the fight between the local people
Episode 15	5/07/2016	Kathanar finds stolen money through his magical powers	Portrayal of the coastal fishing community
Episode 16	6/07/2016	Achankunju defies God	Kathanar's use of proverbs
Episode 17	7/07/2016	Achankunju gets stomach ache	Kathanar punishes the wrongdoers
Episode 18	8/07/2016	Kathanar's medicine cures Achankunju's illness	Kathanar walks on the sea, reminding one of Jesus
Episode 19	9/07/2016	Achankunju becomes a believer	Kathanar forgives the wrongdoers

Episode 20	11/07/2016	Ghost haunts the people	The second theme of spirit possession in the season
Episode 21	12/07/2016	Achankunju saves Pathrose	Kathanar appears as saviour
Episode 22	13/07/2016	Kathanar overpowers the spirits	Kathanar conquers evil powers
Episode 23	14/07/2016	Luka is after Kochuthresia	Kathanar takes care of the needy
Episode 24	15/7/2016	Luka kidnaps Kochuthresia	A Muslim character is introduced
Episode 25	16/7/2016	Kathanar saves Kochuthresia	Kathanar as a democratic figure
Episode 26	18/7/2016	Luka is punished	The reappearance of character Mankamma in season 1
Episode 27	19/07/2016	Mariamamma gets her gold back	Kathanar's use of proverbs
Episode 28	20/07/2016	Kochuthresia gets engaged to Agasthya	The appearance of Jesus
Season 5	Date	Subject	Remarks
Episode 1	21/07/2016	Nicholas visits the haunted bungalow with his family	Anglo-Indian family is introduced
Episode 2	22/07/2016	An evil spirit enters Allen's body	The theme of spirit possession
Episode 3	23/07/2016	Vaidyan examines Allen	Nathan in Season 2 reappears
Episode 4	25/07/2016	Allen gets lost in the woods	Moon as a recurring evil motif
Episode 5	26/07/2016	Allen is killed by an evil force	Highly melodramatic scenes
Episode 6	27/07/2016	Emily gets scared	Evil doll reminding Western horror conventions
Episode 7	28/07/2016	Emily sees a nightmare and gets scared again	The recurring motif of moon
Episode 8	29/07/2016	Parera meets Kathanar while Emily is possessed by the evil spirit	The recurring motif of blood

Episode 9	30/07/2016	Kathanar comes to Bungalow	Spirit possession
Episode 10	1/08/2016	Kathanar saves Aleena from Emily	Kathanar confronts the spirit
Episode 11	2/08/2016	Emily's evil deeds continue	The evil spirit is more powerful than other spirits
Episode 12	3/08/2016	Kathanar confronts the evil force	Western horror conventions
Episode 13	4/08/2016	Emily is saved and Kathanar leaves	Evil signs- doll, owl and dog
Episode 14	5/08/2016	Spirit possesses Nicholas	Spirit possesses the third body
Episode 15	6/08/2016	Perera returns to bungalow	Nicholas reminds one of Dracula
Episode 16	8/08/2016	Aleena is missing	The second child goes missing
Episode 17	9/08/2016	Nicholas follows Emily	Episode is dragged
Episode 18	10/08/2016	Kathanar stops violent Nicholas	Kathanar takes charge of the situation
Episode 19	11/08/2016	Emily worries about her plight	The repeated motif of blood
Episode 20	12/08/2016	Arthur and Clara comes for stay	Evil signs: dog's shadow, moon
Episode 21	13/08/2016	Nicholas turns violent and drags Emily outside the bungalow.	Kathanar comes in double role
Episode 22	15/08/2016	Kathanar wards off the spirit from Nicholas	Kathanar confronts his lookalike
Episode 23	16/08/2016	Itti turns out to be the villain	No cross for Kathanar's lookalike
Episode 24	18/08/2016	Evil forces in Ethenga tharavadu	Devil in black robe
Episode 25	19/08/2016	Manikyan and Devu falls in love and plans to elope	Evil signs: moon and bats
Episode 26	20/08/2016	Manikyan and Devu are murdered	Melodramatic elements
Episode 27	21/08/2016	Spirit of Manikyan kills Kunjikelan, Kuttimali and Naani. Elichedathi and daughters come to stay at Ethenga	The recurring motif of moon

