**Mural Paintings and Wooden Engravings in the Christian temples of Meenachil Taluk – history and Faith: A Study**

Almost all the Christian Temples of Meenachil Taluk follows the heredity of Christian faith inherited from St. Thomas, the Apostle. St. Thomas is traditionally believed to have sailed to India in AD 52 to spread the Christian faith and is believed to have landed at Kodungalloor. According to history and tradition Christianity in Kerala was founded by St. Thomas. He travelled throughout various places to preach the Gospel. While his journey it is believed that he also reached Meenachil Taluk to propagate the views of Christianity. People were attracted by his Preachings and became the followers of his ideas. They followed the Christian legacy of faith and established churches in order to preserve their faith. The chief among them are Martha Mariam Forane Church Kuravilangad, Mar Sleeva Forane Church Cherpunkal, St. George Forane Church Aruvithura, St. Augustine’s Forane church Ramapuram.

Meenachil Taluk consists of lots of Christian temples that carry the eventful history of centuries. Among these the above mentioned churches are adorned with mural paintings and luxurious wooden engravings on the inner walls of Mathbahah and Thora. These exquisite frescos and murals depicts the aesthetic excellence and skill of execution of the ancient period. Most of the Christian temples of today incorporates modern architecture and technology in their construction. This project is an analysis of the mural paintings and wooden engravings of the above mentioned churches.

Major inferences that are compiled from the analysis of this project are stated below.

* The Churches of Kerala contains mural paintings which depicts the characters and scenes from Christian mythology. The artists have done a great job by depicting biblical themes effectively and aesthetically.
* Mural paintings and wooden engravings of these churches are adorned with Kerala’s traditional style, artistic heritage and technology.
* Murals and frescoes can be found in abundance on the inner walls of the Mathbahah and Thora.
* In ancient times the murals were painted using natural vegetable dyes and colouring pigments with natural components. But nowadays, in order to decorate these murals, modern colouring pigments are superimposed over it. As a result of this the naturality and antiquity of these paintings are lost.
* The paraphernalia used in the churches like Lampstands, Bouquets, Baptismal Font, Rock cross, church bells etc. are a unique blend of the artistic features of oriental and occidental styles.
* Most of the murals depicts Kerala’s architectural and traditional styles. They are modified in accordance with the passage of time, so that we cannot reach up to a conclusion with regard to the antiquity of these paintings and wooden engravings.
* Some of these great works of art in Kerala are found to be in a state of ruin just because of the reluctance of Keralites in preserving archeological products and historical monuments.

**Prince Mon Jose**

Department of Malayalam

St. Thomas College, Pala