
Saptamatrikas in Kerala: Iconography and Distribution Pattern

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Abstract: *Saptamatirkas are the mother goddesses worshiped in iconic and aniconic forms in the temple of Kerala. The antecedence of the Saptamatrika worship in India can be traced from the Indus age. Saptamatrikas are represented in various literary texts of ancient and medieval India. Historically, the Saptamatrika worship may starts from the early medieval (probably 8th century AD onwards) period in Kerala. Saptamatrikas are worshipping as chief deities in some of the temples in Kerala. They were worshiped as the protecting and tutelary deities. However, they are occurred in aniconic form in almost all temples of Kerala. The distribution pattern of the iconic form of saptamatrikas has shown that they are mainly distributed in the midland and lowland areas of Kerala, probably on the nearby areas of the itinerary trade routes. As they are mainly found in the early medieval and medieval trade routes, the Saptamatrikas must have worshipped as protecting deities in connection with production and distribution process of early medieval and medieval Kerala.*

Keywords: *Saptamatrika, Literature, Iconography, Iconic, Anaiconic, Distribution Pattern, Kerala*

Introduction

The iconography is a less studied area in the archaeology and history of Kerala. Very few attempts are there to study the iconographical aspects of *Vaishnava* images (Preeti Nayar), *Saptamatrikas* (Padmaja 1994, Arya Nair 2011), mural paintings (Sasibhushan 2005) and *Yakshi* images (Haridas 2016). However, V.T. Padmaja has done a preliminary account on the iconography of *Saptamatrikas* and opened the subjects to the scholastic segment of Kerala. The present paper attempts to delineate the distribution pattern and the features of *Saptamatrikas* in Kerala.

The term *Saptamatrika* is derived from two words *Sapta* and *Matrika* means seven and Mother Goddess or Mother like goddess respectively. They are *Brahmi*, *Maheswari*, *Kumari*, *Vaishnavi*, *Varahi*, *Indrani* and *Chamunda*. However, sometimes, *Narasimhi* is substitutes *Chamunda*. *Saptamatrikas* are usually grouped together with *Ganesa* and *Virabhadra*. The number and names of the *matrikas* increasingly standardized in the post epic period. During this, period *matrikas* seem to have been *brahmanised* and

domesticated. *Saptamatrikas* are the *Saktis* or the female counterpart of the gods *Brahma*, *Maheswara*, *Kumara*, *Vishnu*, *Varaha*, *Indra* and *Yama* and they are armed with the same weapons, wear same ornaments and ride on the same *vahanas* of the corresponding male gods.

***Saptamatrikas* in the Ancient Literatures**

There are different stories connected with the origin of *Saptamatrikas* in *Puranas*, *Sastras*, *Tantras* etc. *Varahapurana* gives details of the story related to the origin of *Saptamatrikas* and most of the *Puranas* give similar accounts. The story goes that:

“The demon Andhakasura who came to rule over the *Asuras* after *Prahlada* practiced many assurities, obtained boons from Brahma, and became very powerful. He caused annoyance to *Devas*; they ran to *Kailasa* to complain Siva about the troubles caused by the *Asura* chief. Siva was listening the complaints of *devas*. At the same time, Andhakasura appeared in *Kailasa* with a view to carry away Parvati. Siva there upon got ready to fight the *Asura*; he made three well-known snakes Vasuki, Dhananjaya, Takshaka serve as his belts and bracelets. An *Asura* called Nila, who had secretly planned to kill Siva in the form of an elephant. Nandi came to know this and informed Virabhadra and took the form of the lion and attacked and killed Nila. Virabhadra presented the skin of this elephant to Siva, which was worn by him as his upper garment. Clad with this curious garment and ornamented with serpents, and wielding his powerful *Trisula* against Siva treated out on his expedition against Andhakasura. He took with him his army consisting of the *ganas*. Vishnu and other gods went along him to help. In the struggle that ensued Vishnu and other *devas* fled. At last, Siva attacked the *asura* with an arrow and wounded him. Blood began to flow in profusion from the wound and each drop of blood as it touched the earth assumed the shape of another Andhakasura. Thus there arose thousands of Andhakasura and began to dance. Vishnu destroyed the secondary *asuras* produced from the blood drops with his *chakrayudha*. To stop further multiplication of *asuras*, Siva created out of the flame that issuing from his mouth a *sakti* called Yogeswari. Indra and other gods also sent their *saktis* to serve the same purpose. The *saktis* thus created were Brahma, Maheswari, Kumari, Vaishnavi, Varahi, Indrani and Chamunda.” (Rao 1914).

In *Varahapurana* the *Devi*, Vaishnavi in account of the creation of the *matrika*, is doing asceticism on mount *Mandara*. At one point she losses her concentration. From her disgraced mind, several beautiful attendants were created. They later became *Devi's* helpmates on the battlefield when she fights the demon. Although the *Matrikas* are described as lovely in this account, it is important to note that they are born when *Devi* losses control of her concentration. This suggests that the *matrikas* are essentially of uncontrolled natures. Born from lack of mental control, they lack control themselves. *Varahapurana* relates them to vices or inauspicious emotions; *Brahmi* of *Mada*, Maheswari of *Krodha*, *Kumari* of *Moha*, *Vaishnavi* of *Lobha*, *Indrani* of *Matsarya*, *Varahi* of *Asuya* and *Chamunda* of *Paisunya*.

Devimahatmya and *Markandeyapurana* give another account related to *Saptamatrikas*. The *matrikas* helped the goddess *Ambika* and *Chamunda* to kill *Raktavija*, an ally of the most powerful demon king *Sumbha*. Each drop of blood oozed from the wounds of *Raktavija* produced a demon equal to him. Then the *Saktis* negated each drop of blood until he became helpless and was finally killed. These accounts indicate that the goddesses were worshipped as *Saktis*.

In *Suprabhedagama*, the *matrikas* are said to have created by *Brahma* in order to kill *Nirrita*. *Matsyapurana* accounts the *matrikas* at Siva's command defeat *Andhaka*. They are described as terrible in appearance and drinking the blood of the demon they slay. After the battle, the *matrikas* announce that they will now proceed to devour all the gods, demons and people of the world. Siva commends them not do this, but they ignore him and begin a rampage of destruction. Siva summons *Narasimha*, Vishnu's man lion *avatara*, who creates a host of benign goddess, they in turn calm down the terrible *matrikas* and stop their destruction. At the end, Siva's own terrible form *Bhairava* is enshrined with the images of the *matrikas* at the place where the battle took place. Since then, these *matrikas* have a benevolent character instead of a malevolent one.

