



HISTORY OF STATE CONTROL OVER TEMPLES IN KERALA

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Role of Temples in Kerala Society

Temples are the symbols of Kerala culture and tradition. They are the divine places of worship of the Hindu community which constitutes 54.72% of the total population of the state.¹ Kerala, generally known as Gods own country, is famous for social reform movements and other political reforms connected with the temples. It is the first state in India, where the famous temple entry proclamation helped all believers to enter and worship temples without distinction. Temples occupy a unique place in the history of Kerala and constitutes the cultural fountain of Hindu religion. Temples exercised enormous influence on society from time immemorial. Daily life of every Hindu irrespective of caste or creed is closely associated with temple worship². Hindu temples in the state were mostly under the management of private bodies known as “*Ooralers* or *Kariakkars*”. In the course of time the temples, particularly major temples, came to possess immense wealth contributed by devotees including rulers, administrators, and the public. The managers of temples introduced rules and customs for temple administration favourable to them and not for the benefit of temples. The state had not interfered in the internal affairs of temples. Temples were autonomous institutions and held a peculiar position to that of the clergy of the catholic church of the middle Ages. Corruption and mismanagement prevailed in their administration. All these led rulers to assume the management of devaswom by virtue of their inherent *melkoima* right as the spiritual head of the state.

State Control over Temple Administration.

The state's efforts to control temples did not just happen in an impersonal evolutionary sense, politicians, bureaucrats, judges and colonial rulers had a hand in it³. The British took keen interest in the control and administration of temples in the beginning of the nineteenth century. In 1811, Col. Munro, the Divan of Travancore, decided that the government would take over the administration of Hindu temples along with their properties⁴. The assumption of temples by Munro is a major landmark in the history of temple administration. The major criticism levelled against Munroe's action was that he transferred income from temples for proselytisation activities⁵. Initially separate accounts were maintained for temples taken over by the Government. After a short span of years, it became difficult to separate revenue of temple lands from that of the Government lands. Thus temples lost their properties and income and they had to depend on the mercy of the Government for their survival. In course of time large number of private temples was taken over on the basis of the Hindu Religious Endowment Regulation act of 1904, which empowered the state to intervene in the affairs of temples whenever seemed necessary.

A Krishna Ayyangar committee appointed by Travancore government in 1919 recommended the formation of a separate devaswom department under the direct supervision of the government.⁶ In 1922 on the basis of a devaswom separation committee report, separate devaswom department was created for temple management.⁷ After attaining independence and the introduction of constitutional changes, Devaswom Department was separated from the effective control of the state. When the Travancore and Cochin states were integrated on 1st July 1949 the administrative control of Devaswoms had been vested with Travancore Devaswom and Cochin Devaswom Boards, in pursuance of the articles of the Covenant and provisions of Travancore Cochin Hindu Religious Endowment Act of 1950. The temples in Malabar area were governed by HR&CE Department on the basis of Madras HRCE Act of 1951. Guruvayoor temple is governed by separate Devaswom committee as per the provisions of Guruvayoor Devaswom Act of 1978. Malabar Devaswom board was constituted by Kerala government as per the directions of Honourable High Court of Kerala. While the Government interferes with the day to day affairs of

¹ *The Hindu*, August ,26,2015.

² *Padmanabhan.S,Temples of South India,Kumaran Pathippagan.Nagercoil,1977.P.1.*

³ *Franklin A.Pressler,Religion under bureaucracy,Policy and administration for Hindu templesin south India,camebridge university press,,camebridge,2008,p.156.*

⁴ *TK Velupillai, Travancore State Manual, Vol. IV, P.559.*

⁵ *SadasivanSN, party and democracy in India, p205*

⁶ *Suresh Kumar, political evolution in Kerala p108*

⁷ *The Travancore directory, 1939, part II, p.359.*

Hindu temples⁸, the churches and mosques of the state are free from such interference. According to public opinion, there is nothing wrong in government looking after the administration of temples provided that the wealth of the temples must be used for the betterment of the Hindu society.

