

AN INSTITUTE FOR MAPPILA STUDIES

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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 district 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 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 a inter-disciplinary nature.

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. Mappila genius expresses itself through the community's cultural treasure consisting of literary works of ~~great~~ historical value and the Arab-Malayalam part of it, generally found in the form of Mappila Pattu and Mappila literature. Mappila folk arts and plays such as Kolkali, dabb, 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 pattu 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.

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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 inagural function, the first publication of the Centre a bibliography of literature on Mappilas was released by Prof. M.G.S. Narayanan, Head of the Department of History, University of Calicut by presenting a copy to Dr. Rol and E. Miller, the reputed 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 extimation and make it available to posterity. To perpetuate the Mappila cultural glory the Centre is taking steps to establish a museum, a time-consuming and continuous process, indeed. For fulfilling the requirements of such an ambitions 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 relies, are manuscripts, books and other papers which are of relevance of 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 andnew, 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 enormous mine will be this literature, for many articles and papers are extant on this theme, Mappilas, their history Social life and cultural legacy. Tho this category belong all those written in the past as well as those now being produced including novels hosrt stories, plays etc. depicting Mappila social life.

With the scope of the Mappila museum, library and archival repositories the centre has a plan to set up a tape library conducting interviews with eminent personalities of the Mappila society and preserving them in tapes so that it could be of immense use for posterity. It should be possible to get into tapes the every valuable spoken words of Mappila freedom fighters, literary men, especially folksong composers leaders in socio-cultural definitely and intellectual fields which would definitely prove to be an invauluable asset and source for the study of Mappila history and

culture. The centre has already embarked on such a project, preparation of a directory of eminent personalities of Mappila society.

The centre established with landable objects, has been welcomed by academic circles as well as the general public and it is hoped that the new institution will rise to occasion to fulfil the expectations it has raised.

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