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# Indian Streams Research Journal

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## CENTERS OF WORSHIP IN KOLLAM TALUK, KERALA



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### ABSTRACT

Kollam district came into exist on July 1, 1949. It is situated on the north of Alappuzha and north east of Pathanamthitta districts, on the east of Tirunelveli district of Tamilnadu, on the south of Thiruvananthapuram district and on the west of Arabian Sea. Kollam, the capital of the erstwhile Venad, was the greatest centre of learning and culture. In Kollam people of different castes and religions co-exist and so the culture of Kollam also is a mixture of several cultures. There are many centers of worship in Kollam Taluk, including temples, mosques and churches. People belonging to different religion live here in communal harmony. The famous pilgrim centers of Kollam taluk are

Rameswaran Siva temple, Sree Krishna temple at Asraman, Thirumullavaram Sree Maha Vishnu temple, Sree Muruka temple at Umayanellur, Pukayila Pandakasala Sree Maha Ganapathi temple,Puthi kavu Sree Bhagavathi temple, Anandavalleswaram temple, Infant Jesus Church, Thuyyam St. Sebastian church, Marian Pilgrimage Shrine Pullichira, Holy Cross Church Thangassery, CSI Christ church, Marthoma Church, Kollam Valliya Palli Jama Attu, Pattalathu Palli, Chinnakkada Jama Attu Masjid etc



**KEY WORDS:** Worship, Temple, Mosque, Church, Kollam

### INTRODUCTION

A centre of worship is a specially designed erection or holy space where individuals or a group of people such as worshipers come to implement acts of devotion, veneration, or religious study. Temples, churches, and mosques are examples of structures created for worship. They played a vital

role for the modulation of human culture. Centers of worship are places of harmony and humanity. They are constructed not only for the religious purposes but also for the development of human culture. In the ancient period they also acted as educational centers. Here the cultural and social activities started and thrived the people for civic rights. In Kollam so many centers of religious worship. As different caste and religious people are dwelling in Kollam taluk, it is a centre of many temples, churches and mosques, etc. here an attempt is made to highlight the main temples, churches and mosques of Kollam.

### Temples

Temples are the seats of Hinduism. From the ancient period the people of Kollam followed Hinduism and as a symbol of their piety they constructed many temples, big and large at different parts. Many of the ancient temples are existing till now, through some renovative works have been done by time.

#### Rameswaram Siva temple

It is believed that Rameswaram siva temple is older than 1100 years. It is having some historical significance. Kollam was ruled by Rama Varma Kulasekhara () with Mahodayapuram as its capital. During the time of Chola king, Kulothunga attacked Quilon and its capital. The Cholas made an encounter against them. In this attack some of the brahmins from the Chola army lost their lives. This war lost the Cheras. As an atonement the king of Quilon constructed this temple. As per the Chaturvarnya system (law of Hinduism) a non-Brahmin have no right to kill a Brahmin and if so he had to pay a fine. Therefore the king had granted tax free land to the brahmins along with some land to the temple. Thus the Rameswaram temple was built. After this incident the Chera ruler Rama Varma Kulasekhra left Mahodhayapuarum and settled in Quilon and started some negotiations with the Cholas. Because of these negotiations the Cholas retreated from Quilon and Quilon came under the control of Chera Empire. Later this temple is dedicated to Lord Siva. This temple is having some Architectural importance.

This west facing Mahadeve temple is famous for its sculptures. There are two small gopurams in west and north and also there is a copper dwajam (kodimaram) in front of the balikkalpura. The rectangular sreekovil has a pyramidal roof. The Sreekovil and Namaskaramandapam are decorated with beautiful stone and wood sculptures. Valiyambalam and Balikkalpura are in typical Kerala style. Sub deity shrines such as Ganapathi, Sastha, Subramanya, Parasurama, Dashinamoorthy, Naga devathas and Bhagavathy are located near to the Sreekovil. Now this temple is under the administration of Travancore Devaswom Board. There are three poojas daily. Rudrabhishekam and Dhara are the main offerings. The annual festival of this temple is celebrating on Thiruvathira day of Makaram (January – February) which is the birthday of Lord Siva. This festival will last for eight days from Uttrattadi to Thiruvathira.