Episode 28	22/08/2016	Eli chedathi and her daughters are in danger	Kathanar's favourite dish- rice and beef curry
Episode 29	23/08/2016	Ittithangoran informs Kathanar of a deadly monster at Thumbichi mala	The introduction of monster
Episode 30	24/08/2016	Rosamma walks in the night	Kathanar conquers the monster
Episode 31	25/08/2016	Saramma is possessed by the spirit	The theme of spirit possession
Episode 32	26/08/2016	Kathanar gives rosary to Eliyamma	New families visit Kathanar
Episode 33	27/08/2016	Saramma frightens everyone	Spirit possession at the peak
Episode 34	28/08/2016	Saramma continues to frighten	Sentimental scenes in serial
Episode 35	30/08/2016	Kathanar confronts Saramma	Kathanar vs evil spirit
Episode 36	31/08/2016	Kathanar saves Saramma	Bible verses are quoted
Season 6	Date	Subject	Remarks
Episode 1	1/09/2016	Chadayan returns to seek revenge	The reappearance of the first evil sorcerer
Episode 2	2/09/2016	Chadayan teams up with Vettiyala Vezhala guru and Mandana	Similar narrative pattern as seen in season 2
Episode 3	3/09/2016	Sreekrishnan saves Lakshmikutty from Mandana	Integration of the Hindu deities
Episode 4	4/09/2016	Sreekrishna blesses Mangamma	Integration of the Hindu deities
Episode 5	5/09/2016	Keettillakara king's secretary visits Kathanar for help	Kathanar decides to confront the scholar
Episode 6	7/09/2016	Kathanar competes with the scholar	Reminds one of Birbal Stories
Episode 7	8/09/2016	Kathanar defeats the scholar	Narrative pattern in Birbal and Thenali Raman stories
Episode 8	9/09/2016	Vettiyala guru sends snakes to scare the villagers	The recurring motif of snake
Episode 9	10/09/2016	Snakes scares the villagers	The reappearance of Kavilpuram

Episode 10	19/09/2016	Kathanar's life is in danger	Kathanar doesn't use magical powers to save himself
Episode 11	20/09/2016	Jesus saves Kathanar	Neeli's appearance as Yakshiyamma
Episode 12	21/09/2016	Vettiyan meets Neeli and restore her evil powers	Yakshiyamma turns into Yakshi
Episode 13	22/09/2016	Neeli targets Thomakutty	Chacko from season 4 reappears
Episode 14	23/09/2016	Neeli drops Thomakutty's corpse in front of Kathanar's house	The theme of spirit possession
Episode 15	24/09/2016	Chadayan enters Thomakutty's corpse	Kathanar cries-sentimental scenes
Episode 16	26/09/2016	Kathanar overpowers Chadayan and convinces Chacko	The idea of Yakshi targeting pregnant women
Episode 17	27/09/2016	Neeli prepares to kill Seetha	Pala tree as an evil sign
Episode 18	28/09/2016	Seetha is murdered	Highly melodramatic scenes
Episode 19	29/09/2016	Kathanar visits Killimangalam	Killimangalam makes his reappearance
Episode 20	30/09/2016	Neeli attacks Janaki	Yakshi's atrocities
Episode 21	1/10/2016	Neeli continues to scare villagers	Yakshi's atrocities
Episode 22	3/10/2016	Kathanar confronts the evil forces	Sri Krishnan appears as saviour
Episode 23	4/10/2016	Kathanar's magical powers fail	Kathanar is whipped and reminds one of Jesus
Episode 24	5/10/2016	God sends angel to save Kathanar	Kathanar gets divine help once again
Episode 25	6/10/2016	Kathanar defeats Chadayan and Mandana	Kathanar turns into an action hero
Episode 26	7/10/2016	Kathanar turns Neeli into Yakshiyamma	Kathanar's and Yakshi's abilities to fly

