

SUMMARY TO THE MINOR RESEARCH PROJECT

SOCIAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL RELEVANCE OF RITUAL ARTS – A STUDY BASED ON POOTHAN AND THIRA OF PALAKKAD DISTRICT

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The artforms of a region are encompassed to the social and cultural life of that place. Typical artforms of Kerala reflect heartfelt emotions of Keralites. In the era of serious discussions on the importance and day to day relevance of artforms, this study using the methodology of Folklore/Folkarts studies, aims to enquire the social and psychological relevance of Poothan-Thira of Palakkad district. Kerala have got a rich cultural heritage which is throughly depended on the Arya-Dravida miscellany. Most of the ritual arts were formed here as a result of idolatry. The unique ritual arts of Kerala include; Theyyam, Thira, Mudi yettu, Padayani, Kolamthullal, Pulluvan pattu, Thottam Pattu, Kalamezhuth and Theyyattu. These arts aim for the social and Psychological upliftment through bringing the literature, culture and knowledge lighted by Epics and Legends to the common man. They are well acclaimed for their ritualistic variance and do exist as a symbol of eternal vitality. Ritual arts are performed for prosperity and favour from goddess, following strict ceremonies and traditions.

The role of ritual arts in human life have become a matter of detailed study in the modern age. There have been many efforts to inquest the psychological influence caused by ritual arts. Ritual arts were hypothesised as a way to create a bond between human mind and universal spirit. The artforms that could be relished according to the ritualistic sense of the devotee have also got a divine touch in it. Palakkad region , which is well known for its agricultural heritage, has got its own numerous ritual artforms which include Poothan Thira. They are being executed in the months between ‘Dhanu’ and ‘Medam’. It is a ritual art based on the myth of execution of ‘Dharikan’ by goddess Kali. Here Kali is symbolic of good and Dharikan represents evil. This ritual art fullfills the aim of eliminating evils from the society and establishing goods in its place. The myth of frightful appearance of Kali along with ‘Bhoothaganas’ after slaughtering ‘Dharikasuran’ is also seen in ritual arts of Theyyam, Mudi yettu, Kaliyoottu and Padayani. But Poothan-Thira secures its unique Place by its elegant appearance and artistic diversity.

This thesis consists of five chapters namely, ‘Folklore and Ritual arts’, ‘Ritual arts of Kerala; A general Analysis;’ ‘The significance of ritual artforms of Palakkad’, ‘Poothan and Thira- The structure and composition of ritual art and Poothan and Thira- Social and Psychological relevance’

FOLLOWING ARE THE IMPORTANT FINDINGS

1. Poothan-Thira is an ancient ritual art which is a legacy and asset of Palakkad. It has been successful in establishing a strong influence on human society.
2. Poothan-Thira effectively exemplify the life-vision and cultural singularity of Palakkad and exist as a platform to attain cultural spirituality.
3. The belief that there is divine presence of diety in the artist perfroming the artform raise society to a spiritual level.
4. The myth of Poothan-Thira related to the execution of Dharikan by Kali represent a strong cultural symbol of Palakkad.
5. The 'Mughathezhuth' in Poothan-Thira is a complex sighlanguage. They symbolically represent certain myths.
6. Customs and rituals related to traditional agriculatural methods could be seen in Poothan-Thira. It communicates with us, the knowledge of corelation between nature and human life.
7. Poothan-Thira is performed to favour goddess (Amma/Devatha) The belief in Amma/Devatha is rooted deeply to the culture of Kerala. They are the archetypes of Palakkad's social unconcious mind.
8. The unity of Palakkad region is throughly seen in Poothan-Thira. They are strong symbols of secularism and communal harmony.
9. Poothan-Thira artistically also fullfills the objective of protecting the working culture and aspirations of rural hearts.
10. The archetypes and myths of social concious mind form the very base in Poothan-Thira. It attains a universal appeal when the spritual experience of the artist is transferred to the audience.
11. The invisible spirit that have gained belief appear through this art. Intense performance with varied pace of beat create sharp imprints in the viewer's mind.
12. Poothan-Thira ensures the process of catharsis. It efficiently creates waves in human mind by ensuring a special atmosphere through its sounds, rhythm, colours and appearance.
13. The key motive of Poothan-Thira is one's social and psychological upliftment. It soothes and provide relief to human soul of modern complex society.