

**Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts
Project Mausam**

Lecture

On

"Shipbuilding on the Malabar Coast in the Pre-modern period"

Date: 18th June 2018

Venue- Lecture Hall, 11Mansingh Road-110011

Abstract:-

The temperature of the water in which ships plied, underwater rock formation, presence of shoals, volume of commodities to be transported, naval confrontations on the high seas and above all the course of monsoon which controlled, to a great extent, navigation in the Indian Ocean regions during the pre-modern period has exerted significant influence on the nature of ship building especially in the choice of timber, riveting, caulking and launching of the ships. Unlike in Europe, scant number of treatises related to shipbuilding is found in India. Indian shipwrights relied mostly on the plans or designs preserved in their memory and transmitted from generation to generation. This is not to consign into oblivion *Yuktikalpataru*, a Sanskrit tract ascribed to Bhojaraja (Bhoja Narapati) of the Paramara dynasty (c.1040-1090) centred around Malwa region in central India which deals with shipbuilding. There are also a few works in Tamil related to shipbuilding in the later period, like *Navoi sattiram*, (McKenzie collection), *kappal sattiram* of Tarangampadi (1620) *Kulathurayan kappalpattu* (of the late eighteenth century) and *Kalavettu-pattu* to mention a few of them. *Kannakiyum cheermakkavum* dealing with some aspects of shipbuilding and launching thereof is the only work in Malayalam, - the native language of the Malabar coast –so far brought to our notice. In fact, a great deal of ship building activities was found on the Malabar coast especially in Be pore for centuries before the arrival of the European mariners and merchants and the expertise of the shipwrights of Malabar coast was adopted by the Europeans which speaks volumes for the quality of shipbuilding there.