

Devi worship in Kerala: A historical and sociological analysis

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ABSTRACT: *Devi worship in Kerala had an antiquity and the sublime nature of the same attracted the attention of scholars from all parts of the world. The paper is an effort to understand the ritualistic and sociological importance of the same. Ever since its origin from pristine times, the cult of Devi prevailed among the elitist sections and marginalised groups with same intensity. The origin, non-Aryan influence, influence of heterodox religions, cult of the aboriginals, the sociological implications etc were analysed here. The evolution of structural temples, origin of Tantra, and development of ritualism in Kerala etc were estimated with precision. Even now the rituals and folk performances are woven around the cult of Devi in a projected manner. The matriarchal influence on this cult has great significance and valuable for gender studies. The cult looms large in the horizons of folk tales and figured in historical narrations as a theme of vibrant nature.*

KEYWORDS: *Devi, worship, ritualistic, sociological, elitist, marginalised, non-Aryan, heterodox, aboriginals, structural temples, folk, Matriarchal, gender, folk tales, historical narrations*

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I. INTRODUCTION

Almost all ancient or primitive societies worshipped female deities. Women played a major role in many ancient societies, including the early Vedic society. Matriarchal nature of certain societies gave a fillip to female deity worship. In primitive societies division of labour was vague and women played a major role along with men in the society. Female deities were worshipped as the embodiment of fertility and creation. They got great prominence due to their powers for controlling the forces of nature. Some female deities were represented in such a form that they bore arms which certainly marks the martial nature of those deities in the context of the beginning of the metal age. Ishtar, Astarte, Hera, Aphrodite, Athena, Cera, Minerva and Venus represent the potent nature of female pantheon in the ancient world. Not only the elite deities, but also the presence of female oracles in certain temples show the fact that female folk were not marginalised in ancient world. The form of worship in ancient world was democratic and egalitarian. But in medieval period, the power and prestige of women folk deteriorated and they were marginalised. In less complicated societies, women freely mixed with men in all social gatherings and commanded respect and obedience from the rest of the society. A clear example of the same is visible in the example of the Vedic society. While, the early Vedic societies gave full power to the women, in the later Vedic society their power and position deteriorated. In the Medieval period, their power and prestige again dwindled.

II. METHODOLOGY

The method adopted here is historical and descriptive. But analytical approach is also adopted in a qualitative manner. The evolutionary changes associated with different periods are analysed. Proper consideration is given to ethnological aspects and anthropological findings. Though the theme is localised history, its scope embraces a wide range of population from devotees to scholars and provide access to further sociological and gender studies. The study aims to assess the legacy of Devi cult in contemporary society in Kerala, which had strong matriarchal leanings. The cult, rituals, and tales associated with it is certainly fascinating. The study is mainly based on secondary sources and occasionally mentions about primary sources like Kali nadakam. The subject is very wide and for brevity we have to limit the number of sources

III. DISCUSSION

The Mother Goddess

In India the mother goddess played a major role in the pantheon of the Harappan people. The cult of mother goddess strongly prevailed in West Asia and India. The Places like Shoaib valley and Baluchistan were once the centres of Mother goddess cult. Probably this was due to the proto-Dravidian influence which is clearly

