

**AKHILA BHARATHA AYYAPPA SEVA SANGHAM**  
**ORIGIN AND FORMATION**  
*A BRIEF SUMMERY*  
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“Akhila Bharatha Ayyappa Seva Sangham was founded by Dr. P. A. Velayudhan Pillai of Thiruvandapuram during the year 1945 to service the Ayyappa devotees who undertake arduous journey to Sabarimala. Later it has been registered as a social service organization under the charitable societies Act”. It has a significant beginning - as in the words of Mr. Nennara Ramachandra Menon: “Years back a group of devotees on pilgrimage reached Pampa from Erumeli through thick and dense forests of high ups and steep downs. A boy among them was caught by a raging fever and the condition of the boy became very serious, rendering the instantaneous medical aid inevitable. The pilgrims run hither and thither in search of some medical aid. Dr. P. A. Velayudhan Pillai, himself a pilgrim came to know of this and he readily gave the boy a few doses of medicine he had with him reserved for his own use. The doctor was then the Superintendent of the Ophthalmic Hospital, Thiruvandapuram. The boy got relief and the devotees continued their pilgrimage. This gave an impetus to the Doctor to ponder over the ways and means to serve the sufferers in future. Thus the seed for the germination of the renowned Ayyappa Seva Sangham was sown in the sacred soil of Pampa, where the Pandalam Raja saw the crying child”.

This was an evening in the month of Dhanu, 1120 (Kolla varsham). Along with Dr. Velayudhan Pillai, there were Shri C. V. Raman Pillai, Shri R. Krishna Pillai and Sari Achuthan Nair. Their thoughts at that circumstance turned to the formation of a voluntary service corps to help the sick and needy, young and old, on their way to Sabarimala. It was their feeling that the camphor which they lighted on that evening was to wipe off the sufferings of devotees. Very appropriately an auditorium in the name of Dr. Velayudhan Pillar has been erected in Pampa and his photograph adorns the wall.

Sabarimala was dangerous and difficult to reach. Thick forests infested with wild animals, unclean water, steep hills and cold weather made the surroundings inhospitable. Among the devotees, there were children and elders, sick and healthy, poor and rich, all treading towards the same goal- to have the *darshan* of Ayyappa. Quite often pilgrims fell sick and need medical attention.

Ayyappa Seva Sangham has an unbounded growth. The first group meeting was held in the month of Meenam, 1120 at Chitra Theater, Thiruvandapuram and was presided over by Justice K. S. Govinda Pillai, who was the then High Court Judge. At this meeting Dr. P. A. Velayudhan Pillai was elected as the First General Secretary. Sri. P. Subramaniam producer, director and owner of Udaya Studio, Alappuzha was elected as the Treasurer. Sri. Subramaniam formally joined the sangham as its first member paying one rupee membership fee and a donation of Rs.600. Sri Chithira Tirunal Maharaja of Travancore sanctioned an yearly grant of Rs 8000 to the Sangham, and it is being

continued. In a short period of time, the membership increased to thousands. The Sangham has numerous taluk and local Sanghams. The Sangham has 227 temples and several schools and libraries.

The most important activities of Ayyappa Seva Sangham is to help the devotees during their pilgrimage to Sabarimala. The Sangham does Yeoman service to the pilgrims on free of cost. The Sangam provides medicated hot water for drinking, food and shelter for weary, medicines and treatment for the sick. It is also operating a well equipped cardiology dispensary at Pampa in association with Apollo Hospital Chennai and another hospital at Appachimedu in association with Madurai Meenashi Mission Hospital. In addition to these the Sangham is running a well equipped hospital at Sannidhanam with highly qualified Doctors.

The Sangham is also helping to re-group the missed devotees during Sabarimala pilgrimage, carry the sick and disabled to hospitals and also helps to take the deceased devotees to their homes using their Ambulances/Vans.

The Sangham conducts special free service camps in important centers where the pilgrims congregate during the mandala season.

The Sangham publishes a regular Malayalam Magazine entitled “SRI AYYAPPAN” from Thiruvandapuram and one Tamil edition entitled “OM SRI AYYAPPAN” from Madras to propagate Sanadhana Dharma among the public.

The Sangham is administrated by its President Thennala Sri. G. Balakrishna Pillai M.P And General Secretary Sri. N. Sreenivasan with the directions of a central working committee.

Dr. P. A. Velayudhan Pillai was born in the Island village of “Pullangady” in Kuttanad, Allapuzha District, Kerala in the reputed family of “Padanair”. During the British rule in India there was no medical college in south India beyond the city of Madras. Two seats were allotted to the erstwhile state of Travancore. Sri. Velayudhan Pillar got admitted to the Medical college with the recommendation of the then Devan of Travancore to the Governor of Madras Presidency. After completing his M.B.B.S. course he was sent to England and America to specialize in Ophthalmology to become an eye specialist. Upon returning to India he was appointed as a Doctor in the Thiruvananthapuram Ophthalmology Hospital.

Doctor Velayudhan Pillai was my mother’s uncle. We the present generation of Pullangady built an AYYAPPA temple in memory of Dr. Velayudhan Pillai in his own village on a piece of land donated by my father Sri. P. K. Raman Pillai ( who entered his heavenly abode three and half years ago)to the Pullangady Branch No.692 of AYYAPPA SEVA SANGHAM.

*I Pray Lord Ayyappa to show the choicest blessing upon all.*