Episode 27	8/10/2016	Rajaguru predicts Jathavedan's early death	Prophecy is a recurring pattern in universal heroic stories
Episode 28	10/10/2016	Kathanar saves drowning Muhammed	Introduction of another Muslim character
Episode 29	11/10/2016	Jathavedan kills rajaguru	Universal heroic pattern
Episode 30	12/10/2016	Jathavedan orders to find the child who will become the future king	Kathanar's affection towards kids
Episode 31	13/10/2016	Nagadathan advises Jathavedan to murder Raman	New evil sorcerer is introduced
Episode 32	14/10/2016	Soldiers find Raman's house	Hero raised by surrogate parents is a recurring universal heroic pattern
Episode 33	15/10/2016	Jathavedan throws Raman off a cliff	Kathanar acts as a saviour for Raman
Episode 34	17/10/2016	Nagadathan comes to know that Raman is saved by a magical power	Integration of Hindu deities
Episode 35	18/10/2016	Nagadathan learns that Raman is in Kadamattom village	Highly melodramatic scenes
Episode 36	19/10/2016	Raman meets Kalyani and Mythili	Kathanar's use of proverbs
Episode 37	20/10/2016	Kathanar takes Chandootty and Mythili home	Bad omen for rituals
Episode 38	21/10/2016	Bhadrakan questions Kalyani Amma	Hero and his parents are united
Episode 39	22/10/2016	Soldiers kidnap Raman	Tear-jerking elements
Episode 40	24/10/2016	Kathanar rescues Raman	Kathanar acts as a saviour
Episode 41	25/10/2016	Jagavedan learns that Atmavedan and Indrani are still alive	Baby set adrift on a river-recurring universal hero motif
Episode 42	26/10/2016	Atmavedan and Indrani learns that Raman is their missing child	Lost chain acts as the connecting thread
Episode 43	27/10/2016	Atmavedan, Indrani and Raman are brought to the palace forcefully	Another episode of evil sorcery

Episode 44	28/10/2016	Kathanar confronts Jagavedan and Nagadathan	Kathanar confronts the evil sorcerer
Episode 45	29/10/2016	Kathanar rescues Raman	Kathanar overpowers evil forces
Episode 46	31/10/2016	Neelakandan and Madhava Padakuruppu are called to Pantheerampadam	Introduction of the character Krishnan
Episode 47	1/11/2016	Kathanar cures Kausu's illness	Kathanar's magical ability to cure illness
Episode 48	2/11/2016	Wanderer warns of bad omen in Kunnathu family	Sign of an impending danger
Episode 49	3/11/2016	Indraneelam gets stolen	The village is in danger
Episode 50	4/11/2016	Infectious disease in the village after indraneelam gets stolen	Tear-jerking scenes
Episode 51	5/11/2016	Krishnan meets Kathanar	The episode reminds of Krishna and Kuchela story
Episode 52	7/11/2016	Kathanar cures the disease	Kathanar's ability to cure illness
Episode 53	8/11/2016	Kathanar wards off the snakes	Snake as a recurring evil motif
Episode 54	9/11/2016	Neelakandan is accidentally hurt during the practice	Kathanar fights against untouchability
Episode 55	10/11/2016	Kathanar cures Neelakandan's injury and Kunjappan's illness	Kathanar's ability to cure illness
Episode 56	11/11/2016	Theramban kidnaps Janaki	New evil deity, Uchadavadakan
Episode 57	12/11/2016	Janaki is saved and Indraneelam is restored by Kathanar	Kathanar saves the village
Episode 58	14/11/2016	Kathanar saves Paru	Kathanar punishes the wrongdoers
Episode 59	15/11/2016	Prince Surya Varma is missing	The reference of Mar Abo
Episode 60	16/11/2016	Kathanar senses an evil presence	The new evil setting is cemetery

