

PREFACE

The architectural heritage of a region reflects the history and culture of the society that built it. Hence study of heritage architecture enables one to identify the traditions and deliberations of the society which thrived in the region. Kuttichira, a Muslim settlement in Calicut stands as an icon of a glorious past with rare antiquity brought about by the flourishing trade relations of the city during the medieval period. The unique mosques and large residences of Kuttichira are repositories of knowledge and information for architects and art historians. This is a pioneering study of a Muslim Heritage settlement –Kuttichira, Calicut in its ethno-history, settlement planning, architecture and construction techniques

The settlement pattern and unique built forms of Kuttichira are an outcome of social, economical and religious needs of the Muslim trading community which subsist there. The society was bound by caste, occupation beliefs and customs which resulted in unique architectural features. The self sustained settlement had definite pattern of spaces to meet its commercial, social, religious and residential needs. The successors of the rich trading community settled in the area, and formed their territory with large residential units, mosques and commercial areas. The unique Architecture of Kuttichira is a rare expression of the Islamic culture brought by the Arab trading community built by the expertise of native traditional craftsmen. This is an imprint of Islamic culture. These buildings are proof of the valuable history of Calicut and stand as testimony to the communal harmony existed in Malabar.

Kuttichira has been a centre of attraction to those interested in the antiquities of the region such as Islamic culture, history, timber trade, traditional architecture and even the exclusive ethnic cuisine. The rich architectural heritage of Kuttichira would evoke the curiosity of an engineer, architect, scholar or tourist who wishes to explore the heritage settlement. This book is a humble attempt to bring out the unique architectural aspects of Kuttichira- its settlement plan, traditional mosques and residences in the area.

Kuttichira offers numerous sectors to be studied in the field of Architecture ranging from settlement planning to residential architecture design and traditional timber construction techniques. Various batches of students of Architecture at NIT Calicut had undertaken project

study in this region as a part of their architectural education. The study was an exploration into rich architecture traditions of Kuttichira in search of identity and values.

The Heritage Conservation Project for Renovation of Miskal Mosque prepared by the author (as Principal Coordinator) was funded by the ONGC, Government of India. This book is published based on the directives of the ONGC to popularize the heritage of Calicut. This book will be a guide for those interested in architectural heritage. The study of Kuttichira has to be continued as there is still a lot more left to be explored.

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