

## City Miniatures for Exhuming Its Heritage: A Study of Calicut, Kerala

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### Abstract

*Realising the significance of city in the history of human civilization this paper seeks to provide a proposal for preserving the heritage of the medieval port city of Calicut situated in the South Indian state of Kerala. The paper primarily proposes to construct a miniature of the medieval port city of Calicut to create a kind of aura of its medieval splendour. It is argued here that apart from the knowledge provided by the historians and the architects, it is necessary to incorporate the useful insights on cities offered by Sociologists and the Social Anthropologists. It approaches the process of constructing the miniature of the medieval port city of Calicut as a step by step process. Firstly, using the historical sources it attempts to visualise the medieval port city of Calicut with palace complex, port, bazaars and so on. Such an image of the city primarily speaks of it as a physical form leaving out the other dimensions of the city unstated. Next, the paper attempts to define the city as a living entity using the insights provided by Sociology and the Social Anthropology. Then, it proposes that the process of constructing the miniature of the medieval port city necessarily involves envisioning it as a living entity with identifiable physical form, geographical networks that stretch beyond the confines of the city and the social reality made up of relations among people. Finally, it demarcates Kallayi, a particular area in the present day city, as the appropriate location for constructing the miniature of the medieval port city and, as well provides some guidelines for its construction.*

**Keywords:** Calicut City, Geographical Networks, Kallayi, Miniature, Port, Timber Trade, Valiyangadi, Zamorin.

### Introduction

Archaeological excavations in the historic sites like Catal Huyuk in the late 1950s and 1960s had triggered imaginative leap in the field of urban historiography. Catal Huyuk was a Neolithic urban settlement that had flourished around 7000 BC in south-central Anatolia, a region in Turkey (Mellaart, 1967). Taking cue from the archaeological evidences

at Catal Huyuk that suggested an origin that was not agricultural, Jane Jacobs, one of the leading urbanists of the 1960s, was quick to imagine the possibilities of putting the urban before the agricultural revolution. In her seminal work, *The Economy of Cities* (1969), she challenged the generally accepted sequence that suggests that agricultural revolution and the formation of agricultural villages precedes urban revolution and thus the formation of first cities in the human history. That means, rather than an agricultural surplus being necessary for the creation of cities, it was cities that were acting as necessary precondition for the creation of farming villages and agricultural surplus. Informed by this line of argument, urban theorists like Edward Soja highlights the importance of seeing cities as the developmental force in human society. To be more precise, the intrinsic nature of city-ness acts as a primary motor force not just for the development of agriculture, but also for the appearance of agricultural villages, rural life, pastoralists and peasants, and later, writing, class formation, state, and scientific, technological and various other socio-cultural and economic processes (Soja, 2000: 26-27).

These developments in the field of urban studies signal the need for unearthing and preserving the heritage of historic cities. This paper attempts to provide a proposal for preserving the heritage of a forgotten medieval port city called Calicut situated in the south Indian state of Kerala. Historically, it was the capital of the well-known medieval kingdom of Calicut ruled by the Zamorins. The historian MGS Narayanan opines that there was no city of Calicut before 12th century and even at the beginning of the 12th century, Calicut was just a no man's land with saltpans and marshes. However, in the 14th and 15th centuries it had been transformed into one of the most prominent centres of international trade; it was the meeting point of east and west, merchants and travellers from China, South East Asia, Arabia and Europe congregated in the streets and bazaars of Calicut to exchange their products (Narayanan, 2006: 17). Today, Calicut city is an ordinary city. Unlike many other historic cities, not many imposing structures of worship, palaces, forts and so on are seen in Calicut. Therefore, as MGS Narayanan has aptly observed, it would be an imaginative adventure to search for the ruined old city below the surface of the new city (Ibid:19).

This paper consists of two sections. The Section I provides a brief survey of the history of Calicut city. Keeping the history in the background, it attempts to provide a picture of the medieval port city by focusing on the traces it had left on the contemporary city. Section II focuses exclusively on the process of constructing the miniature of the medieval port city of

Calicut. It begins with an attempt to provide a comprehensive definition of city in general, and would try to examine how the Calicut city fits into that definition. Next, it delimits a particular area in the contemporary city as the appropriate one to construct the miniature, coming up with the proposal to construct the miniature of the medieval port city in the proposed area.