Episode 61	17/11/2016	Kunjouseppu visits Kathanar	Comic character Pullari Manthrikan is introduced
Episode 62	18/11/2016	Pullari sorcerer arrives at Thrippangottu Kovilakam	Pullari reminds of Neeleswaran in season 1
Episode 63	19/11/2016	Kathanar joins hands with Thevalla Kalidasan	Tear-jerking scenes
Episode 64	21/11/2016	Udaya Varma falls in love with Kalyani	Yakshi has a flashback story
Episode 65	22/11/2016	Kalyani waits for Udaya Varma	Secret ring-exchange reminding Shakuntala
Episode 66	23/11/2016	Udaya Varma kills Kalyani	The portrayal of white-saree Yakshi
Episode 67	24/11/2016	Kalyani's spirit kills Udaya Varma	Lord Ganapathi is introduced
Episode 68	25/11/2016	Spirit attacks the queen	The plotting of two evil spirits
Episode 69	26/11/2016	Kathanar and Kalidasan prepares to confront evil powers	Kathanar and Hindu sorcerer teams up
Episode 70	28/11/2016	Kalidasan disguises as Surya Varma	Kathanar's ability to become invisible
Episode 71	29/11/2016	Athikayan turns to be Vasudevan Namboothiri	Kathanar is called as 'holy man'
Episode 72	30/11/2016	Kalidasan and Kathanar succeed in their mission	The third consecration of Yakshi
Episode 73	1/12/2016	The new inmates of Chandanamangalam tharavadu	Kathanar gives refuge to poor Kutiyamma
Episode 74	2/12/2016	The spirit is out and appears as Gouri	New evil spirit is appears
Episode 75	3/12/2016	Gouri frightens Unnimaya	White saree Yakshi image is employed
Episode 76	5/12/2016	Unnimaya is possessed by Gouri	The theme of spirit possession
Episode 77	6/12/2016	Unnimaya attacks a worker	The atrocities of the spirit
Episode 78	7/12/2016	Gouri attacks villagers	Yakshi asking for lime

Episode 79	8/12/2016	Satyabhama notices changes in Unnimaya	The notion of Yakshi luring men
Episode 80	9/12/2016	Kathanar visits Chandanamangalam	Kathanar takes charge
Episode 81	10/12/2016	Kammaran is terrified	The atrocities of the spirit
Episode 82	12/12/2016	Kammaran is killed by the spirit	Spirit continues to attack
Episode 83	13/12/2016	Unnimaya attacks family members	Reference of <i>pathalam</i> in the oral versions
Episode 84	14/12/2016	Kathanar comes for help	Kathanar acts as a saviour
Episode 85	15/12/2016	Kathanar confronts four spirits	Kathanar's encounter with evil spirits
Episode 86	16/12/2016	Gouri attacks Satyabhama	Kathanar confronts the spirits
Episode 87	17/12/2016	Kathanar binds Gouri	Kathanar wins the battle
Episode 88	19/12/2016	Kathanar meets Nambiar on his way	Kathanar dreams of his sufferings, reminding Christ
Episode 89	20/12/2016	Evil presence in Nambiar's house	The theme of spirit possession
Episode 90	21/12/2016	Kathanar learns about Kadambari	The thread for the next sub-plot
Episode 91	22/12/2016	Evil box is brought to the house	Skull as an evil image
Episode 92	23/12/2016	Evil spirit strangles Nambiar	Reference of Tantric rules
Episode 93	24/12/2016	Kathanar locks the spirit	Kathanar's clever plans
Episode 94	26/12/2016	Unni is saved by Kathanar	New evil sorcerer appears
Episode 95	27/12/2016	Vairajathan sets out for a mission	Reference of human-sacrifice and sorcery
Episode 96	28/12/2016	Kathanar is in danger	Kathanar's dream turns true
Episode 97	29/12/2016	Vairajathan reaches kovilakam	Plotting of the evil sorcerer
Episode 98	30/12/2016	Vairajathan kidnaps Kathambari	The blessed daughter of the village is kidnapped
Episode 99	31/12/2016	The family approaches Killimangalam	Killimangalam makes his appearance again
Episode 100	2/01/2017	Kathanar comes for help	Kathanar's affection towards kids