#### Pukayila Pandakasala Sree Maha Ganapathi Temple

Pandakasala Sree Maha Ganapthi temple is dedicated to lord Ganesa. The original name of this temple is Chenteer Vinayaka Temple. This temple was constructed during the period of Jayasimha, the Venad ruler and built by the crafts men of Tanjavur. Lot of inscriptions had seen in this temple was very ancient and which engraved between 660-675 C.E. by King Kerala Varma. It is believed that this temple is the Mooriyitta Ganesha temple mentioned in the Unnineeli Sandesha, the ancient Malayalam literature. It is also considered as Chintadurai Vinayakar. This Chintadurai Vinayakar was later

transformed as Chenteer Vinayaakar. But some legends says that this temple was constructed by the tobacco merchants of Ceylon (present Srilanka) and hence it got the name Chenteer Vinayaka.

This Ganapathi temple is facing towards north and famous for its sculptures. The architectural style of this temple is similar to Srilakan architecture. This temple is of five layered structure and the walls were decorated with beautiful stone sculptures. There are two daily poojas. Vadamala is the main offering. The annual festival of this temple is conducting the day of Vinayaka Chaturthi the birthday of Lord Ganesha which falls in the month of October.

#### Umayanalloor Sri Balasubramaniya Swami Temple

Umayanalloor Sri Balasubramania (Murugan) Swami Temple is situated 8km away from Kollam railway station. The temple is 2000 years old and the consecration was done by Jagat Guru Sankaracharya. Since the temple is dedicated to lord subramaniya the place is came to be known as Umayanalloor. Umayanan means Subramaniyan son of Sri Parvathi (Uma). Legend says that this temple was built by the women ruler of Venad dynasty, Umayammarani. She was the daily visitor of this temple and in commemoration of her visit a statue of the rani has been erected in front of the temple.

The unique feature of this temple is that the idol faces the western direction. The architecture of this temple was in typical Kerala style. Sub deity shrines such as Ganapathi, Naga devathas and Bhagavathy are located near to the Sreekovil. The annual festival of this temple is celebrating on "Karthika" day of Meenam (March-April). This festival will last for eight days from Avittam to Karthika. Its Aana Vaal Pidutham Mahotsavam was very famous in all over the state. The Ganapathi Homam, Muzhukkapu, Sahasra Namarchana and Raktha Pushpanjali are the main offerings here. This temple was under the control of Akavoor and Umanpally manas. But now it was fully under the control of Travancore Devaswam Board.

#### Anandavalleswaram Temple

Anandavalleswaram temple is located 2 Km away from Kollam railway station. This temple is having some historical significance. During 1800 there were so many Siva and Vishnu temple in Kollam but in 1806 some of them were destroyed and some others were encroached by the temple authorities from the hand of the Dewaswam. Apart from some temples pujas were not doing regularly and nearby the places under the control of Koyikkal palace. Because of this Velutampi Dalawa constructed a new temple. After the reconstruction Lord Siva was erected on the east side and Amman was on the west. The architecture of this temple was in typical Kerala Style. Sreekovil is in square shape with one story covered and decorated with wooden sculptures. There is a chuttambalam around the temple and golden dwajam (kodimaram) in front of the balikkalpura. Sub deity shrines such as Ganapathi, Sastha, Sri Krishna, Subramaniyan, Bhoomi devi, Naga devathas and Bhagavathy are located near to the Sreekovil. There are two daily pujas. Swayamvarachana and Dhara are the main offerings of this temple. The annual festival of this temple is celebrating on "Thiruvathira" day of Meenam (March- April). This festival will be last for ten from Chathayam to Thiruvathira. Through this temple is under the control of Travancore Devaswam Board. The temple authorities also have some administrative right upon this temple.

#### Sree Krishna Temple at Asraamam

Asraamam Sree Krishna temple stands a treasure of cultural tradition to Kollam. This history of this is connected with the history of Kollam. It was constructed in 1000 C.E. by Adithya Raman, the ruler of Venad. During his period this place was known as Adithyaramapuram and later it changed as

Asnapuram and now it is known as Asraamam.

The unique feature of this temple is the idol of Lord Krishna in the form of Navaneet Krishna or Krishna with butter in his hand. The temple is constructed in the typical style of Kerala temple architecture. There are two small gopurams in west and north and there is a dwajam in front of balikkalpura a rectangular sreekovil with pyramidal roof is also there. The sreekovil and namaskaramandapam are decorated with stone sculptures. These sculptures depict the stories of Bhagavat Gita. Sub deity shrines such as Ganapathi, Navagrahas, Sastha and Naga devathas are located near the sreekovil. It is the cradle of Kathakali and also gives much importance to other temple arts. There are two pujas daily. From 1992 Kollam Pooram is celebrating in association with this temple. The annual festival is celebrating on the very day of Vishu the Malayalam New Year which falls in the month of April.

