

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF
THE MINOR RESEARCH PROJECT
"ECOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE IN MUDIYETTU- A RITUAL PERFORMED IN
TEMPLES OF KALI IN KERALA

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'Mudiyettu' is a ritual performance exclusively pertaining to temples of goddess 'Badrakali'. This annually Performed ritual is intended to propitiate the goddess so as to in-walk the goddess to bless the land and its inhabitants with prosperity and wellbeing.

The onslaught of technological advancement and progress in the field of science has brought in many ravages to nature. At present we have started talking of the need for preserving ecological balance and regaining man's lost harmony with nature 'A back to Nature' movement even has become the dire need for man's existence. So looking into the past, searching for means to regain the lost harmony, one gets illuminating insight into the several ways by which the man of the past had existed quite in tune with nature. Naturally the search brings one to the ritual performances that existed among various 'peoples' and hence to the study of 'Mudiyettu'. A proper analysis of this ritual performance shows that it had a great role in tying men and society to nature and other life forms, promoting ecological balance.

Pieces of information gathered from the study of the ecological perspective in 'Mudiyettu', a ritual performed in the temples of 'Kali' in Kerala are as follows:-

- Mudiyettu is performed in various temples devoted to goddess Kali in Kerala without affecting the ecological balance of the nature.
- Mudiyettu is a ritual promoting the ecological balance in nature.
- The ritual indulges in the symbolic destruction of Darika, the evil power and protects the ecological balance and their by humans.
- Man and nature are complimentary to each other; Man's existence is wholly dependent on nature.

- Nature itself is a stage on which the ritual is performed.
- The rich variety of various medicinal herbs and plants in the groves where the ritual is performed serves as an effective remedy for a number of health hazards of men.
- The performance of this ritual reveals a cyclic inter linking of nature- man –mudiyettu-nature.
- The powder in the penta-colours used in the display of the picture of kali('kalamezuthu' is the first step of the ritual) is quite natural. These penta-colours are the same as those used in other Keralite pictorial art forms.
- The huge crown ('Mudi') of kali and crowns of 'Darika' and 'Danavendra' are made out of the pith of jack wood.
- All the costumes and ornaments worn by the performers of the Mudiyettu are made of natural items.
- All the items of facial makeup of the performers, like 'chayilyam' and 'manayola' and also the penta -coloured powders have medicinal impacts on the front epidemics as per ayurvedic system. These things are directly used in the treatment of other diseases also.
- The flowers used by kali in the worship after the killing of 'Darika' and those used in 'Gurusi' are of the five primary natural colours – Thulasi (Holy Basil) –green, ixora-red, arcanut inflorescence – white, sesame(gingelli)-black and paddy grain-yellow.
- There is a firm relationship between nature, man, ritual and healing (Ayurveda).Nature serves as a pivot in the relation in man- ritual- healing.
- The study of the ecological perspective in Mudiyettu brings out the fact that this ritual attains perfection only when it is performed in the lap of nature.