

‘Vinchi Pattukal’ A Diverse Cultural Representation of The Mappila Khalasis in Kerala

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The Khalsis played a significant role in the maritime history of Malabar, boasting a distinct identity for their unparalleled technical expertise in handling heavy goods. The origin of Khalasi is seen as a fusion of Arab and local indigenous groups, with the term Khalasi being derived from the Arabic word Khalasi which means black and white together. Khalasis remained relevant and adapted to the changing times by embracing modern technology and integrating it into their work. Despite the shift in job roles, their expertise in handling equipment and their skills were still highly valued. From the initial period, Khalasis played a vital role in the coastal areas of Beypore and gradually extended their settlements to other coastal areas like Chaliyam, Karuvanthuruthy, and Feroke, depending on the possibilities of their work. Their expertise in using these tools made their work much simpler and more efficient. Several traditional songs and chants associated with their heavy work are known as “Vinchipattukal” “Ambapattukal” and “Elayya pattukal,” which signify their historical connection with their profession. The Panipattu or Vinchi pattukal were not limited to just artistic expressions; they served a greater purpose in creating a sense of unity and strength among the laborers. The chief purpose of the Khalasis using work songs is to gain energy and motivation for

their work. These songs provide a source of strength for the workers. These work songs, such as Amba pattukal, play a vital role in the Khalasi community, representing their culture, customs, and collective spirit. The songs serve as a reminder of their shared heritage and inspire unity among Khalasis making them an essential element of their cultural identity.

Key Words: Khalasis, Muppan, Vinchipattukal, Daver, Kappi, Ambapattukal, Elayyapattukal, Panipattu.

The *Khalasis*, played a significant role in the maritime history of Malabar. They had a distinct identity for their technical expertise in handling heavy goods. However, with changing times and the transformation of coastal areas, the significance of *Khalasi* community gradually faded from the mainstream maritime history of Malabar. Despite being a major social group in the Malabar coastal region, their role in Kerala's maritime history remained largely unexplored. This article tries to shed light on the significance of the social history of Malabar. The present study attempts to explore the uniqueness of *Khalasis* traditional work song, known as *vinchi pattukal*. When we look into the different aspects of *khalasi* work culture, definitely have to focus on their settlements. This article tries to analyse the historical significance of their coastal settlements. The primary objective of this paper is to preserve their legacy, highlighting their contributions to Kerala's cultural heritage, which has remained unnoticed.

Tracing the Roots: Historical Exploration of the Khalasi Community

The Arabs were the most significant contributors to the coastal trade and the cultural history of Kerala. Even before the rise of Islamic expansion, Arabs played a crucial role in commercial ties with Kerala. Both Kerala and Arabs share the centuries-old heritage of trade and cultural exchange. The great commercial relations between Kerala and the Arab world were one of the main reasons for the establishment of Arab settlements on the seashore of Kerala. The dynamic trading culture influenced the Malabar Coast to open up a new space for diverse religions. During the early period of Islamic emergence in Kerala, the construction of Muslim mosques showed architectural

similarities with Hindu temples, representing a level of assimilation of Hindu- Muslim community.

Arab traders came to Kerala's seashores to trade and cater to the needs of the large wooden boats. They were settled in various coastal regions of Malabar. During that time, they married local women, and this led to the formation of a new marriage tradition in Kerala. The marriage was known as *Mutha* marriage. This custom of marriage was well-known in the region of Malabar. The *mutha* marriage was a conventional practice that was not comparable to any other custom prevalent at that time in Malabar. *Mutha* marriage was not considered regular marriages and did not involve customary rituals. Arab traders, who temporarily settled in the coastal regions with the intention of living there for a certain period to carry out their trade and fulfill their needs. So, the Arab traders engaged in *mutha* marriages. This kind of marriage had several distinctive features. As a result, a new generation was born with a mixed heritage of both Arab and local communities. The offspring born through this relationship are considered to have a mixed heritage, with both Arab and indigenous backgrounds. They are seen as a fusion of Arab and local groups known as *Khalasi*. The term *Khalasi* is derived from the Arabic word *Khilasiyy* which means black and white together. The word is reflecting the acknowledgment of the mixed heritage of the children born from these marriages (personal interview, Haasan Koya, 26th January, 2023).