### **Section I: The History of Calicut City**

Ceraman Perumals were the traditional rulers of Kerala who ruled in the 8th, 9th, and 10th centuries, and the last Ceraman Perumal was Rama Kulasekhara who ruled from 1089 to 1102 (Narayanan, 2006: 59). According to *Keralolpatti* chronicle (Genesis of Kerala) the last of the Kerala kings (Ceraman Perumal) partitioned the kingdom among his dependents (feudatories) and secretly left for Mecca with some Arab traders, embraced Islam, and lived for a few years in obscurity and peace in Arabia (*Ibid*)<sup>1</sup>. The king treated *Eradi*, one of his governors who ruled *Eranad* province, as his favourite. As a special mark of his favour, at the time of partition, the king granted him a small tract of land on the sea coast, in addition to his hereditary possessions (*Ibid*: 59). But *Polanadu*, a province ruled by *Polatiri*, was an obstacle in the way of *Eradi* because his territory stood between *Eranad* and the small tract of land gifted to him by Ceraman Perumal. After several years of war *Eradi* finally defeated *Polatiri* and reached the coastal area (*Ibid*: 62) He founded a new kingdom in this newly conquered territory and took the title of Zamorin.

The original seat of Zamorin's family was *Nediyiruppu*, a village in the *Eranad* Taluk of the present Malappuram district. According to *Keralolpatti* chronicle, when the Zamorin conquered the *Polatiri* of *Polanadu*, he abandoned his ancestral house at *Nediyiruppu* and transferred his residence to the newly conquered territory. He founded a town called *Vikramapuram* with a Siva temple or *Tali*<sup>2</sup> at its centre (Ayyar, 1938). But this name did not become popular. The people called it *kolikkotu*, the European form of which is Calicut. This word is explained in various ways. The *Keralolpatti* says it is the land where the cock crows. Sanskrit writers translate it into *kokkutakrotaram* or hencoop. But Krishna Ayyar opines that all these explanations seem to be wide off the mark. According to him *kotu* is synonymous for stronghold or fortress. *Koli* is really a corruption of *koyi*, which again comes from *koyil*. The town derives its name from *koyilkottu* or *koyilkotta*, the fortified palace of the Zamorin, which was its commanding feature. In other words, it was both a *koyil* or palace and a *Kota* or fort. Hence, the town that grew up under his protection came to be called *koyilkotta*, corrupted into *kolikode* (Kozhikode) (*Ibid*: 83).

It was probably in the beginning of 12th century Zamorin moved to Calicut and founded his kingdom. And by 13th century it emerged as a major centre of international trade. The Zamorins were successful in converting Calicut into a major seaport on the Malabar Coast. Krishna Ayyar notes that as the capital of a great kingdom and its chief mart, Calicut overshadowed every port and city in the Malabar Coast. It was the meeting place of nations. Its population was cosmopolitan, consisting of representatives of different races and nationalities. (*Ibid*: 292-93). K N Chaudhuri notes that from late medieval times, a number of great emporia in Indian Ocean provided structure and vitality to its seaborne trade (Chaudhuri, 2002 [1985]: 98). According to him, it is certainly possible to say that “the whole of Indian Ocean and the eastern Mediterranean was held together by the urban gravitation of Malacca, Calicut, Cambay, Aden, Cairo, Alexandria and Venice. The arterial flow of goods and men on the east-west axis is inconceivable without the history of these trading cities” (*Ibid*: 176). Thus, he observe a structural unity in maritime trade in the western Indian ocean, centred on the urban quadrilateral of Aden, Hormuz, Cambay and Calicut (*Ibid*: 114).

The entry of Portuguese in the Indian Ocean trade in the beginning of 16th century brought tremendous changes on the centuries-old pattern of maritime trade that prevailed in the Indian Ocean. Since the origin and the development of the city of Calicut was undeniably linked to seaborne commerce, the weakening of its role in the Indian Ocean trade was a major blow to the prosperity of the city. Zamorins’ continuous war with his neighbouring kingdoms like Cochin were another major cause for the decline of the kingdom. P C Alexander notes that the warfare between the rival kings of Cochin and Calicut continued for over 250 years after the arrival of the Portuguese in Malabar (Alexander, 1946: 31). The advent of Hyder Ali of Mysore suddenly changed the scenario in Kerala. Mysore invaded the city of Calicut six times. The sixth invasion of the Mysore in 1766 resulted in the termination of the Zamorins’ rule. The British East India Company formally took over the administration of Malabar from Mysore after the death of Tipu Sultan in 1799 (Narayanan, 2006: 234). Thereafter, Calicut city was no longer the capital of the kingdom or the seat of the sovereign king. The Calicut city continued its life as the headquarters of the Malabar district within the Madras Presidency. With the formation of Kerala state in 1957, Calicut became the main city of the district in the same name.

