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# Environmental Epistemology, Legends, and Mythology: An Introduction to the Formation of Kerala Culture

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**Abstract:** *There is no society without historical consciousness. In the making of historical consciousness a much greater influence is exercised by popular culture. Along with sociologists and anthropologists, the historians also contributed much to the development of popular culture as a faculty of study. From the bygone time onwards, it was a common practice of the people to propitiate the natural phenomena out of fear. In due course, the nature worship evolved as one of the means of conservation of natural resources with divinity. In the secondary stage, magic and sorcery gave way to rituals and gods and goddesses took a definite form, a form of myth. The main characters in myths are usually Gods, Demi Gods or supernatural humans often linked to religion or spirituality. The worship of Mother Goddess, serpent worship, worshipping of sacred groves, etc. is a part of it which often facilitate to form a popular culture, human culture.*

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**Keywords:** Popular Culture, Globalization, Sacred Groves, Mother Goddess, Ecological Diversity, Fertility Cult, Virginity

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## Introduction

As societies are different in their cultural peculiarities, it would be difficult to view them without historical awareness. The influence of popular culture/history on the creation of historical awareness is not negligible. Popular history is made explicit by his/ her/ neighbours'/ family's/ societies socially experienced stock of knowledge (Panikkar 2011). It is handed over from generation to generation through its oral literature. The history that is made popular is another source that enhances historical awareness in society. When it is made popular unnaturally, it reflects the self interests of certain groups or organisations. The possibilities of distortion to history in that manner are large, and that cannot be left unspoken (Panikkar 2011).

In localised historiographical productions there is transformation from history at macro level to microlevel (Kutty 2010). This short coming was realized by the famous philosopher and theorist, Eric Hobsbawm (1965)<sup>1</sup>, the well-known French thinker Le Roy Ladurie (1979)<sup>2</sup>, Italian historicists Carlo Ginsburg (1980), and Ferdinand Braudel<sup>3</sup>. In their works nation/region has been ascertained structurally and through it humanity

and culture are identified, while regions are recognized by their socio-environmental and administrative criteria with roots on cultural memories (Panikkar 2007).

The colonial Age had marginalized or rejected the identity of nation and region. However, after the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, to be precise from 1945 onwards, European academic society accelerated its interest in the creation of regional history (Gopalankutty 2010). The history of a nation began to be unravelled as the history of the marginalised depending on regional criteria (Haan and Mierau 2014). Anthropologists of high stature such as Robert Douch<sup>4</sup> (1967, 1970), W.R. Powell (1958), Paul Thomson (1998), and John Becket (2007) encouraged this novel concept. Consequently, the history of many empires collapsed. In their place small national/regional histories found their place. The same situation persisted during the postmodern era also<sup>5</sup> (Lyotard 1979; Gupta and Kivisto 2014). The concept of nation/region grew up in the contra direction of Globalisation. The havoc caused by globalization, such as the annihilation of regional history was realized by Subaltern Studies, which undertook regional historiography to a certain extent<sup>15</sup>. In a related perspective, it is the history of a small region, where human interactions/face to face dealings are clearly demarcated, a cultural space where human relations are perpetually nourished, social rites and rituals are moulded in the popular psyche, festivals, celebrations, languages, and culture work together like the links of a chain to make the annals of the region fertile and rich. In this process each and every one is unique, and invaluable. They lead us together towards a world of new knowledge. Geographical and human relations break away the bondage of rejection and strengthen the memories of civilization (Panikkar 2011).

We can look at 'Kavukal' (sacred groves of Kerala) as centers of enriched culture. The places of worship consisting of forests, hills, and streams were known in Kerala as 'Kavukal'. There were many such sacred groves near sea shores, river beds, inland hillocks and even in the South Western corners of ancient households (Rajagopalan 2004). Dravidian folk had to establish their own places of worship as the dominating Brahmins had denied freedom of worship to the subjugated. Most of the Sudras were denied temple entry by the priestly class, and consequently they were forced by circumstances to establish new centers of worship for themselves or to continue the forms of worship followed by their predecessors (Unnikrishnan 1995).