The follower of *Tantrasara* has an esoteric interpretation of the seven *matrikas*. According to them, *Brahmi* represents the primordial *Nada*, the energy in which even the first throb has not yet appeared. This is the manifest sound, the origin of all creation. It is the same substance or energy represented by the *pranava*. When *Brahmi* creates the universe, the power of *Vaishnavi* gives definite shape. The symmetry, beauty, organization and order in the universe are the work of *Vaishnavi*. *Maheswari* stands for the power that gives individuality to the created beings. She resides in the hearts of all and makes them play, as dolls mounted on a machine. *Kumari* represents the ever present force of aspiration of the evolving soul. She is '*Guruguha*', the *Guru* in *guha* (the cave of the heart, the intellect). *Varahi* is the all-consuming power of assimilation and enjoyment. Because of her, all living beings get their food and enjoyments. *Indrani* symbolizes the terrible power that destroys all that opposes the cosmic law. *Chamunda* is the force of concentrated awareness, the spiritual awakening in the heart that devours that ceaseless activity of the immature mind and uplifts it to the highest level (Harshananda 1981.95-99).

Sculptural Representations

The earliest sculptural representation of *Saptamatrikas* occurred in the Harappan or Indus Valley civilization. A seal discovered from Mohenjo-Daro in the Indus period has the representation of seven figures standing (almost dancing pose) beside a tree (Parpola 2001:261). Representations of *matrika* figures with definite characters are from Kusana period onwards. A large number of *matrika* figures in both stone and terracotta are found during this period. From the Gupta period onwards, the *Saptamatrikas* were often carved in relief on a rectangular slab with the figures of *Virabhadra* and *Ganesa* flanking them. In the medieval period, the divine mothers are carved either together in

a group or independently as one or two deities on a pedestal. The number of *matrikas* also varies from three, seven, eight or sixteen in various texts. *Matrikas* were the tutelary deities of the Chalukyas and Kadambas. The copper plates of the early Chalukyas of Badami referred to them as the seven mothers. The earliest extant sculptural relief of *matrikas* in Tamil country is the panel found in one of the cloisters abutting wall in the Kailasanatha temple at Kanchipuram. Here the *matrikas* are found in the company of Ganesa and Virabhadra who are seen together in the beginning of panel instead of flanking the goddess on either end. Many of the inscriptions of the 10th-11th centuries A.D record grants for the worship of *parivara* deities including *Saptamatrikas*. An inscription from Alambakkam dated in the 31 year of Chola Rajadhirajadeva (A.D.1049-50) mentions endowment to the temple of *Saptamatrikas* for the conduct of their worship (Srivastava 1978.86). In Kerala, a 10th century AD *Vattezhuthu* inscription discovered at Triprangot temple refers to the offerings pertained to the *matrikas*(Ramachandran 2011.32-33). The iconic representations of the *matrikas* are occurred in Kerala from 8th century AD onwards.

Iconography of *Saptamatirkas*

The iconographical accounts of *Saptamatrikas* are found in different *Puranas*, *Agamas*, *Tantras* and Devotional literature. According to iconographical texts, the *matrikas* can be represented either collectively on *Matrikapatta* or individually seated on a separate throne or *Asana*. In the seated posture, *matrikas* can be in *Lalitasana*, *Sukhasana*, *Virasana*, *Ardharyankasana*, *Utkudikasana*, *Padmasana* or *Maharajalilasana*. The iconographical representation of *Saptamatrikas* in the literatures is given below (Table 1).

Satamatrikas in Kerala

Representations of *Saptamatrikas* have occurred in iconic and aniconic forms in Kerala. In iconic representations, *Saptamatrikas* have anthropomorphic form and in aniconic form, they are symbolically represented in the shape of small *Balikkals*. The images are found made of using different materials like granite, wood and *Katusarkkara*. Most of the images are made of granite. *Saptamatrika* images found in Kerala are either housed in the *garbhagriha* as the presiding deity or in the temple or temple premises as subsidiary deity. The general features of the *matrikas* sculptures in Kerala are presented mostly in *lalitasana* with four hands. Upper two hands carry typical attributes and lower two hands are always in *abhaya* and *varada mudras*. In general, the *matrikas* are represented in two ways; collectively on *Matrika-patta* and individually seated on separate throne or *Asana*. The district wise distribution of *Saptamatrikas* in Kerala is given below (Table 2, Fig. 1) and the remaining part will discuss iconography of the *Saptamatrikas* in some important temples.

Iconic Representation

The earliest literary works like *Tantra Samuchaya* and *Silparatna* refer to the names and worship of *Saptamatrikas*. The *matrikas* are arranged in usual sequence starting from right *Brahmi*, *Maheswari*, *Kumari*, *Vaisnavi*, *Varahi*, *Indrani* and *Chamunda*; they are flanked by Virabhadra and Ganesa on the right and left side respectively. Iconic

Table 1. Iconography of Saptamatrika

Literature	Brahmi	Maheswari	Kumari	Vaisnavi	Varahi	Indrani	Chamunda
Amsumadbhedagama	Hala – sakti Abhaya- varada	Sula-akshamala Abhaya-varada	Abhaya,Sakti- Kukkuta,Varada	Sankha-chakra Abhaya- varada	Hala-sakti Abhaya- varada	Sakti-vajra Abhaya- varada	Abhaya,Kapala- Sula,Varada
Sritattvanidhi	Pustaka- akshamala Kundi-sruva Abhaya- varada	Pasa-khadga Ghanta-vajra Naga-trisula Ankusa-pasa Abhaya-varada	Bana-sakti Gada-pustaka Dhanus-sula Abhaya-varada	Sanka-gada Chakra-padma Abhaya- varada	Danda- khadga Patra- Abhaya- varada	Abhaya- varada Kalasa- akshamala	Musala-khadga Chakra-pasa Ankusa-dhanus Khadga-kuthara
Vishnudharmottara	Pustaka-sula Kamandalu- sruva Abhaya- varada	Sula-damaru- ghanta-sutra Abhaya-varada	Sakti-dhavja Danda-dhanus Bana-ghanta Padma-patra Pustaka-parasu	Sanka-gada Chakra-padma Abhaya- varada	Danda- khadga Khadga- pasa Abhaya- varada	Abhaya- varada Padma- akshamala Patra-vajra	Musala-danda Dhanus-parasu Khadga-khadga Kavacha-ankusa Bana-pasa
Purvakaragama	Kamandalu- akshamala Abhaya- varada	Sula-Abhaya Akshamala- Varada	Abhaya-Sakti Kukkuta-Varada	Sanka-Chakra Gada-Padma	Hala-Abhaya Musala- Varada	Abhaya- Padma Sakti-Varada	Sula Kapalas with lumps of flesh,Agni
Silparatna	Akshamala- Sruva Kamandalu- Pustaka	Sula,Parasu- Dhundhubhi,Nrik arotikam	Varada,Trisula- Sakti,Gada	Varada,Sanka- Chakra,Gada		Vajra,Trisula- Gada,Varada	Musala,Chakra,Ban a,Ankusa,Khadga- Dhal,Pasa,Dhanus, Dhanda,Kuthara
Matsya Purana	Kamandalu,A kshamala	Khadga,Munda- Trisula,Khadvanga	Trisula,Sula,Kukk uta	Sanka,Gada,A child		Vajra,Trisula, Gada,Khadga	Ghanta
.Visvakarma Sastra	Varada,Sruv,P ustaka- Abhaya,Kama ndalu,Aksham ala	Varada,Akshamal a,Damaru- Abhaya,Ghanta,S ula	Varada,Sakti,Pata ka,Danda- Ghanta,Padma,K ukkuta,Parasu,Ab haya	Varada,Gada,P adma- Mala,Sanka,Ab haya		Varada,Aksh amala,Vajra- Kalasa,Patra, Abhaya	Musala,Kavacha,Ba na,Ankusa,Khadga- Khadga,Pasa,Dhan us,Danda,Parasu