Episode 101	3/01/2017	Kathanar and Sravanan set out for rescuing Kathambari	Kathanar on his next rescue mission
Episode 102	4/01/2017	Dangerous traps on the way	Sentimental scenes
Episode 103	5/01/2017	Kathamabari's attempt to escape fails	Obstacles for Kathamabari
Episode 104	6/01/2017	Rituals begin at Chitradurgam	Sorcery and rituals performed by evil sorcerer
Episode 105	7/01/2017	Kathamabari prepares for sacrifice	Sorcery and human sacrifice is another recurring pattern
Episode 106	9/01/2017	Sravanan fights with Vairajathan	The evil setting is forest
Episode 107	10/01/2017	Sravanan defeats Vairajathan	Kathanar attributes magical powers to ordinary people
Episode 108	11/01/2017	Kathanar's rescue mission succeeds	Kathanar remembers Krishnan
Episode 109	12/01/2017	Vasudevan and family visit Fr. Abel	New sub-plot begins
Episode 110	13/01/2017	Changes in Appu's behaviour	The theme of spirit possession
Episode 111	14/01/2017	Possessed Appu kills the astrologer	Evil powers at work
Episode 112	16/01/2017	Appu kills Bhargavan	Fight between sister-in-laws
Episode 113	17/01/2017	Archa was targeted by Appu	The atrocities of the evil powers continue
Episode 114	18/01/2017	Agnisharaman visits the family	New Hindu sorcerer comes for help
Episode 115	19/01/2017	Appu kills Agnisharman	The Hindu sorcerer is defeated by evil power
Episode 116	20/01/2017	Vasudevan approaches Kathanar	Reference of Kathanar's childhood
Episode 117	21/01/2017	Kathanar examines the situation	Serial employs flashback
Episode 118	23/01/2017	Kathanar enquires about Appu's background	The evil setting of cemetery is repeated
Episode 119	24/01/2017	Kathanar wards off the demon from Appu	Kathanar defeats the evil power by sacrificing his own blood and later gets divine help

Episode 120	25/01/2017	Lucifer in the guise of a priest	Lucifer as the new villain
Episode 121	26/01/2017	Durgamma is set free by Lucifer	The old evil character comes back
Episode 122	27/01/2017	Lucifer misleads villagers	Kathanar is attacked by people
Episode 123	28/01/2017	Durga disguises as Kathanar to trick the villagers	Bhattathiri saves himself from yakshi using the text Devimahatmyam
Episode 124	30/01/2017	Villagers apologise to Kathanar	Bhattathiri and Kathanar teams up
Episode 125	31/01/2017	Bhattathiri turns out to be Murugan and Kathanar wins the heart of the villagers once again.	Lord Murugan gains significance

Appendix E

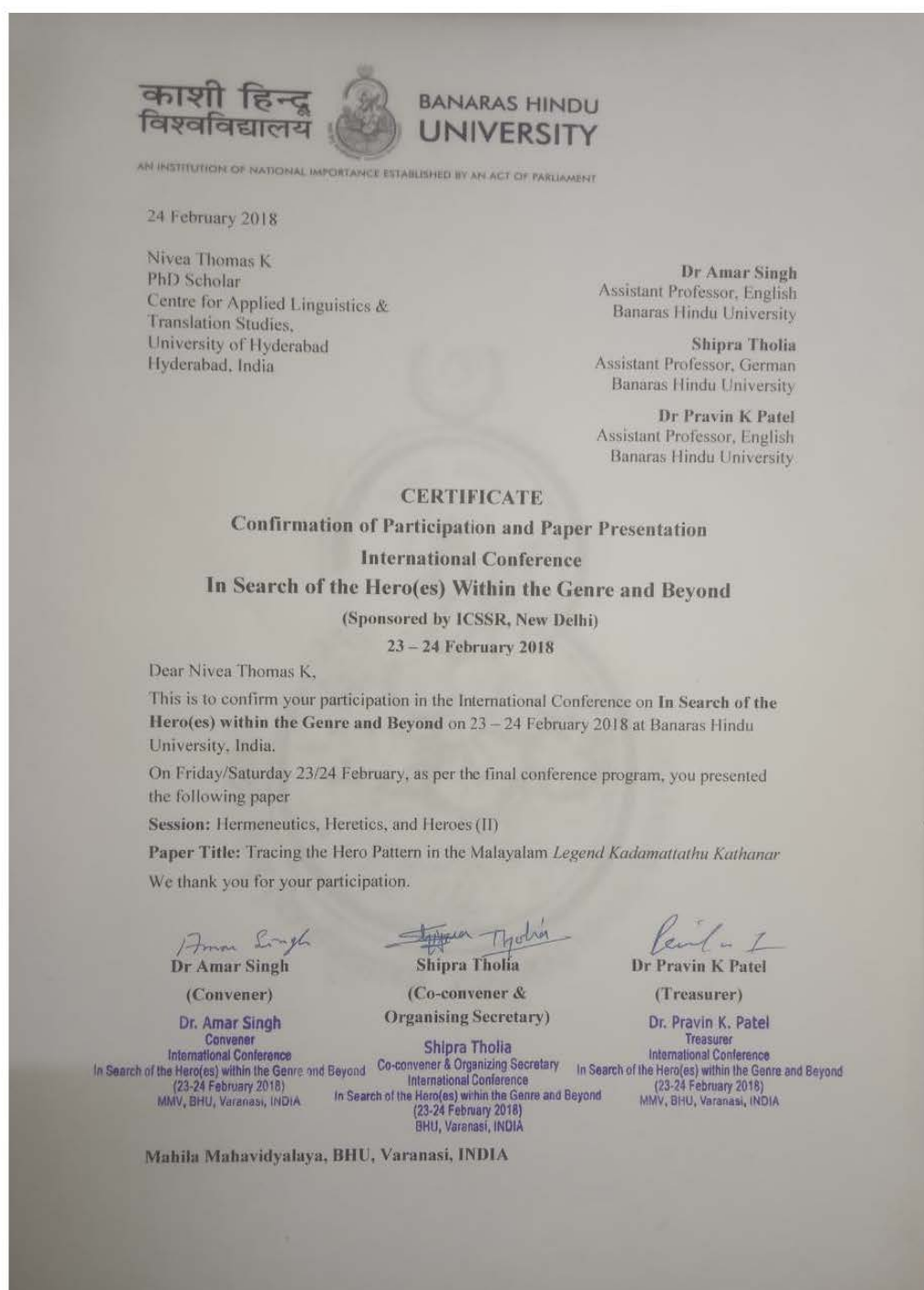
List of People Interviewed and Consulted