proved by philologists who studied the languages like Brahui in Baluchistan. Scholars like Father Heras pointed out the Proto-Dravidian influence on Harappan culture. Almost all Harappan cities were noted for the abundant presence of female figurines which clearly mark the evidence for mother goddess cult. "Small clay figures of women, scenes on seals and ritual objects, notably large stone lings and yonis phalli and vulvae) give glimpses of totemic survivals, of magic fertility rites and of personal deities arising out of them"¹. The term shishnadeva used by Aryans clearly point out the fact that the people of Harappa may be proto-Dravidian in nature. They were highly refined and believed in the efficacy of the cult of fertility and creation. The worship of lings, yonis and the element of Pushkarani or bathing tank in modern Hinduism is a remnant of this culture. Almost all archaeologists and historians who studied about the Harappan culture considered it as an urban culture. A pacific, highly polished culture with abundant amenities of city life. They might have possessed a high degree of gender equality where womenfolk freely used cosmetics and the representation in bronze statue of a dancing girl at Mohenjo-Daro points out the fact that women engaged in all worldly pursuits along with men. The assumption that Harappan culture is proto-Dravidian and matriarchal culture was strongly prevalent in Harappa is attested by archaeological evidences so far. Such a tradition may become a legacy of the people of South India in later days as available from the evidences of Harappan cities, it became clear that in such a society, Mother goddess might have played a great role as the embodiment of creation and fertility. She is represented as the preserver of the world and its main power is to sustain the universe.

Vedic period

The Vedic period was primarily patriarchal and only minor female deities appeared in the Vedic pantheon. Vedic female deities like Saraswati, Savitri, Aditi, Ushas and Aranyani were less important in the hierarchy of Vedic Gods. The Vedic pantheon was dominated by male Gods of anthropomorphic shape. The gods like Indra, Varuna and Agni loomed large in the horizons of Rigvedic Aryans. Some regions like Bengal, Assam and South India continues to be the centres of devi worship in various forms. Probably, the influence of Dravidian folk forced the Aryanization process to adapt primitive deities into the refined Brahminic pantheon. Apart from Lakshmi sukta in Yajurveda and Saraswati sukta in Rigveda, the Eastern and South Indian movement of the Aryan folk compelled the Aryans to assimilate the features of non-Aryan civilization. The etymology and references in Rigveda point out this fact. "Philologists have traced in detail the successive stages of this linguistic evolution, but we can only briefly refer to them. The old Indo-Aryan speech as typified by the Vedic and early Sanskrit altered imperceptibly and transformed into Middle Indo-Aryan and Prakrit". This transformation was not same in all parts of India. The language became more conservative in the North-West and changed to a great extent in South and East. The divisions like Udichya, Prachya, Dakshina and Madhya Desha point out this fact. Most of these linguistic changes occurred due to the eastward movement of Aryan folk which forced them to come in to contact with non-Aryan folk in such regions like Anga, Vanga and Kalinga.

Cultural changes and assimilation

Like the linguistic changes, changes occurred in other cultural fields especially in religious field. The patriarchal Aryan race had to assimilate the cultural traditions of primitive tribes in east and south. That is the reason for having a strong representation of female deities in the South and East India. In later days the sects like Bhagavatas, Shaktas, Souras, Shaivas, Ganapatyas and Jains acted for reducing the Aryan and non-Aryan difference. Mahayana worship and Tantrik Buddhism prevailing in various parts of the world show their influence on the worship of female deities in India. The main elements of the worship of the worship of modern Hinduism certainly derived from the influence of heterodox sects like Jains and Buddhists. Later, Hinduism adopted the features of these cults and rejuvenated itself by the assimilation of these features. Hinduism is an evolving religion during the period under consideration.

Evolution of Devi cult in Kerala

A close analysis on the Kerala society and religion will prove the fact that the devi worship in Kerala had a number of evolutionary streams. They are

1. Primitive war goddess like Kottavai acted as the precursor of devi worship in Kerala. She is the presiding deity of a particular eco-zone which demanded war as a major identity. The representation of Devi with arms has to be reckoned with. The question of martial nature and its propitiation through sacrifices is typical in a martial community.
2. The primitive influence of ancestor worship by raising megalithic tombs acted as a source of inspiration for the later devi worship. These Megalithic remains are the remnants of Sangam age. They are found along with iron weapons and belong to first five centuries of Christian era.
3. The worship of deities like Kali, and Gods like Ayyappan, Anthimahakalan and Pambu prevailed in Kerala society in ancient days. These cults might have prevailed along with nature worship and contained many natural features. A blind emotional fervour is attached with this Bhakti cult.

