A Unique Governance System

The governance system of the Mannan community is unique, traditional, and deeply rooted in its cultural and spiritual beliefs. The King is the head of the community and presides over all major decisions, supported by a structured hierarchy of leaders and advisors. The administrative headquarters of the Mannan community is known as Ayiramperumkuda, located at Kovilmala in Idukki District. In the Mannan language, the King is referred to as Varakku Malan or Valiya Moopan.

The governing structure includes the following:

- 4 Vaathi (spiritual intermediaries)
- 4 Mannan (regional heads)
- 9 Kaani (advisors to the King)
- 10 Kulamthaari and 10 Kulamthaarichi (law and order officials — male and female respectively)

- 4 Mannan and Regional Divisions
- The King (Valiyamoopan / Varakkumalan)
- 9 Kaani
- 4 Vaathi
- 10 Ulamthari Ulamtharichikal

4 Mannan and Regional Divisions

This system of governance — combining kingship, councils, law enforcement, and divine intermediaries — reflects a holistic form of leadership that intertwines administration, spirituality, and community welfare, sustaining the Mannan people’s cultural identity across generations.

The community’s traditional territory is divided into four main regions, each headed by a Moopan of equal authority. These regions are defined based on geographical directions

According to the current Mannan King, even though there are 4 kingdoms based on geography, there exist 3 kingdoms based on the governance structure of the community. They are :

(1) Thekkodu Desham (Kumali Side) Kottakathalayk Melodu	(2) Ayiram Perumkuda (Centre Region) Nadukkada	(3) Vadakku Desham (Adimali Side) Malanaattu Mala

Regions	Boundaries	Leader / Moopan
South (Thekku)	Kumily Area	Chinthirandi Moopan
North (Vadakku)	Thodupuzha Area	Manappadan Moopan
East (Kizhakku)	Udumbanchola Area	Thalambila Moopan
West (Padinjaru)	Ernakulam / Trissur Area	KenjilaManiyaran Moopan

SooryaPathbhanabhan remembers the 4 moopans as : (i) Vadakkooru Malan (ii) Thekkidam Malan (iii) Varakkumalan and (iv) Vettumthera

Table: Various sub-kingdoms and leaders associated

Regions	Boundaries	Leader / Moopan

South (Thekku)	Kumily Area	Chinthirandi Moopan
North (Vadakku)	Thodupuzha Area	Adinaattu Moopan
East (Kizhakku)	Udumbanchola Area	Thalambila Moopan
West (Padinjaru)	Ernakulam / Trissur Area	Manappadan Moopan

According to the research efforts of Biju Ponnayan, a Mannan community member from Kumily, there exists 4 sub Kingdoms for the Mannan community. They are :

Ayiram Perumkuda	Thollayiram Paravam	Chenthanattumala	Kottakathalayk Melode

The King (Valiyamoopan / Varakkumalan)

The elders narrate that the four Moopans, who were initially equal in power, once met at Thollayiraparavi and collectively decided to crown one among them, Varakkumalan, as the King. This was to ensure unity and easier coordination, as frequent travel between regions was difficult in the olden days.

The King serves as the supreme head and guardian of the Mannan community, overseeing welfare, administration, and ritual matters. The title passes through a matrilineal succession system in accordance with the community's customs. Alongside the King, there is an Ilaya Moopan (younger chief) or Ilaya Rajavu, who assists in governance.

Recent Lineage of Kings (as per documented records):

Madurayanda Karanavar Madura Chokkan Madura Veeran Veeran Thevan Veeran Ariyan Thoshanidathan Ashamporumban Periyanayan Chakkan	Listed from the discussion from elders. But most of the names are that of gods and deities rather than actual persons ? The current King does not support the data. The book from Biju only lists the last 4 Kings as recorded history.
Nayan Rajamannan	11th King
Thevan Rajamannan	12th King
Ariyan Rajamannan	13th King

Raman Rajamannan	Recent King. 14th King

The Duty of the King: The King’s duties include calling meetings with Kaanikkar from various hamlets to discuss matters concerning health, death, and religious rituals. Based on the information gathered, the King instructs the ritual performers to perform the ritual of Nellu itt nokuka to identify the causes of community issues and determine remedies through divine interpretation.