Beypore was one of the most significant ports town in ancient Kerala. From the early period, *Khalasis* played a vital role in the coastal areas of Beypore. Gradually they extended their settlements to other coastal areas like Chaliyam, Karuvanthuruthy, and Ferok, depending on the possibilities of their work. Their technical skills, physical strength, and expertise in performing heavy physical tasks on both land and sea made them a vital part of different labor-intensive projects (C.P. Musthafa, 2019, 337). The technical skills possessed by *Khalasis* allowed them to tackle challenging tasks on both sea and land, along with their counterparts in other labor fields. They held a significant position in the labor sector during that period. However, as technology advanced, their exclusive importance gradually diminished, and scope of their work underwent changes accordingly. Still, they

remained relevant in certain specific workspaces that required their expertise.

Khalasis were used traditional methods and equipment such as wooden beams, coir ropes, chain blocks and *kappi* to lift and move heavy loads. Their specialized knowledge and skill in handling such equipment allowed them to control and manage extensive weights effectively. All works was led by their *Muppan* (Head of particular *Khalasi* group) and they performed challenging tasks with the utmost dedication. Their settlements were mainly concentrated in the coastal areas, from the southern regions of Malabar to the northern parts. They strategically chose locations that offered significant work opportunities. *Khalasis*' local knowledge and expertise in dealing with various issues helped them efficiently execute their work tasks, which varied depending on regional requirements. They adapted their work based on the specific challenges and opportunities present in each region.

The nature of jobs is that *Khalasis* used to handle heavy mechanics. They were skilled laborers using various tools and equipment to lift heavy objects and transport them from one place to another. With the help of simple tools and their experience, they were capable of carrying out demanding tasks efficiently. They were highly esteemed in their profession (Muhammad Sadham Chaliyam, 2013, 120). During the modern period, traditional occupations transformed and modern machinery took over many tasks in different industries. However, *Khalasis* remained relevant and adapted to the changing times by embracing modern technology and integrating it into their work. Despite the shift in job roles, their expertise in handling equipment and their skills were still highly valued. Over the years, *Khalasis* have established their flexibility by effectively incorporating modern machinery into their work without losing their traditional importance. They continue to be an integral part of society, living with great significance and contributing to various industries without losing their essential skills.

From the early days, Beypore served as the primary center for shipbuilding in India, and this is why the *Khalasi* community became

more centralized in this region. Their skills were essential for both ship construction and later launching the ships into the sea. They possessed the expertise to handle heavy loads on both land and water. *Khalasis* were adept at performing challenging tasks in the sea and on the coast with equal competence. There are two divisions within the *Khalasi* community. One division is involved in land-based works, including railway work, construction, huge flat air condition work, factory machine erection work, and rescue operations at sites where accidents involving vehicles occur. Their knowledge and competence in managing complicated tasks that were beyond the capabilities of machines were recognized throughout different parts of Kerala. In regions such as Chaliyam, Karuvanthiruthy, Feroke, Thazhekkad, Pakkumkara, Muzhuppilangad, Valapattanam and Kannur. *Khalasis* were involved in various works related to shipbuilding and harbors.

From Tradition to Present: How the Khalasis are Staying Relevant

Khalasis, who had been involved in the construction of ships in Beypore, has a rich history and a deep-rooted connection with the traditional knowledge and skills passed down through generations (personal Interview, Ummer Muppan, 12th December, 2022). Their traditional technical skill and dedication have earned them immense respect and admiration, not only in the local community but also globally. Their contribution is being recognized even beyond the boundaries of Malabar. However, as industrialization and European influence brought changes to Kerala's socio-economic scenario, they adapted to the evolving times. With the advent of modern machinery and the impact of colonialism, they expanded their expertise to embrace new professions and industries. During the colonial period *Khalasis* played a significant role in shaping the traditional craftsmanship of Kerala and creating new opportunities to excel in diverse fields ((Muhammad Sadham Chaliyam, 2013, 121). *Khalasis*, with their diverse skills and adaptability, have managed to maintain their relevance and significance in various industries. Both within and beyond their traditional domains, making them a respected and valued community in Kerala's social fabric.