4. The influence of Tantrik cult in Buddhism and Jainism gave birth to the evolution of complex religious rituals associated with devi worship. Such an assumption can be made as the same happened in North India. In Kerala society we can certainly point out a number of examples as the legacy of Buddhism and Jainism. The female deity worship existed in these two religions in different ways.

5. The non-Brahmin element of worship is visible in the devi cult of Kerala which continues to the contemporary period. The non-sectarian character of the Sangam age became diluted and hierarchical society came in to existence. Though ancient communities lost their power and prestige, their mode of worship began to be assimilated in to the main fold of Hindu civilization of later days.

The war goddess Kottavai attained prominence during the Sangam period. She is the presiding deity of Palai ecological zone and worshipped by the people of Chera country. Kadu Kizhavol or Kadukal can be distinguished from Kottavai. Kottavai is identified with the Vindhya Vasini of the later period. Animal sacrifices were offered to propitiate her. Kalingathuparani of Jayan Gondar refer to forest dwellers and animal sacrifices. The Kottavi cult had similarities with the deities of North India. "Banabhata's seventh century drama Kadambari features a goddess named Chandi, an epithet used for Durga and Kali, who is worshipped by the Sabaras, a tribe of primitive hunters".

Kottavai cult

The Kottavai temple at Ayyaramala is famous. This goddess was worshipped by people of Palai region who engaged in war and looting of cattle resources. As professor Elankulam Kunjanpillai observed, the people of Kerala professed a non-sectarian attitude and propounded ancient Dravidian way of religious practices. Such rituals like animal sacrifices existed in Kerala society especially in devi temples. This can be considered as a vestige of ancient practice of offering Bali to goddesses as referred in Tamil works. This worship in ancient days demanded a strong union of the deity and devotee which demanded a strong emotional union between both. Such practises were a part of the rituals of Agricultural and pastoral societies. The temples like Sreekurumbakkavu, Panayannarkavu maintained such practises of animal worship. The Kuthiyottam in Chettikulangara devi temple is also derived from the practise of sacrifices. Later Brahmanas made substitute for this in their ritual ideology. This clearly points out a case of assimilation in to Brahminic ideology. "The culture of Kerala is a synthesis of Aryan and Dravidian cultures, developed and mixed for centuries, under influences from other parts of India and abroad."

Megaliths and beginning of ancestor worship

The second element which contributed to devi worship in modern Kerala is the practice of erecting burial stones like Thoppikkallu and Kudakkallu in megalithic days." Among the religious faiths of the Dravidian of South India, the most primitive one is the spirit cult or worship of semi divine spirits. Though it is practiced in different parts of the country, North Kerala and adjacent Dakshina Kannada district of Karnataka state have preserved this ancient form of worship in all its purity and elaborate formality with music, dance and rituals". This ritualism was supported by oracles, miracle stories and tales expounding the relation with human beings and divine beings. This concept developed from ancestor worship and the element of totemism, the cult of mother Goddess, serpent and tree is also associated with this. The spirit belongs to animistic origin, legends regarding heroes of the bygone age and the historical figures who had a tragic death were promoted to divinity or semi divinity. The above asserted sentence can be typically applied to such temples like Sree Kurumpa Bhagavathi temple at Kodungalloor. This temple is supposed to have been erected during the days of Chera ruler, Cheran Chengattuvan. The alleged story refers to the deification of Kannagi, a legendary figure who appear as the heroine of Chilappathikaram. "The Kurumpa Bhagavathi temple at Kodungalloor is supported to have been built in the Sangam age intended to commemorate the martyrdom Kannagi". The story of Kannagi is associated with the desham of Muvendar describing Kaveri pattanam, Madhurai and Vanchi. According to the story kannagi came to vanchi and attained martyrdom by slow starvation. The king Cheran chenguttuvan erected a temple at Vanchi commemorating that incident. The presence of northern gate in the temple is a typical practise associated with megalithic burials. In ancient days practice of erecting burial stones like Veerakkallu, Pulachikkallu etc. The personalities who met a tragic or heroic death were commemorated by erecting stones. Such stones or symbols associated with ancestor worship was converted in to traditional temples in later days. The practice of erecting Sivalinga on the Samadhi of a yogi is referred in certain biographies of 19th century Kerala. Many of such places used symbols and traditional temple style in later days.