Even from the earliest of times people had looked at natural phenomena like thunder, lightning, rain winds, etc. as powers beyond their control, and had worshipped them in fear<sup>6</sup>. As primitive man had lived in close proximity with nature, he knew that products of nature were quite essential to his existence, and had the insight that their misuse would be detrimental to him (Unnikrishnan 1995). Early man had believed in ghosts and spirits and other supernatural power that lived in rivers, hills, trees, etc., and that disturbing them would bring destruction to his community (Valath 1969; Dasman 1974). They began to worship in fear the goddess who could save him from diseases and dangers (Unnikrishnan 1995). This line of thinking later developed into

the worship of nature and the protection of the products of nature. In course of time, purity and holiness were attributed to what is given by nature (Garcia and Pascal 2005). In that manner miniature forests or groves became a part of worship. These places were believed to be the abode of the spirits of their forefathers, these mini forests became places of worship. Thus these places came to be called sacred groves or 'Kavukal' (Gadgil 2002), as stated earlier.

Anthropologists like T.J. Lewis (1989), Burnet Tylor (1871), and Herbert Spencer (1896), in their studies, have looked into the belief in the immortality of spirits and ghosts. Claude Levi Strauss, in his book *Primitive Thinking and Civilized Mind* has discussed the relation between signifier and signified related to this (Levi Strauss 1966, 1969). This method of worship was primitive because fear must have led them to various forms of worship. This aspect of religious attitude can be taken as a continuum of our cultural tradition.

In the second half (Transition Period) of the development of worship / the Vedic Age we find the growth of tree worship. James Fergusson in his book *Tree and Snake worship* writes that people in the early times had considered trees as a boon given by God to man (Fergusson 1971). They believed that a tree contains God's blessings which is revealed through the movement of the leaves (Fergusson 1971). In the book *Hindu Mythology: Vedic and Puranic* W.J. Wilkins discusses how in Hindu scriptures Thulasi and Kusa grass are attributed with divine qualities (Wilkins 1972). The same idea is expressed by Samir Ghosal in his *Tree in Folklore* (Ghosal 1965).

In the second stage, in continuation with this line of belief and religious faith Gods and Goddesses originated. Methods of worship and rituals were formulated in a new manner. Imaginative perceptions were molded in beauty and charm. Gradually they grew up into a part of the popular culture or the form of worship liked and followed by the masses. They included common beliefs, celebrations, habits and practices (Storey 2011). The Annales School of French historians represented by Marc Bloch (*History of Europe Through the Objects and Habits of the people*), the spokesmen of social history like E.P. Thompson, *Eighteenth Century, Poachers and Luddites*, Ann Douglas *American Women: Feminization of American Culture* 1977 (Burk 1978), and also champions of linguistic Psycho analysis like Saussure and Lacan have also tried to analyse popular culture (Fiske 1989)<sup>7</sup>. Some such myths that have entered deep into the social Psycho attract the attention of social scientists. This essay is an attempt to deal with nature also which has attained divinity through its greenery and fullness.

## Kavukal

'Kavukal' or saved groves of Kerala can be assessed as the centers of traditional cultural enrichment (Gadgil 2002). The main deities worshipped in the 'Kavukal' are generally Dravidian like 'Kaali', 'Sasthav', Vettakkorumakan, and the Snake deities (Jayarajan 2004). These were the deities worshipped by the tribal population who were the earliest dwellers of the land. The word 'Kavu' is seen used to refer to the Non-

Aryan places of worship and the groves around them (Gadgil and Vartak 1994). Generally, stone platforms or elevated constructions of stone were seen in the 'Kavukal'. Different names were given based on the nature and character of the deity and the mode of worship adopted (Unnikrishnan 1995).

## **Ecological Diversity**

'Kavukal' or the sacred groves of Kerala were known as treasure houses of unidentified plants and vegetation<sup>8</sup>. The deities worshipped in such Kavukal were believed to be in the roof-less Non-Aryan shrines instead of well built temples. In course of time, due to the Aryanisation of rituals, birds found shelter on the branches of the trees and some shrines had no devotees even to light a lamp there. In short, the 'Kavukal' of Kerala are not merely relics of a past culture, but token of a lost tradition also. In the past they had been throbbing with the heart beats of a pristine culture and were guarded by the benevolent land lords and rulers (Freeman 1997; Eck 1999). Emile Durkheim (1915), Levi Strauss (1967)<sup>9</sup>, Alfred Reginald Radcliff Brown (1965), and others have seen matters like this as the entangled relation between religious faith and tribal identity.