#### Thirumullavaram Sree Maha Vishnu Temple

Thirumullavaram Sree Maha Vishnu Temple is one of the important temples in Kollam taluk, which is under the control of Travancore Devaswam Board. According to folklore this temple was one of the seven, established by Parasurama, the creator of Kerala from the sea.

This temple is having twin consecration of Lord Siva and Vishnu. Vishnu is facing on the west and Siva on the east, constructed as per Kerala temple architectural style. The sreekovil is in circle shape and out of the nalamblam sub deity shrines such as Bhuvaneswari devi, Rakshas and Naga devethas are located and there is a gold dwajam (kodimaram) in front of balikkalpura. There is a temple pond situated behind the temple which is few feet away from Arabian Sea. There are three pujas daily. The temple administrative committee provide dinner for devotees every day. It's famous for pithru-bali. Thousands of people assemble here to offer bali to their ancestors, on Karkkadaka- vaavu day. Aana vazhipadu is the main vazhipadu of this temple. The annual festival of this temple is celebrating on "Atham" day of Meenam (March-April). This festival will last for ten days from Rohini to Atham. With the procession of forty caparisoned elephants.

#### Kollam Puthiyakavu Devi Temple

Puthiyakavu temple is one of the oldest temple in Kollam taluk. Sreekovil was in square shape has a pyramidal roof and there is a gold covered Dwajam in front of the Balikkalpura. The Sreekovil and Namaskaramandapam are decorated with wood sculptures. Bhadrakali is considered as the main Goddess. Sub deity shrines as Sree Ganapathy, Sree Parameswaran, Durga, Ayyappan, Hanuman, Madan Thampuran, Yogeewara Swamy, Navagrahangal and Nagadevethas are located near to the Sreekovil.

There is three pujas daily. Ponkala festival on the last Friday of month Kumbham (March- April) attracts thousands of ladies. "Manjaneerattu" (yellow bathing) and "Karakam" procession conducted during Ponkala give happiness and enjoyment to the devotees. Even from distant places ladies reach there for offering "Rahukala Naranga Deepam" on Tuesday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday. The annual festival of this temple is celebrating on Aswathi day of Meenam (March-April) which is the birthday of Goddess Bhadrakali. This festival is last for eight days from Uthrattadi to Aswathi. Annadanam (offering food) is done daily in Kollam district hospital for the last five years by Puthiyakavu Devasam. Devasam also runs a central school in Puthiyakavu. Devasam is also providing treatment facility and help for economically backward people.

The Chennamathu Mahadeva temple at Chattannoor, datable to 13th century has exquisite carving of Devatahs of Ganesa, Uma Maheswara, Saastha, Narasimha, Vishnu and Durga. The



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important offering of the temple is dhaara. The Devi temple at Chittumala an ancient one, the present structure datable to 12th-13th century. It has great architectural importance also. The Vatayattukottah Sree Krishna temple is famous for uriyadi conducted during the Ashtami Rohini festival. The Trikkadavur Sree Siva temple is also a major temple in this taluk. The Kottakulangara Sree Bhagavathi temple and the Panakkalthodi Devi temple are also well known. At Kilikollur there is a temple dedicated to Kandan Saastha. Sree Maha Ganapathi temple at Kacheri has gained great importance.

### Churches

Churches are the Christian worshipping centres. Christianity emerged in India after the arrival of St. Thomas, one of the disciples of Jesus Christ in 52 A.D. St. Thomas established churches in different parts of Kerala, especially in Kollam. There the catholic religion started and Protestant Christianity began to spread here after the arrival of C.M.S and L.M.S missionaries. They all established churches and they play a pivotal role for the spread of Christianity and western culture. Major churches in Kollam are as follows.