Aboriginal worship

The feature of worshipping aboriginal and ancient gods like Kali, Karimkali, Antimahakalan, vettakkaran and pambu prevailed in ancient days. Most of these gods were worshipped in a simple fashion, a notable feature of primitive worship. The worship of Devi in Kavuvu, Kalari, Chempakathara, Kuriala and Elankam is common in Kerala. Probably this existed in a very ancient period, exactly saying before the

evolution of structured temples. “The temple architecture of the early phase is represented by temples built variously on square, circular and apsidal ground plans. Oblong or rectangular plan was also in vogue to enshrine the images of saptamatrikas. Side by side, there must have existed hypaethral temples, with a stone representing Bhagavati placed below some tree .” For example the mulasthana of Sreekodungallur Bhagavati temple can be located in Sreekurumbakkavu which represented a simple form of worship. It reminds us of the primitive ancestor worship that existed in all ancient societies. This temple lacks elaborate structural features visible in modern structural temples. It had no roof or outer wall. The elaborate structural features common to ritualistic temple is absent here. The devi worship in this temple contains primitive and sakttheya features. The temples like panayannarkavu, sharikavu etc also contain such features. Some ancient temples before a powerful state formation lacked such structural features of later temples. The elaborate structural features of temples like Sreekovil, Mulayara, Garbhagriha and Thidappalli aroused in later days and the same denote a redistribution of resources and surplus in temples. The history of land grants and elaborate Kachams of later days point out such a thesis.

Jain and Buddhist influence

The influence of Indian religions like Jainism and Buddhism can be clearly visible in temples like that of Kodungalloor. According to some scholars, Kannagi was a Jain nun who came to Vanchi during the time of Cheran Chenguttuvan. She committed Sallekhana, a typical Jain practise of committing death by slow starvation. The fact that Jain influence existed in Kodungalloor and adjacent places like Tiruvanchikkulam and Iringalakkuda is worth remembering in this context. The Buddhist Tantrik practises and Mahayana Buddhism influenced the structure and nature of religious beliefs in Central Kerala. Their strong presence might have forced the Brahmanas to accommodate and assimilate aboriginal practises within the framework of Brahmin ritualistic ideology. Buddhist practice of Sangha ,icons ,temples, festivals ,Kettukazha etc became an integral part of Modern Hinduism. “Most of the appurtenances of modern Hinduism such as temples, worship of images, utsavams (religious festivals) and religious possessions were all borrowed from the Buddhists “Even the Brahmin practise of Vegetarianism derived from Buddhists .Even before Brahmanism ,Buddhists tried in many places to refine their cultural identities to a pacific lines .Ashoka’s inscriptions clearly prevented animal sacrifices and samajas in North India. A similar initiative in the south was taken by Buddhists or percolated to South along with Buddhist missionaries.

