**Name of The Element:** Chettikulangara Kumbha Bharani Kettukazhcha

**Community/ies:** The entire population of the thirteen villages of the Chettikulangara region are participants of this element. These villages are Erezha South, Erezha North, Kaitha South, Kaitha North, Kannamangalam South, Kannamagalam North, Kadavoor, Pela, Anjilipra, Mattam North, Mattam South, Menampally and Nadakkavu. The villages form part of the erstwhile Onattukara province, an agriculturally predominant area and currently a part of the Mavelikara and Karthikapally taluks (sub-divisions) of the Alleppey district of Kerala State. The Sree Devi Vilasom Hindumatha Convention, a not-for-profit organization since 1957, acts as the authorized umbrella organization on behalf of the 13 villages to conduct the festivities related to the Chettikulangara temple, which is the nodal point for the Kettukazhcha festivities.

**Region:** The thirteen villages of Chettikulangara spread over Mavelikara and Karthikapally sub-divisions (taluks) of Alleppey district and the Onattukara region in the districts of Alleppey and Quilon, form the geographical location for the distribution of this element. This region is located about 100 kilometres north of the state capital Thiruvananthapuram, twelve kilometres in shore along the Arabian Sea and 100 kilometres south of Kochi city.

The nodal point of these festivities is the Chettikulangara temple, located in the middle of the villages, making it accessible to all. Ancillary festivities, numbering around 50 are celebrated across the Onattukara region. Home based practices include the ritual of Kuthiyottam, a dance and song ritual derived from folkloric practices.

Central to the festivities is the making of mobile floats. The Chettikulangara Kettukazhcha, being the largest in terms of the enormous size of floats, antiquity, diversity of rituals, community participation and expenditure incurred, is its hallmark.

**Brief Description** Chettikulangara Kumbha Bharani Kettukazhcha, a post-harvest float festival, is a spectacular confluence of art, culture, architecture and the dedicated human endeavour of approximately 50000 people. The festival is held as thanksgiving to the Goddess Bhadrakali, for the rich harvest gathered in, and protection from diseases and calamities. It begins on the day of Shivarathri and concludes on the 'Bharani' day of the Kumbha month of the Malayalam calendar (during February or early March). Over half-a-million people participate with passion and devotion in the two-week long festivities. In the evenings, devotees conduct a unique dance-song ritual named Kuthiyottam where the entire village is in attendance. Sumptuous community feasts are served thrice a day as part of the celebrations.

The grand finale of the festivities is the dragging of decorative floats to the local shrine of the Goddess. The floats weigh hundreds of tonnes and stand 20-30 metres tall, with a square base of 16 (4X4m) to 25 sq. meters (5X5m) approx, tapering to the top in a pyramidal form. The framework of these floats harks back to Buddhist tradition and to Kerala’s traditional temple architecture. The wooden structures are made using wood, coconut and arecanut tree poles, coir, and are covered with...
colourful embellishments and ornamental ‘torans’ or fringes. Two huge wooden sculptures of the epic figures of Bhima and Hanuman are included in the group of floats.

The event is possibly among the largest mobile float festivals in the world, in terms of size of the floats and participation of communities concerned.

Photographs

Video

Community Consent

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