#### Infant Jesus Cathedral, Tangasseri

The Infant Jesus Church is a historic Roman Catholic Church established by Portuguese in 1614. There is history behind the construction of this church. Tangasseri came under the control of the Portuguese in 1503. In 1544 Saint Francis Xavier established a church at Tangasseri known as Bom Jesus Church. In the course of time this church was demolished. Later in 1614, the Portuguese established the Infant Jesus Church here and dedicated it to Saint Francis Xavier. Later in 1661 the Dutch gained over the control of Tangasseri and tried to destruct the church. But in 1789, the Carmelite missionaries, who have arrived in Quilon and renovated this church. Infant Jesus Church is serving as the pro-cathedral of Kollam diocese since 1886. The present church was reconstructed in 2005. The architecture of this church is in Portuguese colonial style. In 2014, 400th anniversary of Infant Jesus Church was celebrated with great manner. The church remains as a memento of the Portuguese rule of the old Quilon city.

Over the years, the church had played a pivotal role in the social, cultural and educational aspects of residents of Tangasseri, majority members of the church are from the Anglo-Indian community. The Infant Jesus Anglo- Indian High School and the Mount Carmel Anglo- Indian Girl's High School, were associated with this church.

#### Holy Cross Church, Tangasseri

In 1848, Varappuzha Carmelite diocese founded a church in Kochi known as Santha Cross church. During the same year Jo Vakkim Nevis, the bishop of Kodungaloor and Kochi founded a new church in Tangasseri known as Santha Cross church. This church was under the control of the bishop of Cochin. After 1848 the church was renovated three times. The reconstruction of the Church commenced on 14 September 1992 and it was blessed on 15th August 1995 by Fr. Joseph Martin and renamed as Holy Cross Church. Now it is one of the most important church of Kollam dioceses. The old church had a large multi- coloured stained glass window pane that reflected rainbow rays of sunlight into the altar below. From the beginning this church has engaged in several social activities. Such as poor fund for the benefit of poor people, medical help, helps rendered for the widows etc. St. Patricks' L. P. School is run by the church, since 1932 and now is aided by the Kerala Government. Tangasseri Holy Cross Mutual Benevolence Scheme was undertaken by the Holy Cross parish since 2013.

St. Joseph's feast and Secret Heart's feast are celebrating in the church annually. The feast of the "Triumph of Holy Cross" falls on 14 September. Also an eleven day celebration of the confraternity (8

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December) and the feast day of our lady of the Immaculate Conception.

##### Pullichira Church

Pullichira church is a famous Marian pilgrim center which is situated on the banks of Pullichira Lake. It is believed that this church was constructed by the followers of St. Thomas. However the historical evidences proves that it was constructed in the 16th century when a Portuguese ship rescued from wreck. The sailor of the ship had saved from a perilous sea storm with the intercession of Our Lady. As a symbol of this miracle he placed the statue of Virgin Mary in a box and floated it into the Arabian Sea. And it was promised that, a church will be constructed in the place where the box of the statue will be restored. It was this miraculous statue that reached the shores of Pullichira around 1520 C.E. the faithful flowers of Pullichira gladly placed the statue in the then existing small church. Then after the arrival of the Portuguese in Quilon they replaced the old church and built a new church in the same place in 1572 C.E. with a beautifully carved wooden altar, at the top of which they installed the miraculous statue of Our Lady. But that church was reconstructed in 1971 and a new church was blessed in 1974 and in 2004 it was declared as Marian pilgrim shrine by Rt. Rev. Dr. Stanly Roman of Kollam.

The feast of Our Lady of Immaculate Conception church, held every year during the second and third week of December. This is a ten day long festival and during the last three days of feast, the miraculous statue of Virgin Mary is brought down from her position above the alter and taken around the church in a procession. Besides this, other feasts celebrated here are St. Sebastian's feast in the month of January, Lourdes Matha Feast in the month of February, St. Joseph's feast in the month of March, St. Antony's feast in the month of June, Carmelite Matha Feast in the month of September and Fatima Matha feast in the month of October.

##### Thuyyam St. Sebastian Church

Quilon was an important center of St. Thomas tradition and at Quilon he founded one of the seven churches in century. But that church was destroyed by sea erosion. After that in 1510 the Portuguese constructed a new church in the same place known St. Peter and Paul church. However because with the British attack this church was demolished the Portuguese and rebuilt a new church near the Kollam town and named as Thuyyam St. Sebastian church in 1745. In 1845 it was raised as a cathedral under Kollam dioses and from 1845-1905 the bishops of Quilon was stayed there and in 1912 a new divine idol was erected in the church yard. In 2008 it was renovated and blessed by Fr. Stanly Roman and in 2010 it was declared as the Mata Pilgrim shrine by Fr. Stanly Roman.