Non-Brahmin features

The Devi worship in Kerala contain many Non brahmin features. “The fact that Kali is a war goddess and the fact that the Nayars belonged to the traditional warrior class may have special significance here. annual pilgrimage to this Bhagavati shrine during the Bharani festival in the month of Meenam (March/April) attracts toddy drinking, obscene shouting rabbles in thousands even today. Traditionally this has remained a masculine affair though the female folk of certain families regularly attend the service of the shrine”. This festival is a remnant of the period when Kodungallur adorned the position of the capital of Kerala. The presence of Non brahmin elements can be visible in other Devi temples also. Adissanmar, Kavilmussadu, Adikal and Pidaranmar enjoyed much ritualistic significance in temples like Panayannarkavu, Madai, Kalarivathukkal and Sharikavu in Koylandy. The living ethnological traditions certainly points out the conclusion that primitive elements and natural heirs of the soil played a majestic role in the religious ethos related with Devi cult. In Kodungallur temple each community had their own rituals associated with the temple. Even women had significant rights in certain parts of the temple. Kodungallur is one of the oldest temples in Kerala which had a Sangam lineage. In south Kerala Kaliyootu is associated with Bhadrakali worship. In a Kaliyootu ,Kali is depicted as a Pulaya girl. This nine-day festival is a typical example of the social participation by different communities. Karimkali is a theyyam performed by Vannan, panan and kulanadi. In Mudiyyettu, Marar and Kuruppan communities played a major role. This show the sociological implications of such kind of performances which are democratic in nature. In his religious environmental view, Stephen Elliggon points out the interpersonal and organisational relationship between religious communities. The scholars like Eugene Barba, Richard Sheckner, Peter Brook and Philip Zareilli studied about classical and folk theatres of Kerala.. “The default view, in his analysis is that religion consists mostly of beliefs, moral rules and organisations like churches. It sees the primarily the western religion of the dominant, and it needs to be broadened because it has excluded the religious way of the society’s excluded, subordinated and marginalised”. While classical theatres are elitist and wear the marks of ideological hegemony, the Subaltern theatres are marked for their emotional sublimation or catharsis. Their theatres are simple and noted for emotional fervour.

The rise of structural temples

The rise of structural temples in Kerala occurred in Medieval period. The iconography of Mahayanism and Saroopdhyana made a great impact in Devi worship of Kerala. The assimilation of above referred features helped the Brahmins to have intense ritualism based on Tantrik concepts. The rising power of the Brahmins

along with the increase in the power and prestige of structural temples might have helped them to integrate the different streams of worship prevailed in traditional Kerala. Vamachara and Saktheya traditions began to evolve within Brahmanism. The Agama and Nigama of ancient Tamil saints points out the origin of this tradition. The Tantrik practises is certainly very notable in the writings of such medieval saints like Sankaracharya. The Soundaryalahari of Sankaracharya points out lofty concepts of tantrik traditions. Tantra was popular in places like Bharatavarsha, Cina, Anga, Vanga, Kalinga, Saurashtra, Panchala and Utkala. Ritualistic men were divided in to Vaidik, Tantrik and Pauranik. The stories of saktheyas like Puliampalli Namboodiri, Bhadrakali Mattappalli and Kattumadhom points out the evolution of Saktheya traditions and Vamachara in Kerala. The Brahmin priests now used Pancha Makaras or freely accepted Matsya, Mamsa, Madya, Mudra and Maithuna. This aspect of Devi worship is a deviation from Vaidik traditions. The men of tantra used all luxuries of sensual life and enjoyed in worldly pleasures. They were advocating for a higher union with God through skilful and refined method. While, freelance Tantriks were liberal and dynamic in nature. Organised tantra developed along with temples. This flowered within the bosom of traditional Brahmin ideology. Probably, this suited for the emergence of the structural temples which acted as the centres of surplus distribution in the society. The social superiority of the Brahmins was justified by the ideological hegemony evolved through elaborate Tantras associated with temples.