### **Visualizing Medieval Calicut: An Attempt to Look Back**

In its long course of history, the city of Calicut has gone through many phases of transformation. Yet, in the present day city, one could identify locations like the Ocean and the Port, The Kallayi River, and the historic

streets like Valiyangadi (Big Bazaar), Mittayi Theru<sup>3</sup> and so that are capable of providing valuable clues to visualize the medieval city<sup>4</sup>. To begin with, it would be better observe the two central zones that determined the spatiality of the medieval city of Calicut. As the local historians have often described, the medieval city of Calicut had two central zones; while the western and the southern part functioned as the commercial central zone, eastern part acted as the administrative central zone. Administrative central zone consisted of the Palace with Fortress, the Royal Temple and the streets with residences of lords and Brahmins. The king's Palace was the nucleus of administration. Port, bazaars, settlement areas of traders were located in the commercial central zone. Valiyangadi (Big Bazaar), as the most important commercial region, formed the centre of the commercial zone. Valiyangadi (Big Bazaar), the long straight road, which starts from the beach on the western frontier was linked to the administrative central zone situated to the eastern end of the city (Nampoothiri, 2013[2008]:153)

The eastern side of the city which was once acting as the administrative zone has been changed drastically. Mananchira Complex and Mittayi Theru are the two significant locations in the eastern side of the city. The place where Mittayi Theru and the Mananchira Complex situate today was occupied by the palace complex of the Zamorin. Mittayi Theru also known as Sweet Meat Street or S M Street took its name from the special variety of *halwa* made in this street. Mittayi Theru is situated next to the Mananchira Complex. According to local historians, this street claims the history of 500 to 600 years. It is believed that sweet manufacturers were invited by the rulers to settle in this street laying behind the palace compound (Narayanan, 2006:37). However, this street was developed into a modern commercial street during the British period. Today, it is one of the most colourful part of the city, selling modern consumer goods and services. Mananchira Complex, which forms the heart of present day city, was part of the palace complex of Zamorins. It houses a large playground known as *Mananchira Maidan* and a water tank. The name Mananchira can be translated as Manavikraman Tank and it was the drinking water source for the entire palace complex. Manavikraman is the coronation name of the Zamorins of Calicut. The palace of The Zamorin was destroyed during the invasion of Mysore in 1766. After the invasion, Calicut came under the Mysore rule till the 1790. During this period the eastern side of the city where the palace of the Zamorin was existed remained as a desolate area in the city. The British East India Company formally took over the administration of Calicut from Mysore after the death of Tipu Sultan in 1790. With the establishment of British

administrative offices on the ruins of the palace of Zamorin in the second half of 19th century, the eastern side of the city was slowly but steadily transforming into a commercial zone. In this area, the administrative offices of British rulers coexisted with the educational, religious and the commercial establishments of the British and the other European and non-European companies and agencies (Ayyar,1938; Narayanan, 2006).

Despite all these changes, until 1980s the south-western side of the city maintained its prominence as the main commercial zone in the city. Thereafter, these commercial zones had begun to decline. Valiyangadi (Big Bazaar), as the most important commercial region, formed the centre of commercial zone. Even though some historians doubts the existence of Valiyangadi (Big Bazaar) as it exist today during the reign of Zamorins in the medieval times, they unanimously agree that the area where Valiyangadi (Big Bazaar) situates today is a commercial hub since the reign of Zamorins. During the reign of Zamorin, this entire area was considered to be an international center of trade as it was a meeting point for traders from china, Arabia, Europe and so on (Narayanan, 2006:30). Till the end of 1980s Valiyangadi (Big Bazaar) functioned as the main center for spices and other hill produces coming from the hinterlands; it was also the main wholesale market for rice and food grains in Kerala. Warehouses situated in and around Valiyangadi (Big Bazaar) processed and stored these spices and other hill produces and exported to foreign countries via port. From the 1980s onwards, with the development of local markets, Valiyangadi lost its significance as the main market in the city.

The Seaport and the Kallayi River were the two other significant locations in the commercial central zone in the southwestern side of the city. Since the seaborne commerce played the most prominent role in the origin and the development of the city, commercial activities in the city was mainly concentrated along the coastline on the western side. While the ocean formed the boundary of the city on its western side, the Kallayi River formed its boundary in the southern side. This river played a very prominent role in the commerce of the city, for it linked the city with its rich hinterlands. The Kallayi River was connected to the port of Calicut. Ever since the origin of the city, the Port was open to foreign trade. During the medieval period, Calicut Port was the meeting place for merchants and travellers from all over the world. Even though Calicut Port lost its status as an international Port with the entry of European powers, it continued as a major port until it was shut down by the end of 1980. Spices, timber and other valuable hill produces from the hinterland reached the commercial heartlands of the city through the Kallayi River and exported to the foreign world via Port.