As mentioned earlier, like the other deities worshipped in the 'Kavukal', Mother Goddess and serpent deities also attained divinity (Iyer 1968). In Kerala, like the Mother Goddess, many other Dravidan deities are also worshipped in the Kavukal. 'Theeyattu' 'Kanalattu', and vilakku are the festivals celebrated in the 'Kavukal' related to fertility. In other words it can be assumed that as the tribal communities were transformed into agricultural population, the tribal deities were retained as fertility Gods. Birth in the forest, riding on wild animals, etc. signify the origin of some deities in the tribal forest. The myth of life in the royal household of a tribal deity can be due to Aryanisation, and it must have resulted in the acceptance by the agricultural society also. Ayyappan Vilakku in many temples remind people of the glory of agricultural production. The fertility relationship between 'Makara Koith', 'Makara Pongal', etc. have also agricultural and cultural significance (Gurukkal 2012).

## **Mother Goddess**

As woman is the productive center of reproduction and food production (James 1957), primitive man had worshipped fertile lands, nature, and food as manifestations of Mother Goddess (*Amma Daivam*) for the success of agriculture. With the practice of offering the first agricultural product to Mother Goddess, reaping became an occasion for celebration. In the secular agricultural society food can be the mother and god in physical life. In *Thaithiriyopanishad*, food ('Annam') is considered as Brahma. Mother Goddess, the creator of living beings, the producer and protector of food is worshipped, and mother deities became synonymous of fertility, production and continuance of tradition (Rajagopalan 2004).

Myths say that the sickle in the hands of tribal woman while collecting fodder for cattle touched a stone in the forest, and blood oozed out of the stone. Blood represents

motherhood as it appears on maturity and childbirth. Sacrifice is offered to the mother in return to her blood. In popular psyche, fertility or motherhood is associated with the flow of blood. There is a tribal belief that pouring blood over the ground would make it fertile enabling the seeds to grow. Mother worship was among the most ancient forms of worship in Malabar (Rajagopalan 2004). Primitive man considered fertility as a boon given by mother goddess. The sacrifice of the bull, a masculinity symbol like the phallus is a ritualistic process involving sexual connotations. For agricultural prosperity women used to exhibit their nakedness as a ritual in front of the temple. In Egypt, the bull was regarded the symbol of pastoral life, speed, vigour, vitality, and power of reproduction.

The face of the mother goddess appears both as fierce and smiling. She represented virtue as well as the destruction of evil. Early man worshipped her for getting protection from diseases and tragedies. Deities were worshipped for protection from dreadful diseases like small pox in Kerala (Rajagopalan 2004). Primitive man's imagination made vivid pictures of good mother goddess who gave him protection, and the terrible black mother goddess who destroyed evil forces (Caldwell 2000).

Women's periods of menstrual cycle and sex life were also attributed to the control by the Goddesses. In ancient times farmers had the belief that the earth's womb was craving to be fertilized by masculine power. Sacrifices were offered to pacify the mother earth. As desired for sacrifice, she was taken as the Black mother who wanted to devour her own children, and hence the contrary figure of the beneficent good mother. Black mother was considered the wild emotional form of the Good mother (McDermott and Kripal 2003).

The Black mother was the embodiment of blood thirst, devilishness, and wildness. She could be appeased only by atrocious practices like human sacrifice or offerings of blood. In other words, the Good and Black mother were the pleased and wrathful forms of the same mother goddess. Virginity was considered magical and the fire of sexual power had creative function (Mookerjee 1988). The mother goddess being a virgin had powers of creativity and her perpetual virginity could be destructive also. In other words, mother goddess is symbolical of both birth and death. Primitive imagination created myths connecting women's menstrual cycle, and flow of blood during child birth to the process of agricultural activities like cultivation of food grains.

As the earth mother's womb thirsts to be fertilized, she needs to be satisfied with sacrifices and to be fed with dead bodies. Thus, the Good mother deteriorated to the level of the child eating terrible Black mother goddess (Namboothiri 2004; Gurukkal 2012).

Later, as a result of tribal hostilities and wars, the ruling setups were replaced, and the mother goddess was converted to the goddess of war, supporting deity of the martial acts. While the fierce mother was appeased by sacrifices, the mild mother was pleased by collective food offerings and processions of women carrying lighted lamps. Since

woman carries the biological energy or life and reproduction, primitive man pictured mother goddess as responsible for the creation of the world. It explains why, she was represented by the symbol of the female genital organ and the instruments of food production (Sirkar 1964).

A fierce form of the black mother was the deity called Kali, or a terrible personification of Goddess Durga. In short, the driving force behind the worship of terrible deities is fear, which later turned into veneration and worship. The astonishing factor is that even the most needful deity called Bhadrakali who severs the head of the Demon King Darika, is the transformation of the smiling goddess, the mother who showers blessings on the virtuous Goddess Durga (Kindler 1996).

