

***Chumadutangi* (Load Bearing Stone) and Pedestrian Transportation in Kerala, India**

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Abstract

Chumadutangi (Load Bearing Stone) is a bulky stone bench like structure used for supporting the weight of head loads while transporting from one place to another. They were constructed for the comfort of the pedestrian load bearers who carry heavy loads for longer distances. These are unique structures erected in Kerala where the landscape is undulated in most of the places and where vehicle transportation was difficult. These structures are widely seen in the hinterlands of Kerala. Many of the *chumadutangi* bear inscriptions mentioning the sponsor's name, place name and other details. *Chumadutangi* are often associated with other amenities like *vazhiyambalam* (wayside shelters), *tottikkal* (stone troughs) and *kinar* (well). These are significant evidences in tracing the trade routes and understanding the role of hinterlands in supplying various goods to the markets and other larger trade centres in Kerala and vice versa. This paper discusses about the distribution pattern and regional variations of *chumadutangi* in Kerala and their role in movement of goods during the medieval period.

Key Words: *Chumadutangi* , *Load Bearing Stone*, *Medival period*, *Transportation*, *Kerala*

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