The historic sources indeed provide valuable clues to visualize the medieval port city of Calicut. However, this form of analysis gives an impression that an historical city like Calicut could be visualized by focusing primarily on its physical form. Using the insights provided by Sociologist and urban theorists it can be argued that city displays a distinctive kind of social life. That means, the pattern of social life also play a very crucial role in the constitution of the city as a meaningful entity. Therefore, in the next section, the social as well as the physical aspects of the city would be taken as the fundamental elements in the process of the construction of the miniature of the medieval port city of Calicut.

## **Section II: Defining the city**

A comprehensive definition of the city would be able to demonstrate in clear term those features that make a city what it is. The prominent urban theorist Mumford's characterisation of the city as a *geographic Plexus* seems to provide an appropriate setting to define the city. (Mumford, 2011 [1937]). Taking cues from Mumford, another prominent urban theorist Steve Pile explains the idea of *geographic Plexus* to provide a clear picture of those features that makes a city what it is. The term 'plexus' is derived from anatomy. In anatomy, this term is used to describe the networks (plexuses) of nerves, of blood vessels, of tubes for air and food, and so on, that make up animal bodies. So, by *geographic plexus*, he takes Mumford to be saying that the city is made up of many networks. Thus, "the city is like a body, living on its different functions: from manufacturing and assembling, to warehousing and storage, to sheltering and domestic bliss, to personality clashes and political intrigue (Pile, 2005 [1999]:16)." These functions of the city have identifiable geographic locations, and sets of networks (plexuses) that sustain the city by enabling these functions. Just as the animal body is survived by carrying in and consuming the essentials of life such as air and food that exist outside the body, urban networks stretch well beyond the confines of the city to carry in and circulate the things it needs to survive (*Ibid*). To put it simply, a city is a *geographic plexus* for networks of roads, rails, canals and ships, each channelling flows of commodities, people, information, capital and so on (*Ibid*: 27).

The notion of the city as a *geographic plexus* seems to give an impression that the city is primarily a physical form. But, Mumford himself is saying that as far as the concept of the city is concerned "social facts are primary, and the physical organization of a city, its industries and its markets, its lines of communication and traffic, must be subservient to its social needs (Mumford 2011 [1937]: 93)." In fact, both the material and the non-material aspects of the city are crucial in producing a city.

As Henri Lefebvre says, a city is both a practico-material and an architectural fact, and the social reality made up of relations among people (Lefebvre, 2000 [1996]:103). To put it simply, a city is a unique spatial configuration where people, commodities, money, information, techniques, ways of lives and so on, get concentrated, interacted, activated in novel ways. Thus, the process of defining city demonstrate three primary features which are necessary to elucidate what makes a city a city; first; the identifiable physical form; second, the system of geographical networks; and third, the process of social life in the city. Such a conceptualization of the city is grounded on the sociological insights which tend to see city as a living entity or an ongoing process. That means, the city with its distinct physical form is activated through the working of networks and the various levels of the activities of people living in the city.

Putting this definition of the city in the background, we can conceptualise the city of Calicut in clear terms. Historically speaking, two kinds of movements were central to the origin and development of the city of Calicut. The first one is that of Zamorin, the founder of the kingdom of Calicut. From his traditional citadel in the interior, Zamorin moved to the coastal belt which was then just a no man's land with saltpans and marshes and converted it into a port city, realising the prospect of seaborne commerce and the subsequent prosperity. The second movement was that of traders and explorers from beyond the sea, searching for proper destination to conduct trade. The city of Calicut was originated and flourished in the area where these two distinct but complementary movements were intersected. In fact, these two kinds of movements laid foundation for elaborated networks which in turn instigated a series of other movements. Zamorin took no time to convert Calicut into a major Port city and wide variety of commodities started flowing into the city from the hinterlands. In the same way, traders from outside world poured into the city with wide variety of commodities from foreign lands to exchange in trade. Subsequently, these economic transactions facilitated social and cultural exchanges, and laid foundation for the cosmopolitan city of Calicut.

The movements of Zamorin and traders speaks of networks; while Zamorin's movement from the interior indicates the opening of geographical as well as social and political networks facilitating the flow of people, commodities, information and so on to the city from the hinterland, the traders' movement to the city point towards the networks enabled through the maritime space. The intersection of these two movements indicates the creation of distinct physical form of the city with the palace, port, bazaar and so on and the social life in it.