Board Administration for Temples

In Kerala temples were controlled by board system of administration. The board is a system in which the responsibility is vested in a number of individuals jointly, is unsuited for effective administration and management. It violates the cardinal principle of effective control.⁹

Table- General Picture of Temple Administration in Kerala

Serial Number	board	Number of temples	Annual budget	Employees under the board	Membership In the board
1	TDB	1208	560 Cr	3000	3
2	CDB	406	56cr	2000	3
3	GDB	6	100 cr	600	9
4	MDB	1343	128 cr	6000	9

Table Annual Income of Four Devaswom Boards in Kerala

Serial Number	Principal Laws	Board	Number Of Temples	Members In The Board
1	Travancore –Cochin Hindu religious institution Act 1950	TDB	1208	3
2	Travancore –Cochin Hindu religious institution Act 1950	CDB	413	3
3	Madras Hindu Religious Endowment Act 1951(Amendment Act2008)	MDB	1343	9
4	Guruvayoor Devaswom Act 1978	GDMC	6	9
5	Koodal Manickam Devaswom Act 1971	Koodal Manickam Devaswom Committee	1	7

Source:MG.Radhakrishnan,"Temple muddle",India today ,April.9.2010

Statistics

Records show that there is a steady decline in the number of temples in Kerala. At present there are about five thousand Hindu religious institutions including temples, muts etc existing in Kerala.¹⁰ *Travancore State Manual* reveals the fact that in 1812, there were 21658 temples in erstwhile Travancore, which became reduced to 9250 in 1931. With the state reorganization in 1956, about five hundred temples of Kanyakumari district were transferred to Tamilnadu. 1983 statistics reveals that there were 1500 temples in Travancore. It is an alarming fact for the Hindus that within a span of fifty years seven thousand temples had disappeared from Travancore area.¹¹

Temple Administration in Travancore

Temples in Travancore were founded by local people and managed by private individuals and bodies known popularly as *oorallars or karakkars*, in some cases synod of priests.¹² In Travancore, there were large number of temples dedicated to various gods and goddesses. The poojas of the major temples were generally performed by the Brahmins. Most of the temples were ill managed, the revenues from them were being misused by the trustees.¹³ The process of centralization of

⁸ Hindu-Blog.Com/2007

⁹ Sachdeva And Bhushan, *Public Administration*, P.60

¹⁰ Kerala Devswom Administrative Reform Commission Report, 1984 ,P.6

¹¹ Ibid .P 6

¹² Padmanabha Menon KP, *History Of Kerala*, Vol.IV ,Cochin,1942,P.140

¹³ Yesudas.RN, Col.John Munro in *Travancore, Historical society ,Trivandrum,1977,p.37.*

administration started with the period of Marthanda Varma. During the time of Dewan Veluthampi, a bold plan for temple administration was developed. The huge wealth owned by the Devaswoms and the great influence that the trustees had over the people, were the potential source of threat to the state. So, Velu thampi proposed that the entire property of the temples should be confiscated by the government.¹⁴

In 1811, the then Travancore Diwan, Col. Munro had taken over the administration of temples along with their properties. Accordingly, on September 1811, Munro had taken over 348 major temples with all their properties through a proclamation. This was done on charges of mismanagement and corruption of the trustees. It had its own pros and cons. It provided a systematic administrative set up for all the temples in Travancore. At the same time it had its own demerits such as declining public interest consequent on the poor management of temples. The assumption of temples by the state had invited severe criticisms on the ground that the temples possessed enormous and unassessed wealth and a greater part of it was transferred to the Christian missionaries for proselytisation activities.¹⁵ After the assumption, Munro appointed a committee of ten persons to examine and report on the conditions of the temples and to fix a "pathivu" for their day to day expenditure. It is estimated that the total annual income of the temples was somewhat equal to the annual income of the state. Temple revenues were merged to the state exchequer and temple properties came to be treated as government property. The administrative cost for these temples was to be met from the general revenue of the state. This type of devaswoms came to be known as *incorporated devaswoms*. In 1903, Hindu Religious Endowments Regulation was passed which empowered the government to intervene in the affairs of such institutions and to assume their management whenever necessary. Thus in course of time a large number of private devaswoms came under the management of government. On the basis of this, government had taken over 116 temples on accounts of mismanagement. The revenues and receipts were kept separate from state accounts under the name Personal Deposit Devaswoms¹⁶.