Table 2: Distribution of Saptamatrikas in Kerala

S.No	Name of the Temple	District
1	Mannampurathukavu (12°15'30.89" N 75° 07'55.51"E)	Kasargode
2	Kalarivathukkal Bhagavathi Temple (11°55'29.04" N 75° 21'10.67"E)	Kannur
3	Thiruvanchery (11°49'55.48" N 75° 33'17.03"E)	Kannur
4	Mamanikkunnu Mahadevi temple (11°59'35.58" N 75° 32'56.53"E)	Kannur
5	Madayikavu (12°02'05.26" N 75° 32'56.53"E)	Kannur
6	Thiruvaiyanadukavu (11°14'38.29" N 75° 48'13.56"E)	Kozhikode
7	Kaliyamvelli (11°39'32.09" N 75° 36'39.79"E)	Kozhikode
8	Pisharikavu (11°27'29.76" N 75° 40'42.03"E)	Kozhikode
9	Thirumanthamkunnu (10°58'48.02" N 76° 12'6.02"E)	Malappuram
10	Kongadu Bhagavathi temple (10°51'32.53" N 76° 31'1.38"E)	Palakkad
11	Puthukulangara (10°38'31.1" N 76° 32'42.25"E)	Palakkad
12	Kodikkunnathukavu (10°50'11.52" N 76°6'47.29"E)	Palakkad
13	Kodugallur (10°13'37.1" N 76°11'54.44"E)	Thrissur
14	Chovvallur mahadeva temple (10°35'47.03" N 76°2'5.65"E)	Thrissur
15	Thiruvanchikkulam (10°12'37.31" N 76°12'23.31"E)	Thrissur
16	Kizhthali (10°12'37.4" N 76°12'22.42"E)	Thrissur
17	Pazhayannur Bhagavathi temple (10°41'11.82" N 76°25'13.19")	Thrissur
18	Chengamanad Shiva Temple (10°9'13.34" N 76°20'24.94")	Ernakulam
19	Ameda Saptamatr Naga temple (9°56'47.62" N 76°21'46.06")	Ernakulam
20	Trikkariyur Mahadeva Temple (10°5'5.26" N 76°36'44.86")	Ernakulam

21	Thaliyilkotta Mahadeva Temple (9°35'50.5" N 76°30'24.39")	Kottayam
22	Isanathukavu (9°28'43.02" N 76°31'37.99")	Kottayam
23	Pananyanarkavu (9°19'59.66" N 76°32'14.92")	Pathanamthitta
24	Trikkapaleswari (9°24'33.14" N 76°32'5.52")	Pathanamthitta
25	Muthur Bhadrakali (9°23'51.88" N 76°34'9.38")	Pathanamthitta
26	Vizhinjam Bhagavathi temple (8°23'37.07" N 77°0'19.45")	Thiruvananthapuram
27	Palappuru Saptamatrika Temple (8°26'12.57" N 76°58'48.81")	Thiruvananthapuram
28	Chenthitta Bhagavathi temple (8°28'31.82" N 76°56'13.07")	Thiruvananthapuram
29	Thiruvarkattukavu (8°41'22.01" N 76°48'10.13")	Thiruvananthapuram
30	Mudisasthamkodu (8°34'2.03." N 76°59'24.92")	Thiruvananthapuram
31	Kelamangalam (8°34'22.09." N 76°55'40.82")	Thiruvananthapuram
32	Paippinmodu Mahadeva Temple (8°31'06.85." N 76°58'25.17")	Thiruvananthapuram
33	Aruvikkara Bhagavathi temple (8°34'18.06." N 77°01'14.39")	Thiruvananthapuram
34	Ottasekharamangalam Shiva temple (8°28'44.54." N 77°08'05.81")	Thiruvananthapuram
35	Udiyannur Mahadeva Temple (8°32'21.07." N 76°56'52.81")	Thiruvananthapuram
36	Keezhvada (8°32'10.53." N 77°0'40.76")	Thiruvananthapuram

representations of *Saptamatrikas* are the earliest and are seen from 8-9th century AD onwards. Some of the earliest icons of *Saptamatrikas* discovered singly as stray finds from Niramankara temples at Nemam and Bhagavati temple at Vizhinjam (Fig. 2) and two sets of *Saptamatrika* images found at Kizhtali Siva temple at Trissur (Fig.3). *Brahmi* with four hands and three faces found at Nemam that belonged to 9th century AD. *Kumari* seated in *artha-paryanka asana* with two arms; one hand is in *kati* and other in *Varata* pose, wears *upavita* necklaces, bangles, bracelet and anklets found at Vizhinjam Bhagavati temple that belonged to the 8th century AD.