## **Demarcating the City: Quest for Constructing a Miniature of the Medieval Port**

Until the beginning of 1980s, the area extending from the banks of Kallayi River on the southern boundary of the city to the coastline on its western boundary was considered to be one of the most significant commercial regions in the city. This area is generally known as Kallayi. For obvious reasons, this area along the banks of the Kallayi<sup>5</sup> River to the coastline could easily be delimited as the proper region in the city to construct the miniature of the medieval port city. Firstly, since the origin and the development of the city of Calicut was undeniably linked to seaborne commerce, it is necessary to highlight the commercial heritage of the city while attempting to construct its miniature, and in this area, the medieval pattern of trade was predominant till the beginning of 1980s. Secondly, The Kallayi River and the Ocean, the two dominant geographical markers of the area, can still act as solid geographical markers of the city heritage signifying the crucial role these two had played in the functioning of the medieval port city. Finally, as seen in the above, the eastern side of the city, which acted as the administrative central zone of the medieval city, has totally been transformed into a busy commercial street devoid of any considerable traces of its medieval heritage.

As the definition of the city suggested, the processes of constructing a miniature of the medieval port city should consider the functioning of the geographical networks and the nature of their intersection in the city as the two fundamental elements that constitute the miniature. Obviously, the Kallayi River and the Port, the two significant location in the Kallayi region, indicates the functioning of the geographical networks. Further, an anthropological observation on the nature of timber trade that flourished on the banks of the Kallayi River in Kallayi would certainly be capable of demonstrating the functioning of these networks and the creation of a distinctive social world in Kallayi.

### **The Functioning of the Geographical System of Networks in Kallayi**

Ever since its inception, the Kallayi River and the Port played a very crucial role in developing the city of Calicut as one of the major centers of trade and commerce on the Malabar Coast. The Kallayi River flows along the southern boundary of the city and the Port begins from the area where the Kallayi River meets the sea at its western boundary (see the map 1). The geographical connections between the Kallayi River and the Port indeed cast light on to their role in shaping the commercial activities of the city as a whole: the Kallayi River, on the one hand, links the city with its

hinterland (Mizushima, Souza & Flynn, 2015)<sup>6</sup> which provides it with necessary goods to trade; the Port, on the one hand, signifies the link with the outside world, which is crucial for the survival of a trading city like Calicut.

The unique geographical positioning of Kallayi River defines its central role in linking the city with its north-eastern and south-eastern hinterlands through the networks of rivers, backwaters and canals. The Murat or Kuttiyadi River and the Korapuzha River in the north eastern side, and the Chaliyar River also Known as the Beypore River and the Kadalundi River in the south eastern side are the four major rivers linking the city with its hinterlands (Menon, 1962: 321). In fact, these rivers facilitated the movement of commodities and people to the city from its rich hinterlands. Since Kallayi River is flowing adjacent to the commercial heartlands of the city and meet the sea near the seaport, the rivers originating from the hinterlands and their backwaters were connected to the Kallayi River through canals. As discussed earlier, history of the city of Calicut is deeply interconnected with the seaborne commerce channeled through the Calicut Port. Generally speaking, ports represent a complex interplay of physical, geographical and socio economic phenomena (Kidwai, 1992:7). A port is a place of contact where people and commodities as well as cultures are transferred between land and maritime space (Ibid: 10). During the medieval times, the Calicut Port epitomized prosperity and cosmopolitanism for it played a key role in the Indian Ocean trade. However, with the entry of European forces in the Indian Ocean trade from the 16th century onward, the Port lost its charm. Yet, the Port continued its life during the colonial times and the first three decades after the independence, it was finally closed down in the late 1980s.

The coming of spices and other commodities from hinterland through rivers and their export via Port were crucial in determining the character of Calicut as a port city. The Hinterlands provided the city with great varieties of spices and hill produces; and the Kallayi River facilitated the transportation of all these goods from hinterland to the city. Likewise, the Port enabled the export of these different varieties of goods coming from the hinterlands. A T, an inhabitant of Kallayi, narrates the movements of different varieties of goods across the Kallayi River and their export via Port in 1950s and 1960s:

In the past, boats carrying spices and other hill produces used to arrive in Kallayi from the hinterlands. Farmers and local merchants who accompanied such boats unloaded their products in Kallayi Kadavu (Jetty) and from there they transported their goods to Valiyangadi (Big Bazaar) in trolleys and bullock cart for sale. From Valiyangadi

(Big Bazaar) these spices and hill produces were taken to Port for export after processing in the warehouses situated around Valiyangadi (Big Bazaar) and the Port. Timber logs from the hinterland forests were floated down to Kallayi through the Kallayi River. These timber logs were processed in the saw mills in Kallayi and then taken to the port for exporting to foreign countries. (Interview, A T, 22th July, 2016).

