

An Institute for Mappila Studies

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(*) Believed to be the descendants of Arab traders and mariners who had been frequenting the Malabar Coast since pre-Islamic times. Mappilas are endowed with a rich cultural tradition.

Mappilas, the Muslim community of the south-west coast of India have their own place in the socio-historical arena of Kerala. Due to the community's uniqueness in the matter of social structure and customs and their distinct cultural contributions it has evoked considerable academic interest among scholars belonging to history, social sciences and languages and recently it has become the subject matter of systematic research and by individuals as well as institutions. The object of this kind of study and investigation of the Mappila Muslim community is to enable the Mappilas to know themselves. At any rate these efforts have resulted in the publication of many a treatise most of them of an inter-disciplinary nature.

(*) Mappila genius expresses itself through the community's cultural treasure consisting of literary works of historical, cultural and educational value and the Arab-Malayalam part of it, generally found in the form of Mappila Pathu and Mappila

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literature. Mappila folk arts and plays such as Kolkali, Kalaripayattu, dabb and aravana and Kalari payattu deserve protection and preservation, for it is a fact that many a Mappila folk art is facing the threat of extinction. Also the large mass of Mappila literature including the folk songs called Mappila Pathu require compilation, editing, interpretation and reconstruction for research and academic use of those materials. In view of this it is the task and duty of all those who are interested in the preservation of the cultural glory of the past generations to initiate action ^{in order} to preserve the vanishing arts and folklore of the Mappilas.

It is against this background that Farook College, the premier educational institution of Kerala has come forward with the novel project of a Mappila Studies - cum - Research Centre. The Centre was formally inaugurated on 25th March 1983 by Dr. M. K. Mohammed Koya. At the inaugural function, the first publication of the Centre a bibliography of literature on the Mappilas was released by Prof. M. G. S. Narayanan, Head of the Department of History, University of Calicut, by presenting a copy to Dr. Roland E. Miller,

^{reputed}
The author of Mappila Muslims of Kerala (Madras 1976).

The Mappila Studies - cum - Research Centre has set itself to this task of preserving Mappila cultural treasure in order to prevent its extinction and make it available to ~~the~~ posterity. To perpetuate the Mappila cultural glory the Centre is taking steps to ~~set up~~ ^{establish} a museum, a time-consuming and continuous process, indeed. For fulfilling the requirements of such an ambitious project with its all-embracing nature the co-operation and support of all concerned is imperative and the organisers have appealed to the public and those in possession of art objects and artefacts, ^{cultural relics,} rare manuscripts, books and other ~~the~~ papers which are of relevance for the study of Mappilas, to spare them for the Centre (of course with a promise that they will be returned to them after use).

Along with this museum, as part of it, the Centre plans to build up a library - a collection of books and journals ^{old} and new, rare papers and articles. It is the objective of the Centre to collect published and unpublished works on Mappilas together with those written by Mappilas. An ~~immense~~ ^{enormous} mine will be this literature, for many