Sl No.	Name	Occupation	Place
1.	A.K Puthussery	Writer	Kochi
2.	Anantha Padmanabhan	Creative Head, Kalanilayam Stagecraft, Thrissur	Kodungallur
3.	Dr. K.M Anil	Project Director, Centre for Ezhuthachan Studies, Malayalam University	Tirur
4.	Dr. K.V Sasi	Assistant Professor, Cultural Heritage Studies, Malayalam University	Tirur
5	Dr. Scaria Zacharia	Former Professor and Head, Dept. of Malayalam, Sree Sankaracharya University	Changanassery
6.	Dr. Sunil P. Ilaydom	Professor, Dept. of Malayalam, Sree Sankaracharya University	Ernakulam
7.	Dr. V.V Haridas	Assistant Professor, Dept. of History, University of Calicut	Calicut
8.	Emil Kuriyan	Deacon	Kadamattom
9.	Fr. Prince Mannathur	Professor, MSOT Seminary	Kadamattom
10.	John Paul Puthussery	Script writer	Ernakulam

Appendix F



Appendix G



Appendix H

From Little Tradition to Great Tradition: Canonising *Aithiyamala*

NIVEA THOMAS K
S. ARULMOZI

Abstract

In an attempt to reinvent the tradition of Kerala in the light of colonial modernity, Kottarathil Sankunni collected and transcribed the lores and legends of Kerala in his work Aithiyamala in 1909. When the legends were textualised, Sankunni attributed certain literary values to the narratives to legitimise the genre. As it was a folk appropriation by a scholarly elite like Sankunni who had received English education during the colonial period, the legends moved from folk tradition to classical tradition. In their transition from Little Tradition to Great Tradition, the legends underwent huge transformation in terms of form, content, language, context and narrative style. The text became fixed, stable and structured and was eventually subjected to a canon. However, when one perceives Aithiyamala (1909) as the 'authentic' and the 'final' version of the legends in Kerala, one is neglecting and silencing the multiple oral versions and folk tradition that had been existing since the pre-literate period. The current study attempts to trace the transformation undergone by the text when it moved towards the direction of a literary canon.

Keywords: Legends Transcription, Great Tradition, Little Tradition, Literary Canon.

Introduction

Aithiyamala, a collection of lores and legends of Kerala was compiled by Kottarathil Sankunni in *Bhashaposhini* magazine in the beginning of the twentieth century. In his preface to

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