Temples taken over by the state are directly under the control of the Land Revenue Department. In 1907, Travancore Government appointed Ramachandra Rao, a judge, to investigate the administrative set up for devaswoms. In his report he criticised state interference in temple administration. Due to the pressure from various corners government made a move to bifurcate temple administration from the land revenue department.¹⁷ Travancore government appointed Krishna Iyengar to study this issue and his report recommended separate Devaswom department for temples under the direct control of the government.¹⁸ In 1920, devaswom separation committee was constituted and in 1922 separate devaswom department was created for temples.¹⁹

The establishment of the Devaswom department marks an epoch in the administrative history of the temples in Kerala. The newly constituted devaswom department consisted of one Devaswom Commissioner, four Assistant Commissioners, eighteen superintendents and certain gazetted officers. The Devaswom Commissioner is the head of devaswom department. For the administrative purposes the state is divided into four devaswom districts and these districts were subdivided into sixteen groups. Temples in the state were centres of conservatism. In 1936, through Temple entry proclamation, temples in the state were thrown open to all Hindus.

Travancore Devaswom Board

Travancore Devaswom Board is an autonomous body formed as per the Travancore Cochin Hindu Religious Institutions Act of 1950. It is one of the oldest Devaswom Boards, and a successor to Travancore Royal Devaswom Commission. The Constitution of the Board was based on the covenant entered into by the King of Travancore with the Government of India. The headquarters of Travancore Devaswom Board is located at Devaswom Complex in Nanthancode, Thiruvananthapuram.

The Board comprises of President and two Members, the President and one Member is nominated by the Hindu members of the Kerala Council of Ministers and the other Member from the Hindu Members of State legislature. The term of the President and Members is for a period of four years. There are several Primary and Higher Secondary schools all over South Kerala and four colleges under the Travancore Devaswom Board.

¹⁴ Pillai .kk, *Sucindram Temple, Kalakshetra publications, Madras, 1953. p.164*

¹⁵ Sadasivan SN. *Party and democracy in India, 1977, p.205.*

¹⁶ *Kerala Devaswom Administrative Reform Commission Report 1984, 1984, P.17.*

¹⁷ *Christians, muslims and other backward communities began to complain that they could not get top ranking posts in the revenue department because devaswoms were attached to it. So they demanded devaswom bifurcation and a separate devaswom department for temples. In 1919 a civic rights league was formed to pressurized their demand effectively. 1919 a memorandum submitted to the dewan under the leadership of Mamman Mappila.*

¹⁸ Suresh Kumar, *Political Evolution in Kerala, Travancore: 1859-1938, Pheonix publishers, newdelhi, 1994, p.108*

¹⁹ *The Travancore Directory, part II, 1939 P 359*

Table-Taluk wise List of Temples under TDB

Serial number	taluks	Number of temples
1	Neyyattinkara	77
2	Thiruvananthapuram	77
3	Nedumangad	50
4	Chirayinkeezhu	33
5	kollam	69
6	kottarakkara	48
7	pathanapuram	58
8	kunnathur	43
9	karunagappally	54
10	Pathanamthitta	23
11	Thiruvalla	80
12	Mavelikkara	35
13	Karthikappally	57
14	Cherthala	12
15	Ambalappuzha	37
16	Vaikom	30
17	Kottayam	57
18	Meenachal	23
190	Changanacherry	24
20	Moovattupuzha	33
21	Thodupuzha	15
22	Kunnathunadu	23
23	Paravur	30

Source: KP Sankaran Nair commission report pp223-235

Classification of Temples

The temples under TDB are classified into major, minor, petty and PD devaswoms. This classification is based on expenditure:

1. Major class I- 10,000 and above
2. Major classII -5000-9999
3. Major classIII--1000-4999
4. Minor-100—999
5. Petty- less than 100 Besides these there are 59 Personal Deposit Devaswoms under TDB.

Out of the 1206 temples under the Travancore devaswom board, 224 temples are major temples. In these temples there are more than three poojas daily and the temples are opened in the morning and evening. There are 456 minor temples (which are opened in the morning and evening) and 467 petty temples which are opened only once in a day. There are 59 P.D. temples.

On the basis of revenue, the most important temple under Travancore Devaswom Board is the Sabarimala Temple and Chettikulangara is the second largest one. Sabarimala is the main income source of the Board, with Rs.123 crore accruing to it from there during the previous pilgrimage season.