##### C.S.I Christ Church

The C.S.I Christ Church in Kollam has its root in the erstwhile London missionary society. William Tobias Ringel Taube, a missionary of L.M.S. arrived in south Travancore in 1806 and commenced the missionary work. The mission wanted to build a church in Quilon but at that time their request was not accepted by Veluthampi Dalawa. But during the Resident ship of Lord Macaulay, missionary work was propagated. Rev. John Smith came to Quilon in 1821 and he made evangelical work along with social, educational and medical activities. The acting Resident Major. Steve and one another army officer Major. Jover gave full support for Smith activities. In 1821 Smith brought a land and first he constructed a school at there and within a short period he also established eight school in and around Quilon. The financial support for the school construction was made by his close Miss. Cravens an Anglo- Indian lady and also he put his own share with this. Thus in 1826 the first protestant church in Quilon was



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established by Rev. William Crowe. Later a seminary was established. A printing press was established in 1835 and a girl boarding home in 1847. The Craven's church building of today was opened for worship on Sunday 3rd September 1910. After Smith. The building was enlarged, remodeled and renovated in 1979 in the commemoration of the Triple Jubilee of the establishment of the first protestant place of worship in Quilon. Now his church has grown into a full-fledged parish with 300 families witnessing the lord in manifold ways as part of its mission and striving to grow into missionary church. He parish will be completing 173 years in 2010. During the past one decade, anniversary celebration of the church namely Balasamajam, Sunday school, Christmas endeavor youth fellowship and women's fellowship have been held in church on a Sunday in January every year.

The above said churches are the most important churches in Kollam taluk besides this some other churches such as Marthoma Church, Thevally was founded in 1950 by P.K. John. St. Casimir Church, Kadavoor was established on 1962 blessed by Rt. Rev. Dr. Jerome M. Fernandez, Bishop of Quilon.

#### Mosques in Kollam Taluk

The mosques is the place of worship, a spiritual centre for the Muslim community, and focal point for Islamic activities. As such, the mosque deserves due respect and relevance, and be used strictly in accordance with Qur'an. The functions of the mosques include daily prayers, Eid prayers, adult, youth and children education, marriage ceremonies, funeral prayers etc. The city of Kollam have some ancient mosques and 22.05% of population belonged to Islam.

#### Valliya Palli Muslim Juma Aath

Malik Dinar founded 10 mosques in Kerala, one of them was in Kollam. It was founded in 664 C.E, but that mosque was not surviving. After that a mosque was at that place, but that was also destroyed by a sea erosion. Afterwards that again founded a mosque in the same place names as Jonakapuram Palli. But for the course of time to be destroyed. Later there was a new mosque was built and named as Kollam Valiya Palli. It is a Juma Aath mosque (correlated to marriage and death). Under this mosque there are some other mosques are running in Kollam town. Kattu Palli, Kochu Palli, Pallithotham Palli, Arikkada Palli, Faheediya Palli, Valliyakada Palli are them. Ibn Batuta, the medieval Muslim traveler visited this mosque.

#### Patthalathu Palli

Pattalathu Palli was founded during the British period. During the time of British rule in Quilon the Muslim soldier of British army made prayers here. For that purpose they constructed this mosque. Chinnakkada Juma Aath Masjid

Chinnkkada Juma Aath masjid is one of the oldest mosque in Kollam taluk. It was founded on 1844 C.E. In the beginning was a small masjid. Later Chinnakkada became one of the most important center of foreign trade. Several Arabian and Persian traders come here. There the believers increased and in this masjid was reconstructed in 1948. Then after fifty years in 1994, it was once again renovated. Besides these mosques there are some other mosques such as Tattamala Juma Aath Masjid, Pallimukku Juma Aath and Polayathodu Valliya Palli.

#### CONCLUSION

Kollam has through the centuries developed several religions of a quasi-character. They grew in the atmosphere of its temples, churches and mosques which has all along been the centres of cultural

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activity. Through the centres of worship are the seat of religion they significant for the cultural development of the place. Contributions of Kollam to the cultural heritage of Kerala in the field of religion does by no means to cover the whole range of subject matter. It can be confidently be expected that the genius of Kollam would be continue to blossom forth in all its vigour and vitality in the years to come and that Kollam in the fields of culture would soar to more dazzling heights of glory enriching the great Kerala heritage.

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