



Onam and other programmes in our College.

Onam is the biggest and the most important festival of the state of Kerala. It is celebrated as a harvest festival and is celebrated with joy and enthusiasm all over the state by people of all communities. The best part of the festival is that it is a secular festival so people from different communities and religion can take part in it. According to a popular legend, the festival is celebrated to welcome King Mahabali, whose spirit is said to visit Kerala at the time of Onam.

Onam is celebrated in the beginning of the month of Chingam, the first month of Malayalam Calendar (Kollavarsham). This corresponds with the month of August-September according to Gregorian calendar. It is a ten day festival. The first day is called Atham and tenth day, Thirunam are most important of all. Elaborate feasts, folk songs, elegant dances, energetic games, elephants, boats and flowers all are a part of the dynamic festival called Onam.

The festival portrays the rich cultural heritage therefore it signifies the rich heritage of India. Rich cultural heritage of Kerala comes out in its best form and spirit during the ten day long festival. It is indeed a treat to be a part of the grand carnival. People of Kerala make elaborate preparations to celebrate it in the best possible manner.

The most impressive part of Onam celebration is the grand feast called Onasadya, prepared on Thirunam. It is a nine course meal consisting of 11 to 13 essential dishes. Onasadya is served on banana leaves and people sit on a mat laid on the floor to have the meal. There is also a tradition to play games, collectively called Onakalikal, on Onam. Folk performances like Kummatti kali and Pulikali add to the zest of celebrations.

If we try to find out the meaning and significance behind its celebration we will see that according to legends it is this visit of Mahabali that is celebrated as Onam every year. People make all efforts to celebrate the festival in a grand way and impress upon their dear King that they are happy and wish him well.

Pookalam

Pookalam is an intricate and colourful arrangement of flowers laid on the floor. Tradition of decorating Pookalam is extremely popular in Kerala and is followed as a ritual in every household during ten-day-long Onam celebrations. 'Pookhalam' consists of two words, '**poov**' meaning flower and '**kalam**' means colour sketches on the ground. It is considered auspicious to prepare Pookalam, also known as '**Aththa-Poo**' during the festival of Onam.

People believe the spirit of their dear King Mahabali visits Kerala at the time of Onam. Besides making several other arrangements, people, especially adolescent girls prepare elaborate Pookalams to welcome their most loved King.

Making of Pookalam is itself a colourful and joyous event. Being a team effort it helps to generate feeling of togetherness and goodwill amongst the people. It is animating to watch women as they prepare Pookalam while singing traditional songs. Giggling and sharing jokes between the thought provoking and back breaking job.

Trends

Earlier, people used to make efforts to collect flowers for designing a Pookalam. Children used to get up early in the morning and gather flowers in their small 'Pookuda' (basket) from the village gardens. These days, the trend has changed and people have the option of buying flowers from the market in the shape and colour of their choice.

Pookalam decoration competitions are organised by various societies and groups all over the state on the day of Onam. They have become extremely popular and witness huge public participations. Big prizes are also kept in these contests as they have turned up to be extremely competitive events. A large number of people assemble just to have a look at the innovative and meticulously prepared art pieces.

A beautiful design, though it is said, is created in the heart, use of technology is also in vogue in designing of a Pookalam. People prepare design first on computer and then implement it on floor. This saves a lot of time and energy and helps the designers to come up with stunning Pookalams.

In this context we, Chris Cappell College, have conducted the Pookkalam competition. All the students participated it as 8 groups and the best three got prize. Then the Onana payasam was distributed to the students and the Onasadya to the staff of the College.

We send you some of the photos on the different views on our Onam celebration as onappookkalam and some funny games like putting the bangles on the bottle, filling the bottle with water etc.

On September 2nd 2013, we have conducted at our Chris Cappell College a **Personality empowering programme**. It was led by Mr.Nandu John and team. The program was excellent with good music and thought provoking messages. Some pictures we send you.

19th of august 2013 a programme was conducted in our Chris Cappell College by the Kerala Police Association. The theme was Initiatives **Against Drugs and Alcohol**. It is sure that our students might have understood the demerits of such bad habits and its influence to the entire world of youth from this programme.