Only about 100 temples under TDB can manage on their own. However, assets of each temple receive as donations and gifts are kept in safe custody. Gold and silver ornaments, precious stones, and other assets of these temples are kept under double lock and round-the-clock security in strong rooms under 18 sub-groups of the board. But over the past 15 years, the TDB has not been able to verify the assets kept in these strong rooms. The demand for periodic inspection and verification has not been done due to the lack of an efficient system to manage the assets.²⁰

²⁰ Times of India, September, 4, 2012.

Temple Administration in Cochin

Colonel Munroe, the British Resident, appointed in 1812 as Dewan of the Cochin and Travancore kingdoms, was responsible for bringing effective control on temples. Munroe recommended that all Devaswom properties be treated as government properties and the revenue from Devaswom be merged with the general revenues of the state. In addition, for the purpose of meeting the expenses of the temples, Pathiv (that is, a scale of expenditure on uthsavams, remuneration to temple staff, maintenance charges etc.) was proposed. These recommendations were accepted by the Maharajas of Cochin and Travancore. A committee was constituted to study its implications in 1815. A royal decree was passed forming a Devaswom Board, during the reign of Rani Gouri Parvathy Bai, and most of the temples in Travancore were brought under its control. A few large temples preferred to remain independent, although they declared their allegiance to the Travancore Devaswom Board and assured it that they would follow all of its policies.

In the Cochin kingdom, a special commission was appointed to study the formation of Devaswom boards. After a study of 309 Devaswoms, 179 Devaswoms in Cochin state were classified as *Sarkkar Devaswoms*. Sixty-one Devaswoms were returned to *Ooralars*, and another sixty-one were classified as *Vazhipaat Devaswoms*. This was a major step by the state government, which resulted in state's acquisition of temple lands and the power to interfere in temple administration. *Sarkkar Devaswoms* were known as 'incorporated Devaswoms', of which 24 were treated as *Keezhetams* (subordinate to a more important temple). Subsequently, due to mismanagement by Ooralars or under some other pretext, some more temples were taken over by the Sarkkar though their funds were kept separately. Each such Devaswom was called 'unincorporated Devaswom'. Under the Cochin Hindu Religious Institutions Act of 1896, the government took over the management of Devaswoms which had been mismanaged. Such institutions were called 'assumed Devaswoms'. In 1897 a separate Devaswom Department was formed under a superintendent and all incorporated and un-incorporated Devaswoms were brought under its control. Ten years later in 1907 these incorporated and un-incorporated Devaswoms were merged, and by a later amendment in 1916, a common trust fund was constituted as an endowment.

Cochin Devaswom Board

The Cochin Devaswom Board was formed under the act of XV of Travancore-Cochin Hindu Religious Institutions Act, 1950 to make provisions for the administration, supervision and control of incorporated and unincorporated Devaswoms and of other Hindu Religious Endowments and funds under the ruling area of the former Cochin State. Each temples under CDB has been controlled by devaswoms. The financial aspects of each devaswoms are handled by the following groups:

1. Chottanikkara
2. Thrissur
3. Thiruvanchikulam
4. Thiruvilwamala
5. Thripunithura²¹

The Government of Kerala has constituted the Cochin Devaswom Board as a socio-religious trust to look after the temples in central Kerala consisting of Ernakulam, Thrissur and Palakkad districts. The Board was formed on 1st July, 1949. Thrissur is its headquarters. The Cochin Devaswom Board is working as per the Travancore-Cochin Religious Institutions Act of 1950. Cochin Devaswom Board is ruled by a managing committee consisting of three members. The state Cabinet can nominate two persons in the Board and the Legislative Assembly can nominate one person.

The board is divided in to two sections, namely Establishment section and Temple section. The Establishment section is in-charge of the administration whereas the Temple section handles routine rituals and functions of the temples. The Temple section consists of the priests and other temple functionaries. The Establishment section is further divided into four sections - Department of Administration, Department of Finance, Department of Maintenance and the Stores Department. There are five divisions under the Board-Thrissur, Thiruvillamala, Kodungalloor, Chittoor, and Tripunithura Divisions. Among these Thrissur the biggest division and Chittoor is the smallest one. The number of temples under the CDB is 413.²²

