

The Preface

Chapters & Index

It is mainly and truly about the biggest paddling regatta in the world. The event is described in many different contexts of race, competition, festival, ritual, humanity, nature & environment; historical & superstitious beliefs; myths & Mythologies. The book provides a local as well as a global perspective on many themes affecting, people, geopolitical, socio-economic-cultural systems and daily lives. It is hilariously entertaining, at the same time, seriously thought provoking; exposing, challenging and vilifying the bad. The ultimate aim is to explore and find a better and sustainable world in which each individual is recognized; finds a role and effectively contribute.

The theme and contents are formed mostly from actual experiences, interactions, observations, stories told by elders, eyewitness accounts heard in the past, present, as well as media documentaries on a variety of subjects. The facts are complemented with analogies and comparisons providing plausible explanations. The author attempts to conjure up an immersive, 'virtual reality' experience of the events, describing life styles of the past in an interesting, informative, nostalgic, passionate, authentic style and details. It is the genuine hope that the readers will enjoy and appreciate the natural beauty of the land, Vallam-Kali, festivals and the events in several more ways, when they really get a chance to see this superlative event of joy, happiness, spirit, participation, passion and history.

A courtesy reminder: A courtesy reminder: In addition to the general reading public, the author is also mindful of the various professionals in different fields. Therefore, readers may occasionally come across several specialized terms and terminologies, besides native terms, and a few other foreign words and phrases. When ever such situation occurs, the contextual meaning is given in parenthesis next to the word itself. Further more, a look-up glossary of words is also available in the last pages for reference and explanation!

The book contains references and description of:

- VallmKali as a folk festival, the passion and exuberance surrounding the regatta
- The Genesis of 'God's own Country' how did it come about, according to mythology, explained in periodic scientific and captivating chain of events
- Scenes & Background of Kutta-naadu region, with its biosphere- Paddy fields & Palm groves, flora & fauna, fish & fowl, cows & cattle, birds & animals, sights & scenes
- A poetry by the 'Nimisha Kavi'

- Explanation of various customs & traditions, ceremonies & rituals, myths & Mythology explaining its meaning and significance
- harmonious relationship of the inhabitants, the agrarian lifestyle, traits, social structure, the congenial community spirit; their affinity to water; tide & waves; sufferings from flood; ensuing destruction & misery
- A fascinating tale of village life- “the world is a village”!
- Historical significance, nuances & subtleties associated with VallamKali its influence on building strong communities
- from the mind of a child who was seeking truth, meaning and righteousness
- A truly amazing human endeavor!

The reclamation of land 'Pata-Sekha-rams' for cultivation from the depths of the turbulent lake basin;

the resultant transformation of the region & the enormous economic benefits; the tasks, travails and struggles encountered in the process

- A glowing tribute to the ancestors and history makers for their accomplishments, heritage & legacy
- Passionate discussion of the plight of farmers & farming, in both local and global perspectives
- the betrayal by the governments and its ramifications
- Building of a ChundanVallam, the art, Science, passion and the endeavor
homage to the carpenter who painstakingly designed & built the masterpiece
- The ceremonious and ritualistic launching of the ChundanVallam with great enthusiasm and fanfare
- An absorbing & eventful 'Chenda/Pancha Vadhyam' performance explicated in musical and 'show business' perceptive; Comparison of western & Indian music styles & performance
- The “The incredible women, their eminent role” as expounded by the principal of a convent run college
the esteemed place of women in the community
their tremendous contributions which we all take for granted
the significant contributions the Nursing community make to the economic

destiny of Keralam

- “Sadhya”, the communal banquet at the launch of the Chundan, the cuisine, manner and style, explained in eyewitness account
- Science and physics of rowing, sculling, Paddling & canoing
- Vanchi-ppatt its significant role in the races, its themes, rhythm & articulation
- Analytical discussions, juxtaposing occidental & oriental philosophies
- Ancient art forms enacted at the venue as the 'cultural heritage' festival
- An insightful, descriptive documentary of the 'end to end' Television broadcast operations helping readers understand the behind the scene activities and applied technologies
- Interesting events chosen from the lives in the hamlet in a realistic, facetious manner
- Some of the childhood memories, stories, experiences, thoughts, interwoven with anecdotes & incidents, narrated with nostalgic emotions
- A thrilling, scintillating 'Running commentary' of the race
- The delay & suspense encountered in the announcement of the race results in many dramatic twists and turns
- The staging of the winning Chundan, and the celebrations honoring its victory
- Gulf Malayalees & diaspora watching the race, the economic impact and international cordiality created by the NRIs (Indian expatriates)
- A Futuristic proposal for the development, revitalization and preservation of the Vembanadu region; elucidating various schemes, new technologies available today for renewable energy production & power generation, permanently ending the debilitating power outages
- a candid discussion of law & order situation and rampant dishonesty among politicians, bureaucrats and business people; the scourge of frequent “Hartals”
- a call to action for research, innovation, good governance & leadership
- Picture collages from the scenes of VallamKali, other interesting visuals

“truly 'enigmatic', captivating, thought provoking and interesting till the end!”