During the time of British rule in India, *Khalasis* played a significant role in various railway construction activities. They were involved in heavy work such as building rail tracks, bridges, and large factories where heavy machinery was installed. Their expertise was beneficial for many government projects in Kerala. The British government relied on *Khalasi* services not only in Kerala but also in other regions. Gradually *Khalasis* gained recognition and were known for their exceptional skills, both within and outside Kerala. They were sought after by organizations beyond colonial India for their technical expertise in handling large-scale projects. In the colonial period, when India witnessed several major construction projects, *Khalasis* technical skills were highly valued. Their ability was manifest in the construction of massive railway bridges and huge dams, showcasing their engineering capabilities. *Khalasis* played a vital role in the infrastructure development of India during the British colonial period, with their technical skills being highly appreciated and recognized in various significant projects.

During the time of the First World War, there are references in some British records suggesting that *Khalasis* were employed for heavy work in railway construction outside India. It was mentioned in discussions related to the construction of the Bara-Basra Mesopotamia railway line that Chaliyam *Khalasis* were used for this purpose (personal interview, Hassan Koya, 26th January 2023). The British records mention that the *Khalasis*, who cooperated very effectively in the construction of the railway, were given leased land in the coastal region of Malabar as a token of appreciation. Projects like the Kadalundi Bridge and Mettur Dam are some examples of the early works undertaken by *Khalasis* during the colonial era. The construction of the clock tower in Mecca (The Clock Tower in Mecca is a prominent land mark and a symbol of the city's identity. It is officially known as 'Abraj Al Bait Clock Tower. It is visible from various parts of the city and serves as a reference point for millions of pilgrims who visit Mecca during Hajj and Umrah) is another example of the work undertaken by *Khalasis*. (personal interview, Muhammed Koya, 23rd April, 2022)

In the activities related to the sea, another essential division of the *Khalasis* was their involvement in the construction and

maintenance of wooden boats in the region of Malabar. In the early days, certain circumstances large ships were unable to navigate directly to their destination. It was during such situations that the *Khalasis* played a crucial role in navigating and steering the boats. In the early days large wooden boats were used for transporting goods, especially spices, sandalwood and other precious products. Due to their size and design, they were unable to reach the harbors directly. In such cases, the *Khalasis* were responsible for guiding the boats and maneuvering them to reach the nearest harbor. These skilled individuals had an exceptional understanding of the sea and the local waterways, allowing them to safely navigate the boats. Their expertise was also valuable when loading and unloading cargo. They ensured that heavy goods and materials were handled efficiently and securely during the process. Additionally, their proficiency in handling heavy objects was a significant asset when lifting and elevating items on both land and sea. The major areas where we can find *Khalasis* involved in such activities related to the sea are Chaliyam, Beypore, Kallayi, Ponnani, and Tirur. They possess specific regional expertise and utilize technological skills that we can observe in each of these regions (personal interview A Najeeb 30th November 2022).

The *Khalasi* of Beypore gained worldwide recognition, and one of the most significant events in their history was the Peruman train accident in 1988. Mappila *Khalasi* from Beypore, Chaliyam and Karuvatturuthi regions had actively taken part in the Peruman rescue mission (Personal interview, Ummar Muppan 2nd November, 2022). The technology of the traditional *khalasis* was not yet well known to the general public. They showed the world in the face of disaster how heavy things could be lifted using their traditional weapons. The *Khalasis* took up the task when all the rescue operations launched with the help of heavy machinery could not be successful. The *Khalasi* of Beypore and Chaliyam were able to lift the bogies with relative ease when several modern engineering techniques failed to retrieve railway bogies from the depths of the lake (Alex George, May 6, 1989, *Economic and Political Weekly*, p.965)