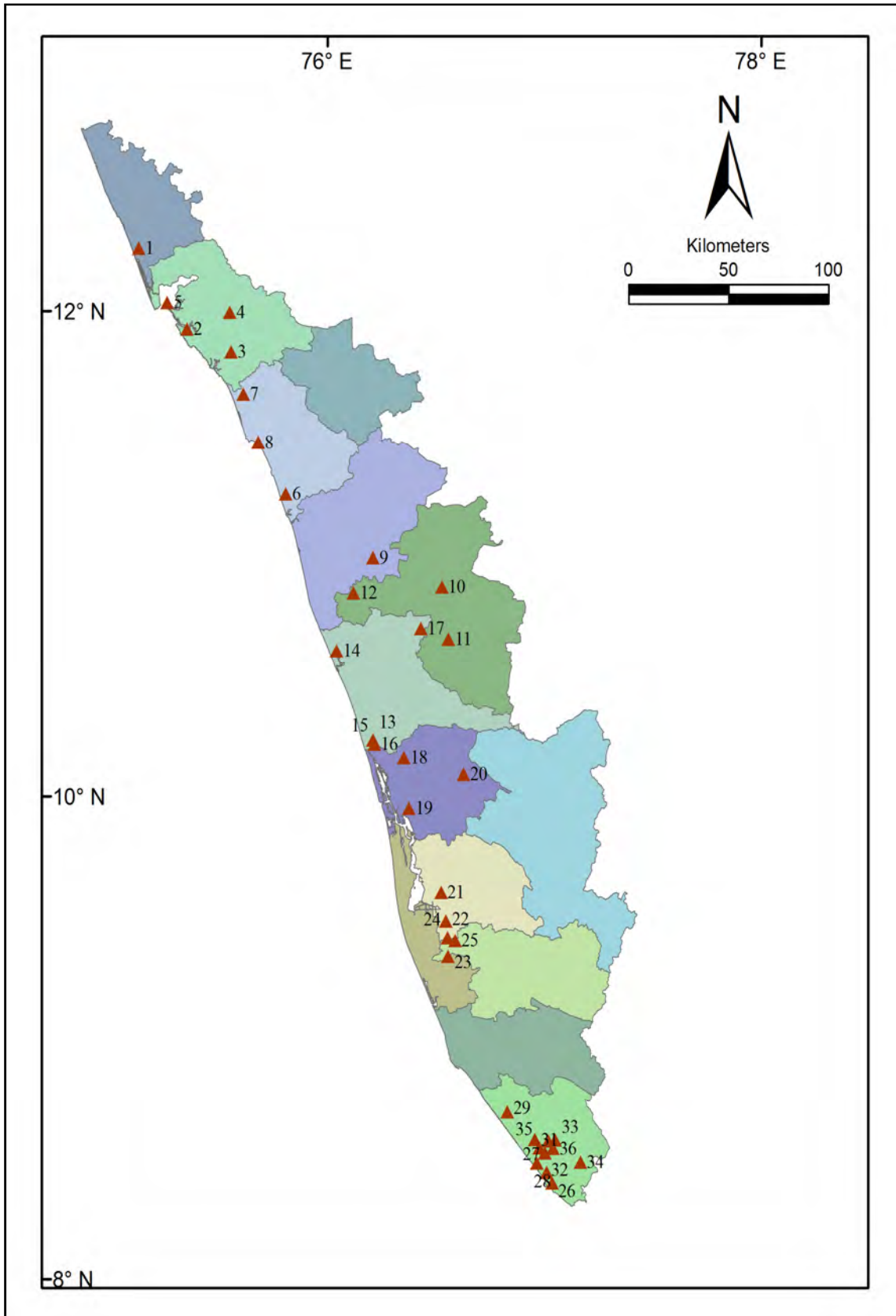


Figure 1: Distribution of *Saptamatrika* Figures in Kerala



Figure 2: Kumari - Vizhinjam Bhagavati Temple



Figure 3: Saptamatrikas- Kizhtali Siva Temple

Similarly, two sets of images of Brahmi, Vaishnavi and Kumari belonged to 9th century AD found at *Kiltali* Siva temple, Trissur. It is argued that the Vasurimalala shrine of Kodungallur temple is the defaced image of a *Matrika*, probably Chamunda that dated to 8th century AD based on the stylistic features (Sarkar 1978:105-106). Tiruppirangot inscription of the Second Chera ruler of Makotai (Kodungallur) of 10th century AD refers to the land grants to the Tiruppirangot temple meet the expenses of the offerings to the *Saptamatrikas* (ARE: 1895: 219). All these have shown that the *Saptamatrika* images were developed in the 8th century AD, means the early Phase of temple architecture (Sarkar: 1978; Arya Nair: 2011).

Saptamatrikas found in the early phase reveals certain characters. *Matrikas* are seated in individual *asanas*, not depicted their *vahanas*, four handed; upper two hand holding representative attributes of the male gods are lower right in *varada* posture and left is on thigh (*Ardhaparyankasana*), *Chamunda* in *Utkudikasana*. One of the important feature noticed in this period images wearing heavy necklace (Tourque), is the typical feature of Chola art. One of the interesting features noticed is that *Adika*, *Moosathu*, *Pidasas*, the socially degraded Brahmins, are the priest community involving in the worship of *Matrikas*, these community has the right to use *Panchamakaras*. Cock sacrifice is still practiced in these temples.

After 12th century AD, *Saptamatrikas* became the tutelary deities of *Naduvazhi Kovilakams*, the matrilineal households that became powerful after the disintegration of Second Chera Kingdom. As the *Swarupams* were followed a matrilineal form of succession, the mother goddess (*Saptamatikas*) worship got more priority and treated them as the tutelary deities of the households. *Saptamatrikas* of Madayikavu, Sree Porkkaleswari, Lokanarkavu, Tiruvalayanad, Tirumanthamkunnu Swarupam, Pazhayannur and Tiruvarkattukavu were worshiped as the tutelary deity of the matrilineal households of Kolathiri Raja, Kottayam Raja, Kadathanad Raja, Zamuthiri Raja, Valluvanad Raja, Kochi Raja and Attingal Raja respectively (Padmaja: 1994). *Saptamatrikas* of Mannampurathu Kavu was the tutelary deity of Allada Swarupam.

The following part delineates the iconography of the *Saptamatrika* images in the early phase temples of Kerala. Three types of temples with *Saptamatrika* worship are mainly discussing in this part; those installed in the *Garbhagriha*, those placed in the *Nalambala* as minor deity and those placed in the *Pradakhinapada*.

Saptamatrikas in the Garbhagriha

Vizhinjam Bhagavathi Temple- *Saptamatrikas* are installed in the *garbhagriha* of Vizhinjam Bhagavati Temple, Thiruvananthapuram. *Srikovil* is rectangular. *Matrikas* start from right to left as *Brahmi*, *Maheswari*, *Varahi*, *Kumari*, *Vaisnavi*, *Indrani* and *Chamunda* flanked by Ganesa and Virabhadra on the right and left side respectively. In this temple prominent offerings and worship is offered to *Vaisnavi*. All *Matrikas* are seated in individual *asanas* and have four hands. The upper right two hands carry attributes of the corresponding male gods and lower right hand in *varada* and left is

over thigh (*ardhaparyankasana*). All wears cylindrical *kirida*, *vritha kundala*, single *kankana* and *padavalaya*. Brahmi is represented with three faces. Upper right hand carries *kamandalu* and left holds *akshamala*. *Maheswari* holds *mriga* in her left hand and *parasu* in the right hand. *Kumari*'s upper right holds *sakti* and left holds *pasa*. *Vaisnavi* holds *sanka* on her upper right hand and *chakra* in the left hand. *Indrani* holds *vajra* on her upper right hand and *pasa* on her left hand. *Chamunda* is represented with wearing *mundamala*, upper right holds *sula* and left holds *pasa*. Ganesa is represented with four hands; upper right hand holds *ankusa* and *pasa*. Lower right is in *varada* and left placed over thigh, seated in *utkudikasana*. These images are placed in the 8th century AD based on the artistic features. The other temple having *Saptamatrikas* in the *Garbhagriha* are Isanathu Kavu (Kottayam) (Fig.4), Panayanarkavu (Pathanamthitta), Kodungallur Bhagavati Temple (Trissur) Thirumanthamkunnu Bhagavathi temple (Malappuram) and Pizharikavu (Kozhikode).