The classification of temples under CDB is not based on any one strict criterion. Income, importance and convenience are taken as the criteria for classification of temples into group A and B. The Cochin Devaswom Board, which manages 403 temples, brings up the rear with revenues totalling Rs 50 crore. As with other devaswoms, only a handful of temples under CDB can meet their expenses. With an annual income of around Rs 6 crore, Chottanikkara Devi Temple tops the list. There are eleven important temples under the control of Cochin Devaswom Board which includes Sri Vadakkunnatha Temple, Thriprayar Sri Ramaswami Temple, Sree Kurumba Bhagavathy temple, Kodungalloor, Sree Poornathrayeesa Temple, Thrippunithura etc

²¹ www.cochindevaswomboard.org

²² www.cochindevaswomboard.org

Temple Administration in Malabar

Malabar became the part of Madras presidency on May 21, 1800 under the British Rule. The British rulers had special interests with the religious institutions of the state. The first enactment in this direction came in force in 1817. The British government by virtue of its sovereign power continued to enforce their right to visit and supervise endowments and prevent abuse of power enjoyed by local rulers earlier. This Regulation laid down a machinery for supervision consisting of District Collectors, Board of revenue etc. The enactment was operated till 1839 when certain Christian zealots and religious propagandist in the United Kingdom agitated urging the government of Madras to refrain from administering the temples as their administration would not fall under the jurisdiction of the government. As per the decision of the Board of Directors of the East India Company, the control on temples was not effectively implemented till 1863. The Religious Endowment Act XX of 1863 had enabled the government to vest itself with the power to manage religious Endowments. But this act was a failure due to the negative attitude of the people. Subsequently many attempts were made to bring out legislations in Madras Legislative Council such as Rama Iyengar Bill of 1886, Muthuswami Aiyyers Bill 1894 etc. In 1925, Madras government passed an amendment act which repealed the Act of 1863. The Act was shortlived as its validity was questioned in the Madras High Court. The Government introduced a bill in 1926 in the legislative council and passed it and placed in the statute book as Madras Hindu Religious Endowment Act of 1927. Later this Act was amended several times. After attaining independence the government of Madras state introduced a detailed bill and HRCE Act of 1951 was passed and replaced the Act of 1927. This Act was also amended in 1954, 1956, and 1959.

Malabar Devaswom Board

In its historical verdict, the Honorable High Court of Kerala issued certain directions to the state government to redress the grievances of temples of Malabar area and the issue of under payment of temple employees in 1994 on the basis of news paper reports. The main directions were;

- 1 To Pay Better Wages To The Temple Employees (From January 1st 1995 Onwards)
- 2 To Prepare A Scheme For The Purpose
- 3 To Utilize The Income From The Vested Forest For This Purpose
- 4 To Constitute A Unified Devaswom Board For Three Regions-Travancore, Cochin And Malabar
- 5 To Revise The Annuity To Temple Periodically.

A total of 1600 temples in the districts from Palakkad to Kasargod and parts of Thrissur excluding those under the cochin and Guruvayur devaswoms, came under Malabar Devaswom Board. The Malabar Devaswom Board was constituted as per the provisions of the Madras Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments (Amendment) Ordinance 2008. The Act provided for a nine member Devaswom Board, one member each from SC and ST sections. This is the first time that people from the SC/ST categories were being made members of Devaswom Board. A provision for two woman members in the MDB as against one in TDB and CDB.

Classification of Temples

The Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowment Department which has administrative control on most of the temples in Malabar region classified the temples into seven grade based on annual income of temples;

1. Grade I Rs 1 Lakhs and above per annum
2. Grade II ---60000-99999
3. Grade III—20,000-59999
4. Grade IV ---15,000-19999
5. Grade V 10,000-14999
6. Grade VI—7000-9999
7. Grade VII Less than 7000

The Malabar Devaswom Board Board has five divisions- Kasaragod, Thalassery, Kozhikode, Malappuram and Palakkad Divisions. Temples are classified into Special category temples and A,B,C,D categories²³. The special category constitutes some of the well known temples like Tirunelli in Waynad, Sri Rajarajeswara temple at Taliparamba, Tali Shiva Temple, Kozhikode, Payyannur Subrahmanyaswami Temple, Parassinikkadavu temple, Madhur Temple, Kasargod etc²⁴ Prominent

²³ En.Wikipedia.Org.

