



KAMARAJ IAS ACADEMY
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Tholpavakoothu

Published On: 08-01-2023

Why is in news? A legendary shadow play

Tholpavakoothu, or the play of **leather puppets**, is performed in Bhadrakali temples in Kerala. It is also known as **Nizhalkkoothu and Olakkoothu**.

It is a traditional temple art. It has roots in Palakkad and neighboring regions in Kerala. It used to be performed in the Bhadrakali temples of Palakkad for **telling tales from the Ramayana**.

It is believed to have originated in the ninth century AD and uses Kamba Ramayana as its basic text.

The puppets used to be made out of deerskin but are now typically made from goatskin. The puppets are painted in vegetable dyes, as these dyes last long.

The instruments used for the art form include **Ezhupara, Chenda, and Maddalam**.

The lead puppeteer is usually called a pulavar. It is an honorific given to a puppeteer who is also a scholar.

Shadow puppetry began thousands of years ago in India and China, and since then, spread throughout South and Southeast Asia.

The rich repertoire of the tradition in India includes **Tholu Bommalata in Andhra Pradesh, Togalu Gombeyaata in Karnataka, Chamadyacha Bahulya in Maharashtra, Rabana Chhaya in Odisha, Tolu Bommalattam in Tamil Nadu, and Tholpavakoothu in Kerala**.

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