Figure 4: Isanathu Kavu – Saptamatrikas in the Garbhagriha

Saptamatrikas in the Nalambalam

Thrikkupaleswari Dakshinamoorthi Temple - *Saptamatrikas* are installed in the southern side of the *Nalambala* of Thrikkupaleswari Dakshinamoorthi Temple at Alamthuruthi in Pathanamthitta district (Fig. 5&6). The figures are tall and slender arranged in usual sequence starting Brahmi, Maheswari, Indrani, Vaisnavi, Varahi, Kumari and Chamunda are flanked by Ganesa on the left and Virabhadra on the right side. *Prabhavali* is absent in these figures. *Matrika* figures are highly ornamented and seated in *lalitasana*. Usually upper two hands carry characteristic attributes and lower left is in *abhaya* and left in *varada* postures. Left leg is dangling down and it rest on a pedestal. Brahmi adorned with decorated *karanda makuta* and presented with three faces. She wears *patra kundala*, decorated *graveyaka* in the centre pedant is fixed, beaded



Figure 5: *Brahmi, Maheswari, Kumari, Vaishavi- Thrikkupaleswari Dakshinamoorthi Temple*



Figure 6: *Varahi, Indrani, Chamunda and Ganesha- Thrikkupaleswari Dakshinamoorthi Temple*

channavira and *kucha bandhana*. Brahmi's upper right hand holds *akshamala* and left holds *kundika*. She also wears *skandhamala* on shoulder, decorated *keyura* and *kankanas*. Brahmi seated in *lalitasana*, wears *padajalika*. Lower garment is represented as transparent reached above knee. Maheswari wears *karanda makuta* with *jata bhara*. She wears *vritha kundala*, *skandhamala*, decorated *graveyaka*, thick *upavita* and *kucha bandhana* (on the centre round decoration are seen). She holds *mriga* on her upper right hand and *parasu* on the left hand. She wears *padajalika* (with two series) on her leg. Indrani wears five tiered decorated *karanda makuta* with *sikhamani*. Indrani holds *khadga* on her upper right hand and *vajra* on the left hand. She wears *vritha kundala*, decorated *graveyaka*, double threaded *upavita* and *kuchabhandha*. Her ornaments include *keyuras*, *kankanas* in hands and *padajalika* on leg. Vaisnavi wears decorated *karanda makuta* with *sikhamani*. She wears *skandamala* on shoulder, *patra kundala*, decorated *graveyaka*, thick *upavita* and *kucha bandhana*. The artistic features of these images show that they belonged to 13th century AD.

She holds *sankha* on her upper left hand and *chakra* on her right hand. Vaisnavi wears *padajalika* on leg. Boar faced Varahi wears conical *kirita* with *sikhamani*. Her ornaments are *graveyaka*, thick *upavita* and *kucha bandhana*. She holds shield on her upper right hand and *musala* on her left hand. She wears *keyuras* and *kankanas* on hand. Kumari wears decorated *karanda makuta* with *sikhamani*. She wears *skandamala* on shoulder, *patra kundala*, decorated *graveyaka*, beaded *upavita* and *kucha bandhana*. She wears *keyuras* and *kankanas* on hand. She holds *sakti* on her upper right hand and *khadga* on her left hand. Kumari wears *padavalayas* and *padasaras* on leg. Chamunda's hair represented as *jatajala* and some tied in *sarpa bhandana*. Her canines are represented as protruding to indicate the ferociousness of the deity. She wears big *vrithakundala*, *kucha bandhana* and *mundamala* as *upavita* *graveyaka*, Chamunda's upper right hand holds *khadga* and left holds *sula*. She wears decorated *keyuras* and *kankanas*. Virabhadra's head is adorned with *karanda mukuta* with *alakachudaka*. He wears *skandamala*, *patrakundala* and decorated *graveyaka*. His other ornaments are thick *upavita* and *urabandhana*. Virabhadra is also represented with four hands. Upper left hand holds *parasu* and right holds *khadga*. Lower right in *abhaya* and left is in *varada* postures. He seated in *lalitasana* (left folded and right dangling down), wears *padavalayas*, *padajalikas* and *mundari* on leg. Ganesa wears decorated small *karanda makuta*. He wears *skanda mala* and *uabandhana*. Tusk is turned to be left (*idampiri*). Ganesa is represented with four hands. Upper right hand holds *ankusa* and left holds *pasa*. Lower right hand is in right is *varada* and left is on thigh. He wears *keyura*, *bhuja bandhana*, and *kankanas* on hand. He seated in *utkudikasana*, wears *pada valaya* on leg.

Thiruvanchikkulam Mahadeva Temple- *Saptamatrikas* are placed on the southern side of the temple *Nalambala* of the Thiruvanchikkulam Mahadeva Temple at Trissur (Fig.7). Images are made of wood. Compared to the stone images these are slender figures. *Matrikas* are seated in *lalitasana* with four hands. Upper two hands carry characteristic attributes of the corresponding male gods. Lower right hand is in *abhaya* and left hand in *varada* postures. They are seated in individual *asanas*. *Matrikas* are arranged in usual

sequence starting right from Brahmi, Maheswari, Kumari, Vaisnavi, Varahi, Indrani and Chamunda are flanked by Ganesa in the right and Virabhadra in the left side.



Figure 7: Vaishnavi, Varahi, Indrani- Thiruvanchikkulam Mahadeva Temple

Prabhavali is parabolic shape. Brahmi's head adorned with conical *kirida*. She is represented with three faces. She wears *graveyaka*, *kucha bhandana* and *channavira*. Upper right hand holds *khadga* and left holds *kundika*. She wears *padavalaya* on leg. *Asana* is decorated with floral motifs. Maheswari wears conical *kirida*; some hair is showing as flowing type. She wears *patra kundala*, single *griva*, *channavira* and *kucha bandana*. She holds *parasu* on her right hand and *trisula* on left hand. Maheswari also wears *padavalaya* on leg. Kumari wears decorated conical *kirida*. Upper part of *prabhavali* is broken. Kumari wears *manikundala*, *skandamala*, decorated *graveyaka*, *kucha bandana* and *channavira*. She holds *akshamala* on her upper right hand and *sakti* on the left hand. Lower garment *antaravasa* is also depicted, *asana* is much decorated. She wears *padavalaya* as leg ornament. Vaisnavi wears conical *kirida* with *sikhamani*. She wears *manikundala*, *hara* with round decoration on the centre, *kucha bandana* and *channavira*. Some part of *antarasaya* placed on two sides of waist. She holds *sankha* on her upper left hand and *chakra* on the right hand. Boar faced Varahi's head adorned with decorated conical *kirida*. She wears *patra kundala*, *skanda mala* on shoulder, single *hara*, *kucha bandha* and *channavira*. She holds *nilotpala* on her upper right hand and *musala* on left hand. *Padavalaya* wears as the leg ornament. Indrani wears *karanda makuta*. She wears *kanthi* and *hara* in neck, *skandamala*, *kucha bandhana* and *channavira*. She holds *vajrayudha* on her upper right hand and *chakra* on her left hand. Compared to others much ornamentation is seen. Chamunda wears decorated conical *kirida*. She wears *hara*, *skandamala*, *kucha bandha* and *channavira*. Her upper right hand holds *khadga* and left hand holds *pasa*. She wears *keyura* and *kankana* on her hand. She wears *Padavalaya* as her leg ornament. Ganesa's head adorned with decorated conical *kirida*. He wears *patra kundala*, decorated *hara* and *mekhala* on the waist. Ganesa is represented

with four hands. Upper right hand holds stalk of sugarcane and left holds *pasa*. Lower right hand is in *varada* and left in *abhaya* postures. The tusk is turned to be right (*valampiri*). He seated in *utkudikasana* wears *pada valaya* on leg. Virabhadra's hair is represented as *jatajala*. He wears single *hara* and *urabhandhana*. Virabhadra is represented with four hands; holds *trisula* on his upper right hand and *khadga* on left hand. He wears *skandamala*, *keyura* and *kankanas* on hand. This images may belongs to 9th century AD.