This narrative basically shows the significant role played by the Kallayi River and the Port in the city of Calicut. Timber trade would be taken as a specific case to demonstrate the functioning of the networks synchronized through the Port and the Kallayi River. Even though the timber trade on the banks of Kallayi River was basically a colonial enterprise, the pattern of timber trade is capable of illuminating the pattern of trade prevalent in the medieval period.

### **Timber Trade on the Banks of Kallayi River**

According to MGS Narayanan, the growth of timber trade on the banks of Kallayi River must have taken place only after the 12th century when the Zamorins became the lords of Calicut (Narayanan, 2006:49). However, the modern history of timber trade is associated with the development of timber trade on the Malabar Coast under the supervision of British colonialism from the early 19th century onwards (Mann, 2001: 419). In Malabar, teak grows naturally in forests of Nilambur valley and Wayanad areas. Forests of Malabar and Kanara were the sources of teak timber for Bombay Naval dock-yard. To counter the shortage of the supply of teak timber, in 1840 Mr Conolly, the then collector of Malabar obtained on lease the forest areas considered suitable for teak plantation on the banks of Chaliyar River in Nilambur, which later developed into the famous Nilambur Teak Plantation. (Menon, 1962: 323).

The rivers originating from the Western Ghats facilitated the transportation of timber to Kallayi. The trees after being felled and roughly squared were dragged by elephants to the nearest river to be floated to the Kallayi Timber Mart. A feature of timber industry in Kallayi was its concentration along the bank of the Kallayi River. In the sawmills of Kallayi timber logs were swan into different types of finished planks and were marketed both locally and also exported to foreign countries (Ibid: 338-339). Writing in 1905, Innes observed: "in the season river at Kallayi is a wonderful sight, the water being scarcely visible for the thousands of logs floating on its surface. The logs are left in the water until they are sold (Innes, 1905: 252 cited in S. Menon, 1962: 339)." Till the beginning of 1960s, Kallayi was considered to be one of the largest timber mart in the world. From 1970s onwards, with the implementation of new forest laws, the supply of tim-

ber from the Forests of Western Ghats got decreased, and eventually by the beginning of 1980s timber trade in Kallayi went to decline. However, Kallayi is still functioning as the major centre of timber trade in the city.

The pattern of timber trade in Kallayi involved various levels of activities. The first stage is of the procurement of timber logs from hinterlands and forests, and their transportation primarily through rivers, backwaters and inland water ways to Kallayi. A R, a famous timber merchant in Kallayi, explains the process of the procurement of timber from hinterland:

We usually go to the field with the broker. If the timber is of fine quality and the price is reasonable, then we make the purchase. After cutting down the tree, we take the measurement and then carries to the nearest river or road. We also participate in public auctions at various forest depots. There would be separate agents for the transport of timber (Interview, A R, 22th July, 2016).

K D, a timber merchant and the sawmill owner in Kallayi, points out that till the end of 1980s timber from hinterland was mainly transported to Kallayi through rivers like Chaliyar River and Kuttiyadi River. Since, these rivers and their backwaters were connected to Kallayi River through canals, the transportation of timber from the deep hinterlands to the Kallayi was less expensive and easy. According to him,

In those days, the transportation of timber through rivers were so huge that it was almost impossible to see Kallayi River as it was filled with timber rafts arriving from far off places. These timber rafts were made by tying huge timber logs with bamboo sticks. On each timber rafts, there would be a person who took the charge of it. He stood on the raft with a long bamboo stick, directing its course through the river. These timber rafts were known locally as *therappanghal*. Workers who moved these *therappanghal* were known as *therappouthouilalikal*. It took several days for such rafts to reach Kallayi from the hinterland forests (Interview, K D, 9th July 2016).

In Kallayi, river is being used for storing logs. According to timber merchants and workers, it is safe to keep timber logs in the river as the river is shallow in this area and the merchants don't have to bother about creating extra space in their mills to keep large quantity of timber. However, the main reason, according to them, is that there is a strong belief among the local merchants of Kallayi that storing timber logs in the Kallayi River would ensure the durability of timber logs because of its salty water (see the image 2). In Kallayi, various kinds of people were associated with the processing and the marketing of timber. Broadly speaking, two groups of workers are employed in Kallayi. The first group, under the supervisor loc-

ally known as *Mooppan*, worked in connection with the river and engaged in measuring, keeping accounts and storing of timber in the river. Another group of workers were employed in the saw mills. The sawmill owners and the timber merchants took charge of trade. Generally these timber logs stay in the water for long time. *Mooppan* would be in charge of these timber logs stored in the river until the sale is over, and the sale of the timber is mediated by him. That means clients usually go directly to the *Mooppan* and negotiate with him. So, quite naturally, these *Mooppans* were very dynamic and influential section in Kallayi (Interview, A M, 4th August 2016).

