

# CONSTRUCTION OF THE KALARI



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In India 64 well known arts, martial arts known as “Vaijayiki Vidhyanjnam”. Its meaning is living knowledge of good successful vidhya.

The base of martial arts is ‘Dhanurveda’. The Brahmins who first came to Kerala had enough knowledge on “Dhanurveda”. The ultimate aim of ‘Dhanurveda’ is the distraction of evil and the protection of good.

The word “Kalari” is derived from the Sanskrit word “Khaloorika” meaning a place where weapon training is practised. All around India there were lots of institutions for training in exercise and weapon training, and it was known in different names in different places. It is believed that in Kerala there institutions are known by the name “Kalari”.

Kalari’s are prim early two types, the first known as ‘Cherukalari’ or ‘Kuzhikalari’ and the second one is ‘Angakalari’. Cherukalari or Kuzhikalari was built for the purpose of inspecting continuous and systematic physical and weapon training. This type of Kalari situated near to sanctuary of a temple. Remnants of such ancient Kalari are seen at some places in Kerala even now.

Angakalari was constructed temporally for the purpose of fighting duels to decide any quarrel between the local rulers. The final decision was taken in accordance with those who won the war. The war is known as ‘Angam’ those who failed in the war was murdered or their hands and legs were cut off. The Angakalari is constructed as per the tradition in such a place where all people can watch the duel conveniently. The place where the war took place is known as ‘Angathattu’. The platform would be constructed four to six feet above the ground level by famous

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carpenters. Before the date fixed for the duel, the Angathattu would be handed over to the fighters after elaborate rituals by the carpenter.

The weapon training is carried out in a scientific and secret way in the Cherukalari. So the building of the Kalari is constructed in that way. For constructing the Kalari, there are certain scientific criteria's. It indicates the length, width, depth from ground level to below by removing the mud, direction, etc includes in that criteria.

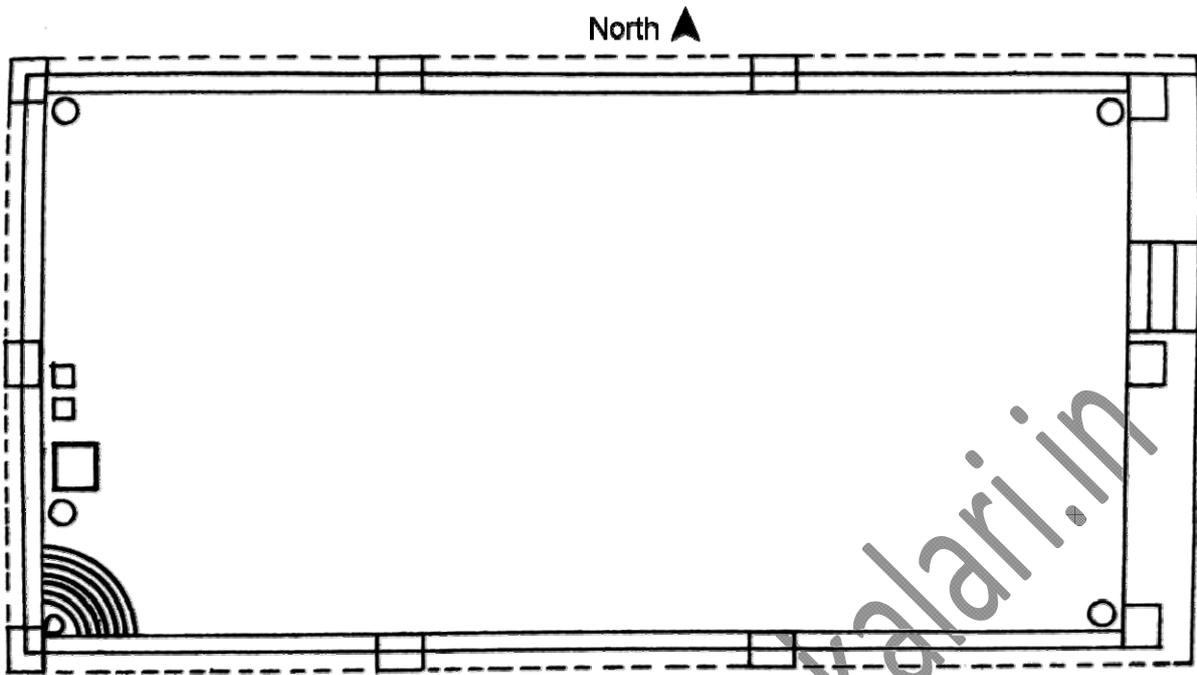
While constructing the Kalari, the building has to be constructed as to face east. The inside of the Kalari will measure 42ft by length east-west, 21 ft by width north-south. The Kalari floor is prepared by digging the ground up to 5 ft depth, removing the inside soil. A Mud veranda is constructed surrounding the hollow ground. On this mud veranda, there are enough 'kaithun'. In the middle of the mud veranda, facing east-west, two centre pillars (Nedumthun) of 21ft length is fixed firmly. Above the two centre pillars a roof or a strong is installed. This is the tradition of the Kalari.

The exact carpet area of the four walls is obtained by height with the stones. In order to give support to ridge beam of a roof certain pillars are building inside the



Kalari. These pillars are very unique and are not like the other pillars. If needed, to support the ridge beam of the roof kathrikai can be given from the two side of the beam supporting rafters of Kalari. The upper part of the Kalari is 7 1/2 Kol

length kathrika 6 1/2 Kol length, 8Angulam and one foot is the calculated by which the



Kalari is constructed with 42ft length and 21ft width. As the Kalari floor is first prepared by digging hallow in the ground it is called 'Kuzhikalari'. It is done in this manner because the heat should not affect them during the training session and also that the mud should not cause any skin disease. In the Kalari, they do not besmear the floor with cow. Small steps are constructed from the right side of the main pillar facing the east. The veranda on the left and right must be built conveniently for the visitors.

Certain conventions have been observed from time immemorial while selecting the site for the construction of the Kalari. Kalari does not build in common ground, lily area, messy place, place with sand, place with snake temple, cemetery and place where temple have been ruined. The most acceptable location for this purpose is where the earth is facing a bit upward to the North-West and downward to south-East.

There is scared space dedicated to the Kalari Goddess at the South-West corner of the building. Her presence is symbolized by the 'Poothara', the seven tiered conical

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stepped alter which looks like a step pyramid, on the seventh step, a lotus bud of seven fingered height is built. The seventh step is considered as the standing pedestal of the lotus shaped bud. This step is also known in various names like 'Manipeedam', 'Manithara' and 'Ezhamthrippadi' so on. On the right there is the Guruthara. Anthimahakalan, Nagadevatha, Ganapathi, Vetaikorumakan are some Goddesses kept there. The diets of the guardians of the eight corners is also placed. In the Guruthara one can see all the masters or Guru.

One should enter bare foot placing the right leg first into the Kalari and then step in with the left leg in the front. Then he has to worship the ground with his hand and then turn right and walk towards Poothara. One has to turn around and place the right leg before the Poothara and worship it. Guruthara, Poothara and the place where weapon is kept must also be worshipped. At the end, he has to do Kalari Vandanam.

For More details,

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