The legend is that Darika, son of the Asura woman Darumathy, Pleased God Brahma and obtained a boon so that he could not be killed by anybody except a woman. Perhaps he was so confident of his powers that he believed no woman would dare to fight against him or kill him. Emboldened by the leadership of Daruka, all Asuras (demons) continued their atrocities against the virtuous all over the world, and even dared to insult the supreme God Shiva. Once they ridiculed Maharishi Narada who was chanting the name of Shiva. Greatly offended, the Rishi reached Kailas, the abode of Lord Shiva, and reported the matter. The Great God's forehead fumed and from there a black flame emerged and grew up into a black woman. She was called Kali (the Black one) and was ordered to annihilate the evil doer.

Carrying a terrible sword in one hand, a trident in the other and a bowl in another she proceeded to fulfill her task. A horrible creature called Vethal carried her like a vehicle. Seeing the young woman coming to fight with him he took it, as a joke, and proposed marriage to her. Kali's reaction was terrible she started to fight with him. However to kill him was not easy. Darika had received a blessing from God Brahma. Due to it if one drop of his blood falls into the earth, from it seven Darikas would be born. The process would continue, and ultimately the whole world would be filled with evil Asuras like Darika. Goddess Kali adopted a eleven trick to overcome this cloning technique of the Asura. As soon as the Goddess cut off Darika's head Vethal, the monster would drink the entire blood from the bowl held by Kali (Harding 1993; Kindler 1996; Varier and Gurukkal 2004)

Goddess Kali is also known as Durga or Mahishasura Mardhini, the slayer of the Demon. In Kerala, the concept of Bhadra Kali worship is also similar to the form of the worship of Yakshi. In Tamil Nadu, Yakshi worship was common even before the advent of the Aryans. The deity was called Yakshi Amman or Pechi Amman. Such forms of mother cults were also part of ancient Buddhist and Jain shines in South India (Subramanian 2012).

The Tamil legend regarding the origin of the Black female deity called Yakshi is related to the atrocity committed by man against woman. A pregnant woman who was cheated by a Brahmin was killed by him in a forest, and years later becoming a deity of

revenge. She sucked his blood and killed him. This gruesome legend of exploitation, revenge, and horror has become a myth of the might of woman. It can also be seen as the legend of the exploited, and the marginalised woman's rising up against Brahmin supremacy and male domination. In another light it can be viewed as symbolising the fight against the imposed restriction over productivity by the suppressed and the marginalised.

However the 'Yakshi' attained the status of divinity and 'Kavukal' or places of worship were attributed to them. She became an icon of goodness and revenge against atrocities. Renowned historian Romila Thapar (2012) has discussed this topic in the article, "Perceiving the Forest: Early India". In short, the concept of Durga/Kali/Yakshi worship remains illustrative of women's daring as well as female sexuality because of the features of her body and the strength of her will to act.

The legend of Kannagi, the daughter of a diamond merchant who burnt the ancient town of Madurai to ashes, can also be analysed in a similar light. Her husband Kovalan, a merchant by profession and a womaniser by choice lost all his wife's riches due to relation with courtesans. After becoming poor he returned to his chaste wife who helped him to start a new life. Kovalan reached Madurai and approached a goldsmith to sell his wife's one gold anklet. The dishonest goldsmith had already secured the queen's anklets which were similar in appearance. To escape arrest the goldsmith accused Kovalan of the theft, and the king ordered to arrest him. Even without an enquiry the King ordered him to be executed. Hearing the news Kannagi reached the palace and proved Kovalan's innocence by bursting open her remaining anklet to show that they contained rubies instead of the mere stones which the queen's anklet contained. In fierce anger she cursed the king for failing to keep justice and protect the innocent. She plucked one of her breasts in rage and threw it to the floor. From the fire that spread from her blood, the whole town of Madurai was burnt to ashes. In grief and remorse she came to Kodungalloor, where the king Cheran Chenguttuvan built a temple where she was given place to rest and was appeased by the people. Even today the deity called Kodungalloor Amma is regarded the icon of women's might, the power of virginity, and the strength of chastity, in short, a part of the popular culture of Kerala (Hart 1975; Basham 1982; Blackburn 2003; Tirumaavalvan 2003).