Timber merchants played a prominent role in converting Kallayi in to the second largest timber yard in the world. They brought timber from hinterland to the Kallayi and exported it to the foreign countries and neighbouring states. They not only connected hinterland with the city but also acted as a connecting link between the city of Calicut and the outside world. The agents of foreign companies, mainly from Europe, came to Kallayi for the purchase. From Kallayi, timber was exported to foreign countries and various Indian states. Local consumption was minimum. Writing in 1962, Sreedhara Menon observed that almost 60 percent of timber was exported by sea to Europe and Arab Counties. 30 percent of timber was transported by rail to different parts of the country. Only 10 percent was consumed locally (Menon, 1962: 318). Thus, the nature of timber trade, especially the export of timber via Seaport to foreign countries demonstrate the ways in which the city in general and Kallayi in particular is linked to the world beyond the sea. A H, once a leading timber exporter in Kallayi, explains the pattern of the export of the timber:

From Kallayi, sawn timber sizes were taken to the Port in boats. The carrying capacity of these boats were 20 to 40 ton. From the Port, steam ships transported both sawn timber sizes and timber logs to Europe, America, Arab countries and Africa. The transport of sawn timber to Bombay, Sourashtra and Kutch was mainly through sailing vessels which were not mechanized. (Interview, A H, 24th July 2016).

The discussion on the nature of timber trade in Kallayi demonstrate the intersection of two different but complementary networks in Kallayi: on the one hand, networks of rivers which facilitates the transportation of timber from hinterland meet in Kallayi; on the other hand, the export of timber via Port facilitate the intersection of network from the world beyond the city in Kallayi. The way Kallayi is linked to its hinterland as well as the outside world through the elaborated system of networks formed by rivers and the port facilitate the concentration of large quantity

of timber and various sections of people like timber merchants, sawmill owners, brokers, different sections of workers, foreign clients and so on in Kallayi. It is this dynamic aspect of Kallayi that enables both the development of timber trade and the creation of a distinctive social world in Kallayi. In short, the ethnographic description of the timber trade in Kallayi demonstrate Kallayi as a unique city space with active social life.

### **A Proposal for Constructing the Miniature of the Medieval Port City of Calicut**

In this discussion, it has already been noticed that Kallayi at present is not an active center of commerce as it used to be. Timber trade on the banks of Kallayi River in Kallayi has already passed its prime phase and is, today, slowly fading into oblivion. The Kallayi River and other rivers connected to it are no longer being used for transportation and commercial purposes. The seaport has also been shut down. However, the Beach, the Kallayi River and its river bank can still be utilized to highlight the heritage of the medieval Port City of Calicut for these geographical markers still continue having a solid presence in the City. However, since these locations have lost their commercial significance, they have to be used differently. That means the economic significance and meaning attached to the area considered suitable for the construction of a miniature need to be replaced. As a Port City, the Port was the 'organizing principle' of the Calicut city (26). Now the city has moved beyond the Port City stage and its characteristics are no longer determined through the functions of the Port. Therefore, while considering the miniature of the Port City it is necessary to replace port related commercial activities with some innovative practices which can illuminate its heritage as a Port City.

Today, the Calicut beach, where the Port was situated, is a favorite outdoor destination for city dwellers in the evening for recreation. Hotels, restaurants, huge residential towers and government offices are seen all along the beach. Eminent historians, like M G S Narayanan (2006) opine that all these new structures along the beach are built on the ruins of warehouses and trading houses owned by various prominent trading communities that had settled along the beach. Yet, the ruins of warehouses and Sea Bridges, and the abandoned Light House that are seen along the beach can be preserved to enliven the heritage of the Port City (see the images 4,5,6). Likewise, the Kallayi River and the Conolly Canal<sup>7</sup> which is connected to it from the northeastern side of the city could be renovated and utilized for the innovative projects like Heritage Boat Ride (Menon, 1962). Finally, the banks of Kallayi River in the area extending from Kallayi River to the coastline, and the beach can be developed as a heritage bazaar dealing

with different varieties of spices, hill produces, handicrafts and so on to enliven Calicut's heritage as a Port City with bazaars and commercial streets.