Chapters & Index

Chapter 1

Page 22

The Scene & Background

Onam, Onam procession, celebration, Maveli

Chapter 2

Page 26

A splendid spectacle in the waters!

Kera, Keralam, tree of Life, Toddy shops, police constables

Chapter 3

Page 41

A typical Evening in the village

Drunkards in ditches, the lives of alcohol addicts, miseries perpetuated, domestic violence, a social problem

Chapter 4

Page 44

Water, Water everywhere!!

the scenes, water logged villages, life, affinity to water, the indispensable Vallams for transport

Chapter 5

Page 47

The Kuttanaadu Basin

Vembanadu lake, canals & waterways, Ekkal, paddy fields, farmers

Chapter 6

Page 49

The Monsoons & floods

The bleak and miserable days of Monsoons, marooned & isolated villagers

Chapter 7

Page 60

The great human Endeavor! Reclamation & Development of land for Rice cultivation A glowing tribute to the forefathers for their legacy

The great land reclamation project, the indomitable spirit, adventure, transformation of the region the social systems & cooperation created, risks faced; the monumental legacy passed on; unsung heroes, the resourceful indigenous people; mechanization & displacement of laborers

Chapter 8

Page 76



Retrival by the Government Plight of Framers



The government, the menace; destructive policies & actions, ramifications, plight of entrepreneurs. The revolutionary government, wrecking institutions & systems; sowing seeds of chaos & anarchy perpetuating poverty, destitution, stagnation & backwardness of the great state

The Magnificent Vembanaadu Kerala
The picturesque port city, Kochi

queen of the Arabian sea, seat of highest justice, education, business, industry
shipbuilding, transportation, naval base; the delta, palm groves, causeways & bridges
bustling, residential, international, cosmopolitan, progressive; beautiful!

Those days of the forgotten past

Vallams, custom made for different applications, effective & important for
transportation. Life stories of the Vallam punters, cargo transporters, the lonely
oarsman's songs

The "Ulbhavam, Genesis of "God's own Country"

The 'beginning', evolution, cosmic activities, 'Yugams'

A PRIMAL CHAOS BEFORE CREATION !



The Sun, solar flares, “big bang”, cosmic cycles, Genesis & creation, Life on earth Parasuraman, Reclamation of Keralam



*From the mind of a child who was seeking
truth, meaning and righteousness*

folklore, the Paathalam, the doomed abysmal dungeon, anxiety & fear created in the minds sins & atonements, the Saints & the holy, devils, gods & demigods, causing a confused state of mind in children; Life in the extended family;
A defining moment of faith & belief

THE JOYFUL FESTIVAL SEASON

the most joyful time in the Kuttanaadan villages follows the rice harvest and cessation of all agricultural activities

Early preparation before the VallamKali

The village comes together for the communal festival season, Onam & VallamKali treating the Chundan ready for races

The making of a Chun-dan-Va-llam, the race boat A tribute to the "Ashaari" the carpenter who design and build the Chundan

from a tree in the forest to a proud treasure of the entire village, the art, precision skill & dedication with which the master carpenter go about his task

The ceremonious launching of the Chundan Vallam

The entire village gathers to attend rituals, ceremonies, the excitingly eventful ChendaMelam, and the launch comparison of music & instruments with those of the Western The women folks, pride of humanity, poem "oh, Eves!"; the inspirational principal of the convent college

The training for the races

The traditional communal Sadhya, training & practice for the races
The versatile and facetious “Kavi” Kunjan Nambiar,
also an inimitable 'Mizhavu' player

Categories of participating Vallams, The race boats

Chundan, Vaippu, Oaadi, Churulan, IruttuKuthi, Kochu Vallam, Women's boat
races different shapes, styles, color, character, speed, traditions, # of paddlers,
prestige, pride & attractions

The grand arrival of the enthusiastic spectators

Festive & boisterous crowd arriving in flotilla, by many other means
all determined to enjoy the races and other cultural events

The sights & sounds In and around the race course

The magnificent ambiance, exuberance, and anticipation of
the biggest regatta in the world, and of many superlatives
The panorama of sceneries, backgrounds,
blending of people & nature in the natural settings

The organization & preparation The staged and orchestrated activities

The extraordinary arrangements and efforts needed to stage the event

A 'Cultural Heritage' Show!