²⁴ malabardevaswom.kerala.gov.in

'Category A' temples: Kalarivathukkal Bhagavathy Temple, Valapattanam, Cherukunnu Annapoorneswari Temple, Cherukunnu, Anantheshwaram Temple, Kasargod. Prominent 'Category B' temples: Thirumandhamkunnu Bhagavathy Temple, Kongadu, Viswanathaswami Temple, Kalpathy, Thaliyil Neelakanda Temple Neeleswaram. These temples are in relative lower category but are highly famous in the region.

Temple employees who work in the temples of Malabar Devaswom board can submit complaints related to salary to Devaswom board commissioner either in written format or on phone. The Malabar Devaswom Board (MDB), meanwhile, tops in the list of the number of temples under its management at 1,337, and comes third in revenue terms, making about Rs 80 crore annually. While figures for individual temples are not available, Kadambuzha Sree Parvathi Temple is considered the richest deity under its administration. Sources at the MDB said that there has been at least a 30% increase in revenues annually. Temples of 26 taluks in Kozhikode, Kannur, Palakkad, Thrissur and Malappuram districts come under the MDB. Most of the temples bank on special offerings to meet their expenses.²⁵

Table Grade wise Classification of temples under MDB

NO	DIVISION	Total temples	taluks	Total temples	A gr	B	C	D	Spl.gr
1	KASARGOD	207	Hozdurg	34	0	9	6	18	1
			Kasargod	55	3	12	3	25	2
			Talipparamba	118	2	7	16	90	3
2	KOZHIKODE	242	Bathery	10	1	3	0	6	0
			Eranad	54	2	2	7	43	0
			Koyilandy	39	0	6	7	25	0
			Kozhikode	80	2	12	12	51	2
			Nilambur	23	0	4	2	17	0
			vithiri	13	0	0	2	11	0
3	Malappuram	349	Chavakkad	37	0	2	33	1	1
			Fort Kochi	2	0	1	0	1	0
			Kodungalloor	7	0	0	1	6	0
			Ottapalam	105	0	5	4	96	0
			Perinthalmanna	67	0	1	2	64	0
			Ponnani	36	0	1	1	34	0
			Tirur	78	0	4	0	69	5
Tirurangadi	17	0	2	0	15	0			
4	Palakkad	338	Alathur	59	2	6	5	43	1
			Chittoor	35	2	1	3	29	0
			Mannarkkad	35	1	3	1	30	0
			Ottapalam	114	5	11	7	68	2
			Palakkad	95	5	11	7	68	2
5	Thalasserry	232	Kannur	116	6	7	6	96	1
			Mananthavady	24	0	2	0	21	1
			Thalasserry	51	0	7	4	38	2
			Vadakara	41	0	6	9	26	0

Source: www.malabardevaswom.kerala.gov.in, accessed on 21/7/2015

Guruvayoor Devaswom Manmaging Committee

According to the legends, the idol worshipped here is more than 5000 years old. But there are no historical records to establish it. In the 14th century Tamil literature 'Kokasandesam', references about a place called Kuruvayur is made. As early

²⁵ Times of India, Sep 4, 2012



as 16th century (50 years after the Narayaneeyam was composed) many references are seen about Kuruvayur. In ancient Dravidic, Kuruvai means sea, hence the village on the coast may be called Kuruvayur.

But according to Prof. K V Krishna Iyer (eminent historian), the Brahmins had begun to come and settle at Kodungalloor during the period of Chandra Gupta Maurya (321-297 BC). Trikkunavay in the Gurusvayur documents is the same as Thrikkannamathilakam or Mathilakam mentioned in the Dutch and British records. And this place was in between Gurusvayur and Kodungalloor. Gurusvayur was Trikkunavay's subordinate shrine since they were destroyed by the Dutch in 1755. That way Gurusvayur must have come into existence before 52 AD. The story of Pandyan King building a shrine here may be a reference to the Azhavars, but they are all silent in their writing about Gurusvayur. Before the British occupation, Gurusvayur was a temple state. As a state it had a well defined government, law and order maintenance, army and judicial jurisdiction. As a colony of Trikkunavay, Gurusvayur had certain obligations too. It had to receive the permission of the parent temple to celebrate the Annual Utsavam (festival). The superior staff in the administration were called Kovil adharikal, and lower staff as Kovil karmikal. The members of the staff were either given a monthly remuneration or assigned lands. The Administrative office is functioning in the Sreepadmam building from 1997. In the present set-up there is no yogam. The ancient families all except Mallisseri have become extinct. On 9th March 1971, the Government of Kerala introduced an Act, known as the Gurusvayur Devaswom Act, replacing the Trusteeship by a Managing Committee, nominated by the Hindu Ministers in the State Cabinet²⁶.