In fact, governmental as well as non-governmental agencies have recently come up with plan for the renovation of Conolly Canal and the Kallayi River (Rajagopal, 2013, August 31). However, such a venture would remain an empty gesture and a vain invitation to the city's heritage unless it is placed in the larger arena. It is in this context the idea of constructing a miniature becomes relevant. In fact, any step towards constructing the miniature of a medieval port city like Calicut demands the combined efforts of sociologists, social anthropologists, historians and the architects. While architects with the help of historians could identify and rebuild the physical form of the heritage city, the knowledge of social anthropologists and sociologists could be instrumental in envisioning the social and cultural life evolving through the commercial practices of the port city. In a typical miniature all the fundamental elements of the city like its physical form, geographical networks, and the pattern of social life have to be incorporated. In this model, the heritage boat ride is proposed to signify port city's link with hinterland and the outside world through networks of rivers and the port. Heritage markets should signify the physical form of the city both through the reconstructed architectural forms and articles traded there. Finally, the manner in which people engage with these spaces are also crucial for such a miniature to find its relevance as a meaningful entity. Heritage boat ride and heritage bazars seems to be capable of ensuring peoples' active participation in such spaces and as well, a constant flow of tourists, common folk and historians alike. Thus, developing such a miniature as a 'Heritage Park' would be capable of attracting scholarly as well as popular interests. It is in this way that the miniature would be capable of demonstrating the city as a living entity.

## **Conclusion**

As discussed in the introduction, cities always play a very prominent role in the development of human societies as a whole. Therefore, the ventures to preserve the forgotten cities like Calicut demands considerable attention. In fact, the medieval city of Calicut played a very prominent role in the development of regions situated around the city. The history of suburban towns, villages, local trading centers etc. situated around the Calicut city are deeply interwoven with the origin and the development of the medieval port city of Calicut. It is highly probable that the large scale agricultural production of spices and other commercial crops in the interiors of Calicut were accelerated by the pro-

spects offered by the port city of Calicut. Faced with such a possibility, it wouldn't be too imaginative to propose that the development of settled agriculture, the large scale migration of people to the interiors and thus the development of more settled social life in the area need to be attended in relation to the origin and the history of the city of Calicut. In short, any venture towards preserving the history and the heritage of Calicut city is a gateway to the historical development of the region as a whole.

### Notes

1. This myth of partition and conversion of the king has been a vital part of the oral tradition of Malabar for centuries. Even though it is a well tradition contained in *Keralolpatti*, the early travellers who came to south India, such as Sulayman, the Venetian traveller Marco Polo, and latter travellers like Ibin Batuta and others do not make reference to this fact. Peoples of other religions also claim Ceraman Perumal as a convert to their respective faith. One account says that he went away to Bethlehem. Some say he turned a Buddhist or a Jain. However, Hindus believe that he was a devotee of Siva throughout his life. In this regard see (K, Ayyar, 1938; MGS Narayanan, 2006, p.57-58)).
2. The *Tali* Siva temple was one of the two royal temples patronized by the Zamorin (the other being the *Valayanaattu Kavu*). The temple's date of origin is uncertain but was most likely built during the foundation of the city itself in the 12th century or before. In this regard see (K. Ayyar, 1938).
3. *Mittayi Theru* is the first modern commercial street in the city of Calicut. It is believed that the numerous sweet shops once present in this street gave the street its famous name. In Malayalam, *Mittayi* means sweets and *Theru* is the Malayalam word for street. Therefore, *Mittayi Theru* means street selling sweets. Today the street is called Sweet Meat Street (S M Street). Sweet Meat is the special variety of halwa made in *Mittayi Theru*. Though the street is formally known as S M Street, the short form of Sweet Meat Street, the common folk call it *Mittayi theru*.
4. For the details see the Survey and Settlement Register of Nagaram Desam, no 38, Calicut Taluk, Malabar District, 1901.
5. Kallayi is the name of a suburban town located on the bank of Kallayi River. However, this paper considers Kallayi as the area stretching from the banks of Kallayi River to the coastline where the seaport is situated, for the significance of Kallayi in the city of Calicut is based on the commercial significance of this area.



6. The word “hinterland” comes from German and it is translated as “behind land.” It could be defined as “the region lying behind the coast district; hence a region remote from cities and towns.” In this regard see T. Mizushima, G. B.Souza, D.O. Flynn, 2015, p.5-6.
7. Conolly Canal in the city of Calicut was built in 1848 by then collector of Malabar, H V Conolly. It linked the Korapuzha River in the north to the Kallayi River. During the colonial period it was mainly used for the commercial purposes. For details see (S. Menon, 1962,p. 321)

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