Thiruvarkattu Kavu (Madayikkavu)- This temple is located at Madayi village in Kannur district. The main deity of the temple is *Bhagavati*. On the southern side of the temple in a rectangular shrine *Saptamatrikas* is placed. These are life size figures. The arrangement of *Matrikas* are not usual sequence starts right from Chamunda, Brahmi, Maheswari, Kumari, Vaisnavi, Varahi and Indrani are flanked by Ganesa on the right and Virabhadra on the left side respectively. *Matrikas* are seated in *lalitasana* with four hands; upper two hands carry characteristic attributes of the corresponding male gods. Lower left hand is on the lap and right hand is in *abhaya* posture. The peculiar feature noticed in the temple is that *Matrikas* are presented with their *vahanas* on their *asanas*. Chamunda's hair is represented as *jatajala*. She wears single *hara* and *kucha bandhana*. She holds *khadga* on her upper left hand and *khedaka* on the right hand. Lower left hand holds *kapala* and right hand is in *abhaya* posture. She wears *keyuras* and *kankanas*. *Padavalayas* and *nupuras* wear on leg. Her *vahana* is an owl. Brahmi is represented as three headed, wears *karanda makuta*. She wears single *hara* and *kucha bandhana*. Upper right hand holds *kundika* and left holds *akshamala*. She wears *valaya* and *kankanas* on hand. Her *vahana* is *hamsa*. Maheswari's head adorned with *karanda makuta*. She wears *graveyaka* and single *hara* on neck, *upavita* and *kucha bandha*. Her upper right hand holds *trisula* and left holds *akshamala*. She wears *keyuras* and *kankanas* on hand. Her *vahana vrishabha* is represented on the *asana*. Kumari wears decorated *karanda makuta*. Her other ornaments are decorated *hara*, *upavita*, *channavira* and *kucha bandha*. She holds *sakti* on her upper right hand and holds *ghanta* on left hand. She wears *padavalaya* and *nupura* as leg ornaments. Her *vahana mayura* is also represented on the *asana*. Vaisnavi wears decorated *karanda makuta*. Vaisnavi's ornaments are *vritha kundala*, single *hara* on the neck and *kucha bandha*. She holds *chakra* on her upper right hand and *sanka* on the left hand. She wears *keyuras* and three *kankanas* on hand. The peculiarity noticed is the representation of *vahana*. Her *vahana garuda* is represented in hybrid form (upper portion is like bird and lower is like human). Boar faced Varahi's head adorned with *karanda makuta*. She wears *graveyaka* and *hara* as her neck ornaments. Varahi wears *kuchabanda* across the breast. She is presented with four hands. Upper right hand holds *musala* and left holds *pasa*. She wears *keyuras* and *kankanas* on hand. Varahi wears *padavalaya* and double storied *padajalika* on leg. Her *vahana* buffalo is represented on the *asana*. Indrani wears *karanda makuta* on head. She wears *patra kundala*, single *hara* and *kuchabanda*. She holds *vajra* on her upper right hand and *ankusa* on her left hand. Her ornaments are decorated *keyuras* and *kankanas* on hand. She wears *padavalaya* and *nupuras* on leg. Her *vahana airavata* is also represented. Virabhadra wears *karanda makuta* on head. He wears single *hara*, *upavita* and *urabandhana*. He is represented with

four hands. Upper right hand holds *pasa* and left holds *mriga* and lower right hand is in *abhaya* and left is on the thigh. He wears decorated *valaya* and *kankanas* on hand. He seated in *lalitasana*, wears *pada kataka* and *nupuras* on leg. Ganesa adorned with decorated conical *kirida*. He wears *graveyaka* and single *hara*, *upavita* and *urabhandana*. Ganesa is represented with four hands. His right hand holds broken tusk and left holds *modaka*. He wears *valayas* and *kankanas* on hand. He seated in *utkudikasana*, wears *padavalaya* and *nupuras* on leg. As this temple was under the patronage of Kolathunadu rulers, this images belonged to the 14th century AD.

Saptamatrikas in the Pradakshinapada

Ottasekharamangalam Siva Temple- This temple at Ottasekharamangalam village in Neyyattinkara taluk of Thiruvananthapuram district is dedicated to Siva (Fig.8). Two temples are seen inside *prakara*. Saptamatrika icons are placed on *antarmandala* area of the temple to the southern side. Two sets of *matrika* panels are seen. *Saptamatrika* figures are made of using black granite. *Matrikas* are independently seated starting from right they are Brahmi, Kumari, Maheswari, Vaisnavi, Varahi, Indrani and Chamunda. *Matrikas* are flanked by Ganesa and virabhadra on the left and right side respectively. Because of the highly eroded nature of the *matrikas* it is difficult to identify the attributes.



Figure 8: Saptamatrikas of Ottasekharamangalam

Matrikas are presented with oval faced and are four handed. Upper two hands carry the attributes of the corresponding male gods and lower left is on thigh and right is in *varada* posture. One of the special features noticed in the *matrika* figures is that all wears the heavy necklace (torque like). On the basis of the artistic features and style of attributes, the images are dated to the 9th century A.D. Brahmi is shown with three faces and the head is adorned with five tied *karanda mukuta*. She wears *vritha kundala*. Toruque like single *graveyaka* wears in the neck. Brahmi is represented with four hands. In the upper arms she wears single a *keyura* and at the wrist *kankanas*. Upper right hand holds *kundika* and left holds *akshamala*. Upper part of the body is nude and the lower garment is represented as parallel folds. She wears single *padavalaya* on her leg. Kumari wears three tiered conical *kirida*. Her ornaments includes *vritha kundala*,

torque like necklace in neck and thick *upavita*. She also wears single *keyura* and *kankana* on her hand. Upper right hand holds *sakti* and left holds *akshamala*. Maheswari's head is adorned with decorated five tiered *karanda mukuta* with five tiers. She wears *vritha kundala*, torque like ornament and also wears thick *upavita*. Her hand ornaments are single *keyura* in the upper part of the hand and also wears *kankana*. Vaisnavi wears *karanda mukuta* on head and wears usual ornaments like *vritha kundala*, single *graveyaka*, thick *yanjopavita*, *kankana* and *padavalaya*. Vaisnavi holds *sankha* in her upper right hand and *chakra* in the left hand. Varahi is highly eroded compared to others. Boar faced Varahi wears conical *kirida*. She also wears thick *graveyaka* (torque like), *yanjopavita*, single *keyura* and *kankanas*. Her upper left holds *hala* and right holds *chakra*. Indrani's head is adorned with decorated *karanda mukuta*, wearing *vritha kundala*. *Graveyaka* is small compared to others. Her ornaments are single *yanjopavita* and single *keyura* and *kankanas* in hand. She holds *akshamala* on her upper right hand and *vajra* on left. Indrani also wears single *padavalaya* on leg. Chamunda's hair is represented as *jatajala* type. She wears single *graveyaka*, *mundamala* as *upavita*. She holds *sula* in her upper right hand, *khadga* in the left. Virabhadra's hair is represented as *jatajala* type. He wears single *graveyaka*, *yanjopavita* and single *urabhandana*. He is represented with four hands, attributes in the upper hands are not clear. Lower right hand in *varada* and left is on thigh, seated in *lalitasana*. Ganesa is adorned with three tied conical *kirida*. The tusk is turned to the right (*valampiri*). He is represented with four hands, upper right holds *ankusa* and left holds *pasa*. Lower right hand in *varada* and left is on thigh. He also wears *urabhandana*, *keyura* and seated in *utkudikasana*.