From the beginning the Indian Army's Armed Recovery Vehicle took over the rescue mission. So, the *khalasis* were not directly

involved in the rescue mission. However, even then, they played a crucial role in helping the army climb up by fixing iron ropes on the bogies sunk several feet below the water surface. But the attempts to lift the train using crane failed. The mission failed when the iron rope tied to the bogie to lift it broke. Rail coaches were gone under the water again. The *Khalasis* then took over the responsibility of lifting the bogies. In this critical situation, the Mappila *Khalasi* used their traditional tools such as *kappi* and rope, for this rescue operation (Personal interview, Ummar Muppan 2nd November, 2022). However, initially, the railway engineers did not have much faith in the skills of the *khalasis*. The *Khalasis*, with their strenuous efforts, pulled out the railway bogies one by one from the water. The people present watched the work of the *khalasis* with great wonder.

Unique Cultural expression's

In Beypore, *Khalasis* have an exceptional role in the construction of traditional wooden boats known as *Uru*. Due to the long history of *Uru* construction, they have a rich heritage and experience in this field. They have been involved in building *Uru*. Their expertise is especially significant in the construction of traditional wooden boats, which is a unique aspect of their craft. The *Khalasis* of Beypore play a crucial role in launching the newly constructed *Uru* into the water. This task requires a specific set of skills that are mastered by the *Khalasis* through their long-standing involvement in the *Uru* making process. In addition to their involvement in sea-related activities, *Khalasis* were skilled in handling large boats that entered the harbors. When such boats got stuck in the area of little water, the *Khalasis* themselves were capable of maneuvering and freeing the vessels. To accomplish such tasks competently, *Khalasis* relied on their special tool called “*Dhawar*” commonly known as a wooden *vinch*. Along with *Dhawar*, *Khalasis* used additional tools such as “*kappi*” and “*coir*” to aid in their effort (C.P Musthafa, 2019 p.338). Their expertise in using these tools made their work much simpler and more efficient. Several traditional songs and chants associated with their heavy work are known as “*Vinchi pattukal*” “*Amba pattukal*” and “*Elayya pattukal*,” which signify their historical

connection with their profession (personal interview with Muhammed Koya, 23rd April, 2021)

Due to the serious nature of their work, a sense of solidarity among the laborers becomes crucial. Providing inspiration and enthusiasm to the workers is the purpose of such songs. Often, these songs aim to simplify challenging tasks and elevate the mood of the workers. The rhythm and melody of these songs were designed to invigorate the laborers, encouraging them to work with more energy and dedication. (B. Muhammed Ahammed, 2006, 52). These songs create a sense of unity and shared experience among all the workers, making them feel more connected and driven to achieve their common goal. When we study the history of work songs, we can indeed observe a uniform nature. All types of songs used in workplaces aim to reduce the burden of labor and foster amity among the workers. The use of work songs created a sense of collaboration and cooperation among the workers, leading to a collective effort in achieve their goals. The lyrics of these songs were not purely for artistic purposes; rather, their significance lay in motivating the workers and creating a sense of solidarity within the workforce. So, the lines of these work songs did not follow the conventions of refined music; instead, they prioritized the essential message of unity and encouragement. Workplaces are filled with various emotions, joys, sorrows, and challenges. All of these characteristics are reflected in the work songs, making them an integral part of the work environment.