Selection Procedure: Traditionally, after the passing of a King, the position is passed down through the Marumakkathayam system of lineage. The matrilineal family members gather together at the residence of the King, tenter a trance-like state known as Uranju Thulluka, during which divine will is believed to guide the selection of the next ruler. However, in the recent succession, Raman Rajamannan assumed kingship voluntarily without performing the ritual, leading to differing opinions among the elders regarding divine legitimacy.

9 Kaani

The Kaanis are senior advisors to the King administrative, spiritual, and social matters, representing various sub-groups and regions of the community. There are nine elderly Kaanis in total as advisors to the King.

As per Ramesh Gopalan & elders	As per Raman Rajamannan	As per Biju’s data and book
(i) Valayitta Valladan Kaani (ii) Chaden Purambula Kaani (iii) Kattathopran Kaani (iv) Kandamakkidadan Kaani (v) Aanakkadan Kaani (vi) Kuthiyathukolan Kaani (vii) Varakkuraliyan Kaani (viii) Kadattu Kumbulan Kaani (ix) Kalkoonthal Kaani. Apart from these 9 Kaani, an additional post called is also present named Kenjila Maniyaran Kaani.	(i) Nattumalan (ii) Kadattu Kumbulan Kaani (iii) Varakkuraliyan Kaani (iv) Kuthiyothukolan Kaani (v) Kattathopran Kaani (vi) Chaden Purambula Kaani (vii)Kandamakkidadan Kaani (viii) Kalkoonthal Kaani (ix) Muthur Kaani According to Raman Rajamannan, apart from these 9 Kaani, there are later added 10 Kaani to the list who governs the Ayiramperumkuda	(i) Kattathopran Kaani (ii) Purambila Kaani (iii) Idaadan Kaani (iv) Kumbilan Kaani (v) Kenjilamaniyaran Kaani (vi) Barakku Uraliyan Kaani (vii) Bekran Kaani (viii) Kolan Kaani (ix) Kularan Kaani

Kulamthaari and Kulamthaarichi (Law and Order Enforcers)

The Kulamthaari group is responsible for maintaining law and order within the Mannan community. Their duties include settling disputes, enforcing community norms, and implementing punishments where necessary. Currently, these positions were held by men, but there are also women counterparts known as Kulamthaarichi, who performed similar roles.

As per Ramesh and Elders	As per Biju’s book

(i) Aayiram Kudiyanavan (ii) Periya Kudiyanavan (iii) Valiyulamthaari (iv) Ilamthari Kudiyanavan (v) Kattila Valiyulamthari (vi) Vela Valiyulamthari (vii) Ilayavattam (viii) Thandakaran (ix) Thannipatha	(i) Periya Kudiyanavan (ii) Aayiram Kudiyanavan (iii) Ilamthari Kudiyanavan (iv) Valiyulamthaari (v) Ilayavattam (vi) Valiya Thandakkaran (vii) Thannipatha (viii) Pongalaali Kudiyanavan (ix) Maramathu

Traditionally, those who disobeyed community laws were subject to punishment as per these local governing systems.

4 Vaathi

There are four main Vaathis in the Mannan governance structure. They serve as intermediaries between the community and the gods, interpreting divine messages and rituals, especially during times of difficulty or calamity.

As per Ramesh and elders	As per Raman Rajamannan	As per Biju
(i) Nedumpura Vaathi (ii) Udumpara Vaathi (iii) Adipisha Vaathi	(i) Valiya Vaathi (ii) Kadadu Vaathi (Puli Vaathi) (Kunju Vaathi) (iii) Edasherikkadu Vaathi (iv) Adipisha Vaathi	(i) Adipisha Vaathi (kizhakku) (ii) Kanaapra Vaathi (padinjaru) (iii) Kulathu Vaathi (nadukkada) (iv) Kadadu Vaathi

Aanavaathi & Pullivaathi : Due to increasing wild animal conflict, a meeting was adjourned and a resolution was reached. To instill Adukkattu Nagamalean as Aanavathi. Similarly, Kandamalath Paneekudi was given charge of being Pulivaathi

10 Ulamthari Ulamtharichikal

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Law and order; mudra vadi etc.