Another set of *matrika* figures are also seen inside the temple complex. These figures are also made of black granite rock. These are not much eroded compared to the above-mentioned figures. *Matrikas* are arranged in usual sequence starting from right Brahmi, Maheswari, Kumari, Vaisnavi, Varahi, Indrani and Chamunda. These are slender compared to the above-mentioned figures. *Matrikas* are shown with four hands, upper two carry corresponding attributes, lower left is on thigh, and right is in *varada* posture. Special feature noticed in these figures are leg ornaments are absent.

Aniconic Representation

In majority of the temples of Kerala Saptamatrikas are represented in aniconic form (Fig.9). In this form, Saptamatrikas along with Ganesa and Virabhadra are installed on a single *balipeetha* as nine *devatas* in the form of small *balikkal*. These *balipeetha* of *matrikas* are seen placed in the *antarmandala* area of the temple on the southern side. They are as the safeguards of the temple.

The *balippethas* having nine *devatas* (seven *matrikas*, Ganesa and Virabhadra) is placed in east-west direction on the southern side of the temple. Therefore, the *matrikas* Brahmi, Maheswari Kumari, Vaisnavi, Varahi, Indrani and Chamunda all face the north. They are flanked by Ganesa and Virabhadra on the right and left in the form of *balikkals*. Ganesa faces east and Virabhadra the west. These *balikkal* type aniconic forms of *matrikas* are generally made out of granite. There are some exceptional cases where

laterite is used as medium for this *balikkals*. *Balikkals* of Saptamatrika have a symbolism behind them. Here Brahmi represents the *shristi sakti*, Maheswari represents *samhara sakti* and Kumari represents *guru sakti*. Vaisnavi also represents the *maya sakti*; *varaha sakti* is represented by Varahi. Indrani represents the power of earth and Chamunda represents *kundalini sakti*. The daily *puja* given to *matrikkal* is *balithooval*. In this *puja balichooru* and flowers were given to the *matrikkal*. *Utsavabali* is the greatest *puja* given to the *matrikkal*. This *puja* is done in the temple festival occasion of the temple. While doing this *puja matickal* are invoked in the form of deities.



Figure 9: Aniconic form of Saptamatrikas

Discussion

The iconic representations of Saptamatrika images are fewer in Kerala as compared to other deities. Iconic form of Saptamatrikas gained popularity in Kerala from 8th century onwards. It has a great popularity in the Northern part especially in the present Kannur and Kasargod districts. This is probably due to the close contact of the region with Chalukyan country during the medieval time, where this cult was popular. Saptamatrika images are found made of different materials like granite, wood and *katusarkkara*. Most of the images are made of granite. Sculptures of *matrikas* are represented in two ways in north India; *Asana Matrikas* or seated *matrikas* and *Nritya Matrikas* or dancing *matikas*. In Kerala, only *asana matrikas* are occurred.

The general features of the *matrikas* sculptures in Kerala is that they are in usually sequenced from the right starting with Brahmi, followed by Maheswari, Kumari, Vaishnavi, Varahi, Indrani and Chamunda ; they are flanked by Ganesa and Virabhadra on the right and left side respectively. Saptamatrikas are mostly observed seated in *lalitasana* with four hands. Upper two hands carry characteristic attributes

and lower two hands are always in *abhaya* and *varada mudras*. Saptamatrika figures in North and South Kerala have slight variation in material and iconographic characters. In North Kerala figures are made of stone and wood however in South Kerala only stone figures are found. The placement of iconic representation of Saptamatrikas in the *antarmandala* area of temples are seen in temples of Ottasekharamangalam Siva temple, Paippinmoodu Siva temple and Thiruvarkattukavu, Attingal; is unique in South Kerala, these are not seen in North Kerala. In the Saptamatrika representation of North Kerala, the *vahanas* of each of the *matrikas* are invariably depicted. However, in North Kerala this form is not clear. The existing iconic representation of Saptamatrikas can be classified in to two phases; Early phase (800-1000 A.D) and Late phase (1000-1600A.D). General features of the *matika* figures in the early phase (800-1000A.D) are:

1. Saptamatrika images are found made on granite and wood.
2. They are represented seated on individual *asanas*.
3. Two handed as well as four handed *matrikas* are seen. Upper two hands carry corresponding attributes, lower two are on thigh.
4. Upper part of the body is nude and drapery limited to the lower half.
5. Chamunda's hair is represented as *jatajala*, wearing *mundamala*

During the second phase, some variations are seen in the iconographic representations of *matrika* images (1000-1600 A.D).

1. Saptamatrika images are found made on different materials like granite, wood and *katusarkkara*.
2. Life sized as well as medium type figures are noticed during this period.
3. Ornamentations increased during this period. The *matrikas* images generally are observed with cylindrical and conical crown (*kireeda*) on the head. *Graveyaka*, *kanti* and single *hara* as neck ornaments. *Patra kundala*, *vriitha kundala* and *Manikundala* as ear ornaments. *Kankanas*, *keyuras* and *valayas* on hand. *Padavalayas*, *padasaras*, *padajalikas* and *padanguliyakas* as leg ornaments.
4. The physiognomies of the male and female forms are clearly depicted. The physique is strong for the males, slim and curvy for females. The face, which is generally ovaloid, has clear expression of iconic characters.
5. *Matrikas* are shown with four hands. Upper two hands carry characteristic attributes; sometimes four hands carry attributes.
6. Unlike early period, the upper garments are shown in the form of *kucha bandhana*. Parallel folds indicate lower garment.

This study reveals that both brahmanical and non-brahmanical characters were amalgamated in Mother Goddess (*Sakti*) worship. The typical characters of the *Saptamatrika* images are *brahmanical*. At the same time, the ritual offerings to these deities are sacrificial in nature (*rurujith vidana*). The cock sacrifice is still practicing in some temples like Madayikkavu, Ammakkottam etc. *Panchamakaras* form of ritual is practiced by Adikas, Pidarans, Mussatus in Saptamatrika temple proves that worship is in non-brahmanic characters.