The work songs sung by the *Khalasis*, who were involved in the construction of Beypore *Uru* are known as “*Panipattu*” or “*Kappal pattu*.” These songs hold significant impact of the *Khalasi* Muslim community, which was engaged in the different stages of *Uru* building activities (personal Interview, Ummer Muppan, 12th December, 2022). The style of singing and the vocal techniques used in these songs were influence by *Mappila pattu*. The lyrics song contains references to *Allah*, the divine power, reflecting the deep faith and spirituality of the workers. The *Panipattu* or *Kappal pattu* was not limited to just artistic expressions. They served a greater purpose in creating a sense of unity and strength among the laborers. These songs incorporated the legends of Prophet Muhammad,

Karamat (Arabic term commonly used in Islamic religious context to refer the miracles or extraordinary acts performed by saints or holy person. These miracles are believed to be manifestations of divine power and are often considered as signs of the person's spiritual and connection with God) of Sheikh or *Auliyas*. *Panipattu* or *Kappal pattu* played a significant role in the work environment. It bringing together the workers and motivating them to carry out their tasks with determination and unity.

The chief purpose of the *Khalasis* using work songs is to gain energy and motivation for their work. These songs provide a source of strength for the workers. The term commonly used to refer to those who sing work songs is known as “*Ambakkaran*”. The leader of the group is called “*Khalasi Moopan* who acts as *Ambakkaran*”. ‘*Jawabmar*’ as the term used to refer to those who respond to the song or repeat it is sung by *Ambakaran*. Their usage of specific words and context depends on the situation and the demands of the work environment (personal interview with Mammu, 15th December, 2022). Some of the work songs may contain short poetic verses, and they are used accordingly based on the rhythm or tempo of the work. Various workers may sing the same song, but the lyrics may be adapted to fit the context of the different work sites.

This paper mainly focuses on the distinct style of *Amba* songs. When analyzing the lyrics of these work songs and examining the techniques used, it becomes possible to gain a clear understanding of the different work environments. *Mappila Khalasi Katha parayunnu* the malayalam work written by C.M Mustafa Haji Chelembra discusses the detailed references to the unforgettable experiences of the *Khalasis*. In this work, Chelembra narrates the details of the strenuous work that *Khalasis* undertook using traditional equipment called *Vinchi* to lift weights at the construction sites in Malabar (C.M Mustafa Haji Chelembra, 2011, pp.37-40) Before attempting to lift a heavy object, the experienced *Khalasi* in the group would call out “*Pidikkalle*” (going to lift) to which others would respond. Then the lifting process started and everyone joined together (C.M Mustafa Haji Chelembra, 2011, pp.37-40). After that throughout the work, they would continue singing the *Amba Pattukal*. Everyone, hold it and lift

it together. The *Khalasis* would engage in the laborious task while singing *Amba Pattukal*, making their work more manageable and inspiring each other with a sense of unity. Some lines from the *Amba paattukal* that the *Khalasis* used to commonly use in their workplaces are mentioned in this context.

Ailasa... ailasa....

Oblamali ailasa...

Thalla pokkaru ailasa...

Ailasa... ailasa... (personal interview, Abubaker , 18th December, 2022)

It is impossible to find the exact literary meaning of lines mentioned above. The workers sing these lines together, called “*ailasa*,” to make the task of lifting heavy objects more strenuous. It is more likely that the term “*thalla pokkar*” refers to an imaginary leader. Such *amba* songs were used during times of heavy lifting and also during times of pulling or pushing heavy loads.

We can see different kinds of *amba pattukal* that the *Khalasis* used to sing, depending on the nature of the work. The nature of the song totally different when they sang it during rescue operations at accident sites. Here is the translation of the famous lines from the *amba pattukal* sung by *Khalasis* during vehicle accidents and rescue operations:

Vandi marinje ...ailasa..

Undikkettu ailasa...

Ailasa...ailasa

Oblamali ailasa.. (personal interview, A Najeeb, 30th November, 2022)

The words “*vandi marinje*” and “*unthikettu*” are in the traditional common usages.”*vandi marinje*” means that the vehicle has overturned. “*unthikettu*” refers to the collective effort of lifting a fallen vehicle using everyone’s strength. *Khalasis* commonly use *ailasa* calls in all kinds of heavy lifting tasks to reduce the workload.

