



A Sreedhara Menon Cultural Heritage of Kerala

The word 'culture' means the customs and beliefs, art, way of life and social organisations of a particular country or group. Our country has a unique culture and the people of Kerala enriched the 'cultural heritage' with their distinct contributions. And this book is a perfect example of explaining and analysing the varied aspects of Kerala's rich cultural heritage. A must read for the students of History and others too.

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(1925-2010)

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Prof. A. Sreedhara Menon

Cultural Heritage of Kerala


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1. Kerala Culture in the Indian Background

India has a composite and cosmopolitan culture to which the peoples of all the regions of this ancient land have made their distinct contributions. Among the people who have thus enriched Indian cultural heritage and helped the cause of national integration, the people of the Kerala region of South India have a place of honour. Kerala culture is, in fact, an integral part of Indian culture. There are many basic similarities between the two. The Kerala region, like the Indian sub-continent, can claim to have a culture the history of which runs into the dim recesses of antiquity.

Composite Culture

Kerala culture is also a composite and cosmopolitan culture to which several peoples and races have made their significant contributions. In fact, the secret of the vitality and strength of Kerala culture lies in its composite character. The gradual evolution of a composite and cosmopolitan culture led to the emergence of a spirit of tolerance and catholicity of outlook which still persist among the people of Kerala. Its history unfolds the romantic and fascinating story of a unique process of cultural synthesis and social assimilation. In response to every challenge Kerala has demonstrated through the ages its genius for adaptation and fusion of old traditions and new values in every sphere of human thought and endeavour.

Unity in Diversity

It may really be said of Kerala culture, as of Indian Culture in general, that its salient feature is 'unity in diversity.' It was Kerala's foreign contacts from the earliest days which helped in the evolution of a way of life and culture noted for its catholicity and universality. The neighbouring states of TamilNadu and Karnataka have also exercised some influence on the evolution of the life and culture of the Kerala people. At the same time the peculiar geographical position of Kerala as the southernmost part of the Indian peninsula separated from the rest of the country by the natural barrier of the western ghats and from the rest of the world by the high seas has helped the people of the land