## **Serpent Worship**

Serpents are an entangled set of symbols that remain embedded in the cultural life, thoughts and emotions of humanity (Raju 1991). The snake is a puzzle in the myths of all countries of the world, because its image contains imaginative aspects around life, death, deliverance, and rebirth. Being an evergreen symbol of sex it has direct affiliation with the mother of mankind. In many regional myths snakes are sacred. The explanation of the riddle is difficult, just like the complexity of its superlative shape and structure. In India the myth is that the Lord who protects the world lies on a great snake called Ananta over the ocean (Walker 1968).

According to uroboric belief life/death, disease/cure, such binary oppositions are mutually inclusive. It is this concept that makes snake the symbol of both sex and death (Vogel 1972). In the bible, snake, the symbol of sex advises woman to become equal to God by creation through sex. The serpent approached woman because reproduction is woman centered. As the serpent represents children, wealth and happiness in agricultural societies serpent worship generally became common (Dikshithar 1981, Soman 2004). Some legends say that mother Goddesses and serpents find their abode in trees. As noted earlier the groves that worshipped mother goddesses and deities like serpents gradually were given divine status. The association between serpents and the groves is well knit, and it extends from the Biblical Garden of Eden to the *Sarpakavukal* of Kerala (Sinha 1979).

With the decline of matriarchy the serpent and woman were considered the causes of sin. The serpent that caused the fall of man was cursed perpetually. It is believed that through the serpent man had lost his paradise. Satan had adopted the guise of the serpent. Like that the Dragon is the personification of evil. It is St. George who is empowered to destroy this evil (Scott 1975). However, in Hindu mythology great serpents like Adisesha, Vasuki, Ananthan, Karkodakan, Thakshakan and Kaliyan are given prominent roles (Sinha 1979; Nair 1987).

In the folklore and beliefs of India serpents have an important place. Snake worship in Kavukal is performed during the full moon nights. The festival of Naga Panchami illustrates the association between the Moon and Naga worship. In Kerala there is a wide spread belief that female infertility is caused by the curse of serpents. There is a well known place of snake worship where rituals are performed for the cause of fertility (Choondal 1980; Fawcet 1985; Kaithkottil 1998; Namboothiri 2004). There is a wide spread belief in India that serpents guard huge treasures, and also some such snakes carry magic gems on their heads. Serpents are worshipped by all Hindus irrespective of their caste difference. The common belief is that mother deities have their abode in Kavukal where there is the presence of the serpents. Hence the mother goddess and Naga Devatha (Serpent deity) are considered complementary to each other (Sinha 1979). Many forms of serpent worship and rituals to appease the serpent deities exist in India even today. Among them Sarpakalam, Sarpabali, Nagappat Theyyam, Pulluvar Song, Sarpam Thullal, Kalam Azhikkal, etc. are well known in Kerala (Fawcet 1985; Kaithkottil 1998).

In North Kerala, while the savarnas (upper castes) found divinity in idols made of stone or metals which were placed in the temples, the representations of godliness were done through ritualistic art forms in the Kavukal (Kurup 1973). The heroes made immortal by Theyyams were Aryan and Non-Aryan deities, chaste women and tenant workers who lost their lives due to the atrocities of the landlords (Kurup 1973). Some such famous Theyyams are Muchilottu Bhagavathy Theyyam, Kathivaroor Veeran, Aippally Thottam, etc. At least 500 deities are worshipped in the Kavukal of North Kerala. The powerful influence of Shaiva, Vaishnava religions as well as Buddhism and



Jainism can be seen in the rituals performed in the Kavukal. Virgin worship, Thalappoli, etc. are some of the rituals done in the Kavukal have relation to Jain religion (Unnikrishnan 1995). In the Kavukal, especially those of the Thiyyas of Malabar, the Anthithiriyar who goes without upper garments with shaven head and palm leaf umbrella resembles the 'Bhikshu' of Buddhism and Jainism. Deities like Vettakkorumakan, Bhairavan, etc., who have their origin related to Shiva, and Deities of Shakti cult such as Kali, Chamundi, etc. also found their worship in the Kavukal. The Kavukal originated as a result of the denial of the right to worship by the Brahmins to the Avarnas (lower castes), as stated earlier. In course of time many transformations took place, and the deities which were not protected in the sun and snow were covered by large structures and strong roofs (Malhotra and Gokhale 2007).