The day-to-day administration is to be looked after by an Administrator appointed by the Government. The Managing Committee include, the Zamorin Raja, the Mallisseri Namboodiri and the Tantri of the temple among others.

Due to the High Court's directive that the Act should be revamped, the 1971 Act was replaced by 1978 Act. According to 1978 Act, the Managing Committee consists of 9 members - The Zamorin Raja, Mallisseri Namboodiri, the Tantri, a representative of the employees of the Devaswom and five more persons of whom one shall be a Scheduled Caste member. The six non-traditional members are appointed by the Hindu ministers of Kerala Government of which one will be the Chairman of the Managing Committee. The committee selects an Administrator from the panel of names given by the Government. The Administrator should not be below the rank of Deputy collector. The Administrator acts as the Secretary of the Managing Committee and the Chief Executive of the Devaswom²⁷. Gurusvayur temple had about 13000 acres of land until the Kerala Land Reforms Act came to force. Presently the Devaswom has 230 acres of land including that purchased after the Act. The major income of Devaswom is from the temple as Vazhipad by the devotees which amounts to about Rs.10.00 Core an year. Other sources of income are the receipts from land and buildings, Guest houses, interest from investments and endowments, livestock, grants and fees etc. There are about 900 permanent staff and many part-time and contract laborers working under the Devaswom. There are eleven temples under the management of devaswom, they are called as Keezhedams. They are Narayankulangara, Thalakkottukara, Thamarayur, Punnathur, Anjur, Nenmini, Vermanur, Kaveed, Manganchira, Poonthanam.²⁸

Koodal Manickyam Devaswom

Koodalmanikyam Temple is situated in irinjalakkuda is the only temple dedicated to the worship of Bharatha, the second brother of lord Rama. The earliest historical reference to Koodalmanikyam Temple is found on a stone inscription attributed to the chera king Stanu Ravi Varman dated 854 A.D, donating vast extents of land for the temple. It is, therefore, reasonable to assume that the temple must have been in existence for quite some time before this date and that even then Koodalmanikyam occupied a place of importance among temples of Kerala.

The administration, control and management of the Devaswom shall be vested in Koodalmanickam Devaswom Managing Committee. The Committee shall consist of the District Collector, Trichur or if he is not a person professing the Hindu religion, an officer professing the Hindu religion and not below the rank of Deputy Collector nominated by the District Collector, Trichur, in this behalf, ex officio who shall be the Chairman; the Administrator, ex officio; the Kaimal, the hereditary trusty; four persons professing the Hindu religion nominated by the Government and a representative of the employees of the Devaswom nominated by the Government.²⁹ The Government shall appoint an officer not below the rank of [Deputy Tahsildar] and professing the Hindu religion to be the Administrator for the Devaswom Temple Fund. There shall be constituted a fund to be called "Sree Koodalmanickam Temple Fund" which shall be vested in and be administered by the

²⁶ <http://www.gurusvayurdevaswom.nic.in>

²⁷ Gurusvayoor Devaswom ACT 1978

²⁸ <http://www.gurusvayurdevaswom.nic.in>

²⁹ The Koodalmanickam Devaswom Act, 1971 (Act 7 Of 1971)

Committee. The fund shall consist of the income derived from the movable and immovable properties of the Devaswom . The fund may be utilised for the maintenance, management and administration of the Temple, its properties and the temples subordinate

The Gouda Saraswatha temple are to be treated as separate category as they follow the principles laid down in the dwaitha philosophy of Sree Madhvacharya. The acharyas of these maths still have effective control of on these temple.³⁰ There are about 35 such temples and all are private temples. Similarly there are still many renowned temples managed by individuals and institutions and trusts³¹ There are several temples under the control of Hindu organizations like RSS, SINDP, NSS and so on. Sree padmanabhaswamy temple, Thiruvananthapuram is directly under the supervision of Travancore royal family.

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³⁰ Jayashankar, S, Temples of Kerala, Directorate of census operations, Kerala, 1997, P.21,

³¹ Ibid. p21