During the course of the study, 15 temples in Kerala have Saptamatrikas installed in the *garbhagriha* even now. They are located in the temple premises in 25 temples. Saptamatrika worship in Kerala appears to receive a set back around 12-16th century with the growth of Vishu and Shiva worship. During this period, some of the temples that were dedicated to Saptamatrikas appear to have been re-dedicated to the major principal gods like Siva and Vishnu. The images of Saptamatrikas installed in the *garbhagriha* were shifted to auxiliary positions during this period. Then the aniconic representation of Saptamatrikas appear to gain popularity. Irrespective nature of the deity installed in the *garbhagriha* every temple in Kerala came to be installed with aniconic representation of Saptamatrikas along with Virabhadra and Ganesa in the southern side of *garbhagriha*. Though devolved from the status of main deity in the *garbhagriha*, the Saptamatrikas continued to be worshipped as the minor deity in all temples of Kerala even today.

Glossary

<i>Akshamala</i>	Rosary
<i>Alaka chudaka</i>	Hair-do of the deities
<i>Ankusa</i>	Elephant-goad
<i>Antaravasa</i>	The lower garment, covering thighs and reaching down the knees
<i>Antarmandala</i>	It is square, having half of <i>dand</i> from the <i>adisthana</i> of the srikovil
<i>Asanas</i>	Seat, Seated posture
<i>Astadikpalas</i>	Guardians of cardinal directions
<i>Asura</i>	Anti-god, demon
<i>Asuya</i>	Envy
<i>Avatara</i>	Incarnations
<i>Ayudhapurushas</i>	Manifestation of a weapon as god man
<i>Balikkal</i>	Stone representing divinity on which bali is offered
<i>Balipeetha</i>	Pedestal for food offering, placed in axial alignment with mulabera in all temples
<i>Balithooval</i>	Daily <i>puja</i> given to Saptamatrikas
<i>Bana</i>	Arrow
<i>Bhuja bhandana</i>	A thick ornament worn on the upper arm

<i>Chakra</i>	Wheel
<i>Channavira</i>	Cross belt, basically it denotes valour
<i>Damaru</i>	Kettle-drum
<i>Danda</i>	Staff
<i>Devatas</i>	Group of Goddesses
<i>Ganas</i>	A troop of spirits or demi-gods who are the attendants of Siva
<i>Garbhagriha</i>	Shrine proper Sanctum sanctorum
<i>Garuda</i>	A troop of spirits or demi-gods who are the attendants of Siva
<i>Graveyaka</i>	Broad necklace
<i>Griva</i>	Single necklace
<i>Hala</i>	Plough share
<i>Hamsa</i>	Swan
<i>Hara</i>	Garlant, Necklace
<i>Jatajala</i>	Locks of hair, spread out
<i>Kabandha</i>	Headless body
<i>Kalasa</i>	Vessel
<i>Kamandalu</i>	Water pot
<i>Kankana</i>	Wrist band
<i>Kanta bhusana</i>	Neck ornament
<i>Kapala</i>	Skull used as begging bowl
<i>Katisutra</i>	Belt of cloth or metal tied on the hips
<i>Kavacha</i>	Armour made of metal
<i>Keyura</i>	Armlet of various shapes
<i>Khadga</i>	Sword
<i>Khadvanga</i>	Club of bone with skulls
<i>Khedaga</i>	Shield
<i>Kirida</i>	Crown
<i>Krisangi</i>	Emaciated body
<i>Krodha</i>	Anger
<i>Kucha bhandana</i>	Breast band, used by devis.
<i>Kukkuta</i>	Cock
<i>Kundika</i>	A small water pot
<i>Kuthara</i>	Battle axe
<i>Lalitasana</i>	It is easy and careless posture of sitting with both legs on the seat; one of the leg is laid across resting on the seat while other leg is slightly raised, only the foot touching the seat
<i>Lobha</i>	Greed
<i>Lola-jihva</i>	Long tongue stretched out

<i>Mada</i>	Desire
<i>Maharajalila</i>	A seated posture with one leg pendant and the other rested on pedestal.
<i>Mahisha</i>	Buffalo
<i>Mani kundala</i>	Jewelled ear ring
<i>Matsarya</i>	Aristocracy
<i>Mayura</i>	Peacock
<i>Mekhala</i>	Girdle with strings
<i>Modaka</i>	A sweet cake carries some forms of Ganapathi
<i>Moha</i>	Illusion
<i>Mriga</i>	Black antelope
<i>Mudra</i>	Specific gesture of finger of the hand
<i>Mundamala</i>	Garlant of served heads worn by Siva and some violent forms of Devi
<i>Mundari</i>	Ring worn on toes.
<i>Musala</i>	Wooden pestle
<i>Nada</i>	Sound
<i>Naga</i>	Snake
<i>Nilotpala</i>	Blue lotus
<i>Padajalika</i>	Flowing anklets
<i>Padanguliyaka</i>	Ring worn on toes
<i>Padasaras</i>	Ornaments loosely covering the top of the foot, itflows upon the feet
<i>Padavalaya</i>	Tight- fitting anklets
<i>Padma</i>	Lotus
<i>Paisunya</i>	Malignity
<i>Parasu</i>	Battle axe
<i>Pasa</i>	Noose
<i>Patra kundala</i>	Leaf ear-ring
<i>Prabhavali</i>	It is the arch of effulgenc surrounding the deity.
<i>Pradakshina pada</i>	Circumambulatory passage
<i>Prakara</i>	Enclosure wall
<i>Puja</i>	Worship
<i>Sakti</i>	Spear
<i>Sankha</i>	Conch
<i>Sara-Saranga</i>	Bow and Arrow
<i>Sikamani</i>	Top most of the karanda makuta is surmountsby a crest jewel
<i>Srini</i>	Elephant goad

<i>Sruva</i>	Square spoon used in vedic rituals
<i>Sukhasana</i>	One of the leg usually left is placed on the seat as but the thigh of the other leg is above knee is held high and the foot on the seat.
<i>Sula</i>	Spear
<i>Tidappalli</i>	Kitchen of the temple
<i>Tomara</i>	A missile, iron club
<i>Torque</i>	Single heavy necklace
<i>Udarabadha</i>	Belly band, an ornamental band that encircles the belly
<i>Utkudikasana</i>	It is a posture where one sits on the arms with one leg folded and held upright and the other dangling down
<i>Utsavabali</i>	The greatest puja given to Saptamatrikas
<i>Vahanas-</i>	Vehicles on which gods and goddesses are supposed to ride or be seated
<i>Vajra</i>	Thunder bolt
<i>Valaya</i>	Armelt
<i>Vanamala</i>	Garland of flowers in the centre of which are large sized kadambaflowers , usually worn by Vishnu
<i>Varada</i>	Boon Bestowal
<i>Vetala</i>	Skeleton like ghost
<i>Vina</i>	Lute
<i>Virasana</i>	A posture of sitting assumed by monarchs and heroes in this posture
<i>Vrishabha</i>	Bull
<i>Vrithakundala</i>	Rounded ear ring
<i>Vyaghra Carmambara</i>	Tiger's skin
<i>Vyalimukha</i>	Mythical figure of a fierce animal like lion, tiger
<i>Yanjopavita</i>	Scared thread

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