Ritualism and Tantra

The growth of structural temples and Brahminism strengthened the evolution of ritualism associated with devi worship. The earlier emotional union with the deity by the aspirant in a primitive fashion now gave way to a sublime concept of ritualistic performance. Dr.ChelanattuAchutha Menon points out shakteya element in Bhagavathi seva. Tantra expounds shakti of knowledge, shakti of action and shakti of will. The essence of Kali worship is based on the concept that Kali and Thara are mahavidyas.” According to Mahanirvana tantra, Kali is aadya, the primal form of devi and Mahavidyas are her emanations.” The evolution of philosophy of tantra was visible in works like Nigamakalpatharu, Mahanirvanathantra and Mahakalasanghita. The growth of shakteya and tantra tradition gave different bhavas to Kali like, Dakshina Kali, Bhadra Kali, Smashana Kali, Guhya, Kamakala, Dhanasidhi and Chandika Kali. Not only bhavas, but also iconography also developed due to the impact of tantra. Kali was portrayed with weapons. Kali is the Goddess of dark colour, her face alone being red. She carries in her two hands, a lotus and a Kalpa. She is a destroyer of fear.The primitive fear of the common folk was now transformed into a sublime devotion of unity with growth in philosophy and iconography. Kali is essentially a Shaiva Goddess, while Durga had Vaishnavite leanings. The Chovva Bhagavathi in Malabar, the deities of Chovvara, Chovvannur and Chovvalloor represent the Kali worship. The Chamundi and Rurujaith of ancient Nairs also point out fierce form of worship. Such a portrayal of Kali was justifiable due to the needs of the time. That may be the reason for portraying Kali in a classical sense, demands developed ritualism allied with other corollary features including Varnana, Bhava and iconography. In democratic performance, Kali’s narration is singular and popular in character. It is suited for a democratic performance. Text or contexts exalting the Mahadevi (great Goddess) however usually affirm Shakti to be a power or the power underlying ultimate reality or to be the ultimate reality itself. Instead of being understood as one of two poles or as one dimension of the divine, Shakti as it applies to the Mahadevi is often identified with the essence of reality.

Devi worship in folk traditions

Earlier Kali worship was simple in its nature. Pana is the oldest form of Klai worship in Kerala which is performed by giving maximum importance to Paala maram or AstoniaScholaris. The performance like thiriuzhychil, thaalappoli, mudiyettu, paaranattu, kuthiyottam, theyyam and thiyattu had great importance in propitiating Kali. Many of these rites are performed by marginalised group of people who were controlled by social taboos. These ritualistic performances are very much different from temple rites and pujas. The democratic and popular aspect of modern Kali worship is derived from ancient traditions. The cultural symbiosis and synthesis helped the Brahmins assimilate Kali worship in the traditional Hindu fold. During this period, Aryanization process was at its highest. The evolution of structural temples and ritualism and the promotion of the Brahmin ideology gave new garb to the Kali worship. Many of the performances related to Bhadrakali worship are performed by low class people. For example, Mannan occupies a low position in traditional Kerala social ladder. But Mannan thottam had great ritualistic importance. The oracles in many temples belong to lower castes. Such rituals like Mudiyettu and Kulavazhavettu in Central Travancore is performed by lower caste people, like the Ezhavas. The women oracles in Kodungalloor highlight the importance of women folk. Many of the rites associated with Kodungalloor temple became the rights of women. The Palakkal Velan in Kodungalloor had certain ritualistic rites to cure devi from the wounds of fight with Daruka. With the pujas of Velan, Shakteya puja is offered to devi. Similar examples are visible in Panayannarkavu, Sharikavu andMadayikavu. The martial traits of Kuthiyottam and the folk stories regarding Theyyam in North Kerala upheld the non-Brahmin element of worship. The concept like Chudala Bhadrakali

points out this aspect. Thus, Kali worship in Kerala had a proud democratic basis hailed by lower caste people and other people like Nairs. The emotional propitiation of Kali at Kodungalloor temple on Meenabharani days certainly proves the ancient rites of the non-Aryan castes like Nairs, Ezhavas, Velan, etc: Even women were not marginalised in such an occasion. Such emotional fervour and union with the divine being in a democratic manner is evident at Kodungalloor temple on Meenabharani day. The later Shakteya tradition grew out of this emotional union of the democratic structure of devi worship. "Puranic growing around the nucleus of material that the early literature simply calls purana, though we may not know what the nature of the material was. But it is imperative, in this regard that we see this growth as Hindus do, i.e., against its Vedic background."