Kallayi River (Kallayi puzha is merge with the Arabian Sea in Kozhikode. The river is significant for its historical and cultural importance) which was strongly connected with the lives of *Khalasis*

in Malabar. In the trade history of Malabar Kallayi River was considered the main center of the ancient timber trade. The main theme of the *amba pattukal* revolves around the Kallayi river, as it had a profound impact on the professional and social lives of the Khalasis. From the song of *amba Pattu*, we can assume how much influence and impact the Kallayi River had on the lives of *Khalasis*.

Allante kamalu rahmathu

Thannalu rabee barakkathu

Allante kamalu rahmathu

Thannalu rabee barakkathu

Kallayippuzhayude rahmathu

Thannalu rabee barakkath (personal interview, Hussain P, 26th January, 2023)

The Kallayi River was an integral part of the lives of *Khalasis* in Malabar, and it played a significant role in shaping their livelihoods. It served as a major center for their activities, and they depended closely on the river for various stages of their lives. The main thing that is being indicated in these lines is that the biggest blessing that God has given to the *Khalasis* is the Kallayi River. This song “*amba pattukal*” reflects the association between *Khalaasis* and the Kallayi River, symbolizing the wealth and prosperity bestowed upon them by God.

Another important place where the *Khalasis* sang *amba pattukal* was in connection with the different stages of uru making. *Khalasis* used to be involved in all the stages of Uru making. The *Khalasis* themselves used to do all the different heavy-duty tasks related to Uru construction. In all these stages, the *Khalasis* used to sing *vinchi* songs to lighten their workload. During the time of *Uru* launching in to the sea, the *Khalasis* sang a song to ease their fatigue from laborious work (personal interview, Ummer Muppan, 12th December, 2022). During this period, they sang song known as *vinchi pattu*. In these *vinchi* songs, everything that brings enjoyment and comfort to the mind will find its place in the lyrics. They used *vinchi pattu* song inspired by Muhiyudheen Sheik’s extraordinary skill. They believe that Muhiyudheen Sheik’s exceptional abilities would bring about more

significant accomplishments in this meticulous endeavor (personal interview, Ummer Muppan, 12th December, 2022).

Alla alla ya salama

Porishayerum nurudheen sheik

Ya auliya

Alla allay a salama (personal interview, Mammu, 15th December, 2022).

It is possible to witness profound songs in the *vinchi* tradition, expressing deep religious sentiments in the cultural history of Malabar. *Auliyakkal* played a significant role in shaping the strong beliefs and cultural values in Malabar. Hence, we can indeed have an enormous collection of poignant *vinchi* songs.

Shahid abubakkar samadani oliyulla

Allahi alla salamu

Shahid abubakkar samadani oliyulla

Allante alla kaval

Shahid abubakkar samadani oliyulla (personal interview, Hussain P ,26th January, 2023).

We can see many *vinchi* songs that mention the miracles of the *Auliyas*. In such songs, we can see the *Auliyas* being praised in an immense way. The *Khalasis* believed that when doing heavy work, the *Auliyas* would be with them and help them lift the weight invisibly. This belief gave them the confidence to lift even the heaviest objects.

The existence of such *Amba paattukal*, which praised *Allah* (God) and the *Auliyas*, was another important proof of the strong faith that the Mappilas possessed.

Alla alla...yallaa...

Keripokatte ya allaa

Alla allay a alla...

The song *Ellayya pattukal* was commonly used by *Khalasis* to lift heavier loads during manual labour. In some places, these types of work songs were also known as *amba pattukal* or *alayya pattukal*. These songs provide rhythm and motivation for the workers, making

it easier for them to coordinate their efforts and lift heavy weights together.

Othupidichal malayum porum elayya
Kakkane njangale ellayya
Pavangalan elayya
Mureed auliya ealayya
Alla alla elayya
Kakkane alla elayya
Muthu nabiye elayya

Each *Elayapatt* or *Ambapatt* song provides valuable information about the lives of *Khalasis*. By analyzing the *Elayapatt* songs mentioned above, we can find facts that support these observations. *Othupidichal Malayum Porum*: The phrase “*Othupidichal malayum porum*” means that if we stand together, even an impossible task like breaking a mountain becomes easy. This reminds us of the importance of unity and cooperation among the *Khalasis*. They were a community that worked hard together and helped each other.