When Kavukal were converted into temples and the local deities of the numerous Kavukal in the rural areas were made into Gods and Goddesses, and temples were built based on astronomical and Tantric laws the thousands of years old Dravidian culture suffered total annihilation. The sacred groves lost their organs of greenery and concrete structures grow up in their place, what makes a culture beneficent is co-existence, and not domination or assimilation. Only Time and Nature have the right to deal with the traditions and culture of a region and its people. In Kerala, the Brahmin priest who had the authority to do worship in the Kavukal cast a long shadow over the varieties of regional worship patterns. Later, when the trees were cutoff to construct marriage auditoriums, and large halls, the death of the Kavukal could be declared (Unnikrishnan 2010).

Once Kavukal controlled the entire community of the village. In fact, they were the links that connected the early society together into a single entity. The Kavukal also kept the memories of their forefathers alive. The discussion and sharing of problems, finding remedies for them, strengthening social tie-up, etc. were included in their function. Later, caste groups and agricultural communities also developed through their tradition. In course of time, they aroused social consciousness among the people. The villagers of the north Malabar organized themselves and carried on conflicts and even resisted colonial dominance with this energy generated by this unity (Unnikrishnan 2010).

## Conclusion

The decline of faith and belief was developed by globalization, and the growth of sectarianism. The belief in God as the controlling power of the universe failed and togetherness disappeared. Folklore was neglected and globalized ideas erased our sense of Time and Place. It eradicated the memories of our yesterdays from our minds. Like everything else in human life, it commercialized beliefs and forms of worship also (Payyanad 1999). Kerala's sacred groves had been functioning as the fertile centers of our biological diversity, environmental wisdom, ecological conservation, celebrations, and practices of worship. They have a unique role in the construction of the indigenous history of a region. The famous American philosopher Ralph Waldo Emerson has

reminded us that nature is the greatest creation of God, and it is our duty to protect that creation (Hay 2009).

This article can be read in the light of James George Frazer's book *The Golden Bough*. The factors shared by societies include aspects of beliefs assimilations, festivals, popular culture, which have all gone into the making of human culture (Frazer 1994). That is why the sacred groves remain as the relics of living history of a different culture in the present times. Generations had shared and accepted it as practices, legends, folklore, memories, songs, ballads and celebrations (Freeman 1999). Through the sharing we can resist and defeat the dangers of Globalisation which is capable of wiping away local and regional historians and there by democratize both society and history (Payyanad 1999).

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> *Local History is indeed micro history, but located in the context of the macro. Eric Hobsbawm has drawn out the relationship between the micro and macro. He states that using a microscope does not mean that the telescope has become irrelevant.*

<sup>2</sup> *LeRoy Leduri helped to tie popular culture in the early modern period to larger political life.*

<sup>3</sup> *Ferdinand Braudel developed a more materialistic history that attempted to locate patterns of culture in geography, economy and material culture of common people. In his monumental work. *The Mediterranean world and the Age of Philip II* (1966) Braudel has produced a new image of popular culture.*

<sup>4</sup> *It is stated that between the late Nineteenth Century and 1945 educational institutions in Europe, showed little interest in Local History.*

<sup>5</sup> *In the age of Post Modernism, questions concerning one's identity became important and consequently there were efforts at locating one's roots. Locality was also seen as binary opposite of globalisation. Some even regard the writing of Local History as part of a strategy to oppose the all-pervading march of globalization. Jean Francois Lyotard, one of the prophets of Post Modernism rejected 'Metanarratives' as merely illusions. His most famous definition of Post Modernism is simply incredulity towards meta narratives 'Grand Narratives' of progress and human perfectibility then, are no longer tenable, and the best, we can hope for is a series of 'mininarratives' which are provisional, contingent, temporary and relative and which provide a basis for the actions of specific groups in particular local circumstances.*

<sup>6</sup> *It was common practice to propitiate the natural phenomena like rain, wind, etc., as those were beyond their control. Therefore, the anthropologist argues that the origin of faith in divinity and transcendental world were emerged out of the innate fear factor of human being.*

<sup>7</sup> *Saussurain and Lacan semiotics which have woven together in langue/parole model to understand the cultural processes involved in acts of consumption, which are reinterpreted to reveal forms of creative production.*

<sup>8</sup> *Sacred Groves are ancient nature sanctuaries where all forms of living creatures are afforded protection through the grace of some deity.*

<sup>9</sup> *The Alliance theory, also known as general theory of exchange is a structuralist method of studying kinship relations. The theory tries to understand the basic questions about inter individual relations, or what constitutes society.*

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