IV. FINDINGS

1. The cult of Devi had universal significance and it originated among the ancient inhabitants of Kerala and India.
2. The cult is prevalent among subalterns and elitists of Kerala in different ideological back grounds.
3. The cult is influenced by matriarchal leanings and a strong theme for gender studies in Kerala.
4. The cult still prevailing in Kerala with modifications but maintains traditional attire on sociological reasons.
5. The cult point out historical, sociological, cultural and aesthetic values.

V. CONCLUSION

In ancient societies, worship of Gods and Goddesses had a democratic structure. All sections of people including the lower castes and women folk nourished certain privileges in the worshipping centres. With the Aryanization process, a cultural symbiosis occurred in Kerala society. The same process occurred in all parts of India, especially in East and South. This may be due to the infiltration of the Aryan folk and because of the hegemonic ideological process which was guided by a patriarchal society. The ancient war Goddesses, the megalithic tradition of worshipping the ancestor spirit and the worship of primitive Gods like Kali and Ayyappa prevailed in Kerala society. These offerings were simple and egalitarian in nature. Proper representation was given to lower castes and women in this performance. Later with the advent of new religions like Buddhism and Jainism, the traditional Vaidik cult were forced to assimilate certain features of the democratic form of devi worship. This process started with increasing Aryanization and with the growth of structural temples. Now, the ancient simple rites and emotional fervour attached with the devi worship in a democratic society was converted to a complex ritualistic performance offered by Brahmins. The development of Shaktism in Kerala can be viewed from this angle. The stories of Brahmin houses performing Vamachara is significant. It is certainly a departure from the old Vaidik traditions. With the growth of temples, iconography, philosophy and ritualism, the ancient simple rites were transformed into a complex pattern of rituals nourished by the Brahmin class. But the vestiges of the democratic structure of ancient devi worship is visible in ancient temples like Kodungalloor, Panayannarkavu, Madayikkavu and Sharikavu. This assumption is evident from comparative studies and ethnological traditions which are prevailing in different parts of Kerala. The performance of classical theatre in Kerala is different from folk theatres. While classical tantra became elitist, ritualistic and temple oriented, folk propitiated their goddess in an emotional grandeur. There the process was simple, and woven around folk traditions. Many symbols of folk traditions are still visible in Devi worship. This can be identified from the objects of worship and its narration. The most popular tradition in Kerala, Kali having victory over Darika has been differently portrayed in different customs. The words, music, instruments and even objects used for Kali worship is denoting a marked difference. This suggests local variations and sociological patterns. Kali is the destroyer of time like past, present and future. Her wild hair is portrayed as a protest against social norms. The folk tantra and theatres woven around Kali help us to reintegrate all wild impulses and enter in to a stage of highest imagination and dreams.

Suggestions

1. Hindu cultural traditions must be viewed from the angle of a cultural symbiosis. It is not monolithic but contain diverse cultural elements.
2. Protecting ancient cultural monuments so as to keep original purity and pristine nature. This may help us to arrive at conclusions of historical nature in a more sober manner.
3. The art and architecture related with temples should be closely analysed to understand the pedagogical and aesthetic values.
4. The subaltern and elitist narrations of devi cult should be analysed in an academic manner. This will certainly attract young historians to imbibe ethnological values.
5. Historian should maintain utmost objectivity in analysing ethnological sources. His duty is neither to love past nor to condemn it. But to cherish the moral values lying in these folk narrations.

6. The relation between man and nature should be reanalysed by projecting the fact that ancient worship and society had a more reciprocal relations with nature.
7. To develop and encourage the common folk to visit the structural and living remnants of the past age.
8. Devi worship is certainly a feel which inspires the people and scholars to form gender-based studies in religious context.
9. Appreciating the attempts of UNESCO and other reputed institutions to recognize certain features associated with devi cult as a part of our cherished heritage.

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