Enactment & staging of various cultural art forms
in traditional setting and meaning. Keralam boasts 64 unique art-forms!
The destructive Harthals, chaotic governance, appalling law & order situation
Remarkable progress in transport infrastructure, amenities

The important role played by the Malayalee Diaspora

The spirit, sacrifices & contribution made by the expatriate community
the so called NRI The exceptional role of the the nursing community
expanding new horizon and avenues



The psyche of Keralites

The sociology of rustic communities
There are over 1600 of them governed by local bodies, elected by democratic
process. They are called “Panchayath”

A Mecca of Opportunities

new opportunities of many kinds open up; need to make certain changes to
capitalize Understanding the dynamic world & changing world order

AROUND THE VENUE

Many things to see, participate, enjoy and experience,
not be just a spectator!

Topics, conjectures, science & culture

Discussions & interaction between people

The distinctions between paddling, rowing, sculling
major distinctions in perception, thought processing, philosophies in different
cultures

The pavilion & Reception center

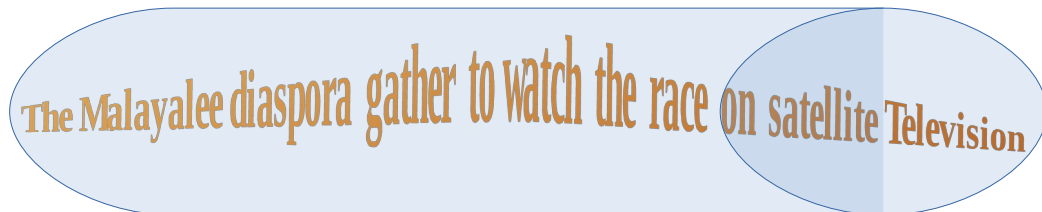
The decorated pavilion, the traditional greeting rituals, beautiful receptionists
dressed in gilded Sarees, hair-tops, ornaments, bangles & adornments offering
garlands & “Namasthe”



The elaborate set up for the satellite broadcast operations
The video, audio, sound, graphics, technology, commentary,
automation, coordination



The preview and grand introduction of boats-description, No. of paddlers,
track record, the village representing, the location, the people, boat captains,
odds of winning, the sponsors etc



gathering of the international expatriate community from different countries,
cultures & religions enjoying the race and potluck dinner in a relaxed, casual,
cordial settings



The details of the race, the course, distance, time needed



The exciting commentary by specialists, color, analytical, science commentators, play by play, boat by boat, spot by spot, scene by scene, statistics, actions, projections the poet describing the scenes, beauty of the nature, the suspense & ecstasy of the boisterous crowd



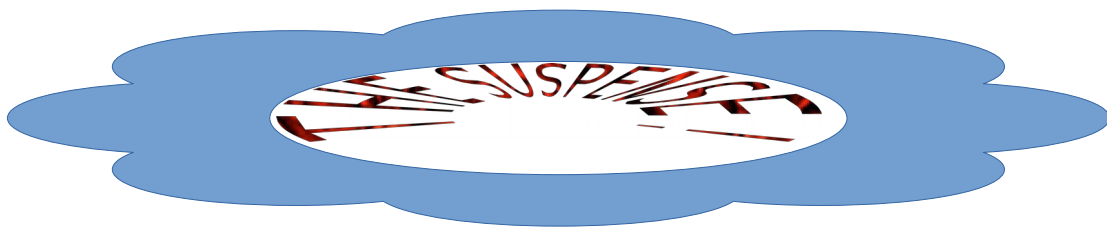
reminiscing on the trips to VallamKali as a child



the close finish, the uncertainties, the nerve racking wait



An elaborate plan & proposal for the revitalization, beautification of a sustainable, vibrant Vembanaad region with Renewable Energy, marine research & technology complexes, marina, fishing, residential/industrial/commercial/agricultural centers, parks, recreation & amenities centers
The end of 'current cut'! Prosperity to the people & farmers at the same time!!



The horrible, unbearable delay in announcing official results, the edgy crowd

EUPhoria Of Winning and the agony of defeat

the pictures tell the whole story!

Plotilla escorts the Chundan back to its original resting place

The triumphant journey home, celebrations along the way

The final chapter

The veneration & coronation

staging of the triumphant Chundan

The Chundan floats in majestic state, the proud village celebrate the victory with ChendaMelam PanchaVadhyam, fireworks, in great jubilation and veneration
The Chundan earns a well deserved rest until the time for the next race in the coming year!