“*Kakkane njangale ellayya- Pavangalan elayya -Mureed auliya elayya*” we see the poor *Khalasis* praying to the saints (*auliya*) for their protection. *Khalasis* himself says that they were very poor and they faced many hardships. Therefore, they believe that the help of God and the saints is essential for them. It is clear that, through such *amba pattukal*, they greatly desire the mercy and compassion of God. Songs like *ambapatt* and *elayapatt* reveal important details about the social, cultural, and economic standing of *Khalasis*. These songs give us a clear picture of their unity, cooperation, faith in God, poverty and hardships. They serve as an important source for understanding *Khalasi* culture.

Allase ele mali
Allase ele chumbra
Allase ya maoulani
Allase musakka
Allase beeran ponni
Allase maveli nattil

Allase vilayatt undedo (personal interview, Ubaith , 15th December, 2022)

The *Khalasis* used to sing a large number of work songs that were widely common at the work sites. These *amba pattukal* (work songs) played a vital role in the lives of *Khalasis*, providing them with much-needed relief during their laborious tasks. With the help of these songs, they could synchronize their efforts while lifting heavy weights and the rhythm of the songs made their work more manageable and inspiring. The songs were used in conjunction with their work routines. The *Khalasis* adjusted the lyrics of the songs based on the nature of their work and the difficulty of the task. Depending on the specific work, they used different verses and adjusted the tune accordingly. For example, they sang *Bhakti Pattukal* (devotional songs), *Hasya Pattukal* (comical songs), and *Theri Pattukal* as per the context of their work (personal interview, Ubaith , 15th December, 2022). Many types of songs were frequently sung in accompaniment to *Amba paattukal*. The enchanted verses of these songs embodied humor, faith, and life itself. *Khalasis* unity is the most significant component of their work. When a *Khalasi* in a group is not giving his work his full attention, the other members of the group tease him and sing about it. Such lines were quickly making their way into their songs. In the same way, occasionally they would pair these songs with swearing songs. Such swearing songs were regarded by them as a type of workplace humor. All those involved in the *Khalasi* profession were part of these songs. The truth is that these songs, whether they were swearing songs or mocking songs, never had an adverse impact on the *Khalasis* sense of unity.

Conclusion

The unique and outstanding feature of *Khalasi* culture is the representation of their work songs, known as “*amba pattukal*.” These songs have a deep-rooted connection with the cultural life of the *Khalasi* community in Kerala. Regardless of the nature of the work, the *Khalasis* used these songs to efficiently coordinate and manage their labor-intensive activities. These songs were a perfect example of how work and cultural practices could intertwine harmoniously.

Even the *Vinchi Pattukal* served as a cultural representation of traditional community practices. The *Khalasis*' social group in Malabar exhibits a strong cultural unity, heavily influenced by their beliefs, customs, and rituals, which are reflected in their lives. These songs also brought out their talents and showcased their traditions through competitive representation. Irrespective of regional differences and variations in work types, the *Khalasis* demonstrated unity by coming together to sing and perform during laborious tasks, making these work songs a significant aspect of their cultural heritage. Throughout different regions and diverse work assignments, the *Khalasis* maintained their unique cultural identity by integrating these labor songs into their work routines. This tradition of using work songs has been passed down through generations, allowing them to preserve their customs and beliefs. The notable ability of the *Khalasis* to adapt their work songs to different contexts and work environments highlights their creativity and resilience. Whether it was a representation of *vanchi pattukal* or *Amba pattukal* to demonstrate their cultural heritage and bring together diverse beliefs and practices. These work songs, such as *Amba pattukal*, play a vital role in the *Khalasi* community, representing their culture, customs, and collective spirit. The songs serve as a reminder of their shared heritage and inspire unity among *Khalasis* making them an essential element of their cultural identity.

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