



Tholpavakkoothu: Kerala

Why in News

Recently, a shadow leather puppet in **Kerala's famous temple art Tholpavakkoothu** has been animated by a [robot](#).



Key Points

▪ About:

- It is a **traditional temple art in Kerala** having its roots in Palakkad and neighbouring regions.
 - This art is **confined largely to Pulavar families** from Shoranur region of Palakkad district.
- Among the ancient artforms of Kerala, **tholpavakkoothu or shadow puppet play** occupies a prominent place. It is a fine example of the **integration of Aryan and Dravidian cultures**.
- It is a ritual art performed during the **annual festivals in the Kaali temples of Palakkad district**.
 - It is **also known as Nizhalkkoothu and Olakkoothu**.
- The theme of the play is based on the **Kamba Ramayana** (the Tamil version of the epic).

▪ Origin:

- In Malayalam, **Thol means leather, pava means doll and koothu the play**. Though the origin of this ritualistic art form is not known exactly, some **believe it to be as old as 1200 years**.
- It used to be performed in the **Bhadrakali temples** of Palakkad, telling tales from the

Ramayana.

▪ The Show:

- This entertainment art is performed on a **special stage called koothumadam in the temple courtyard.**
- It is **performed using the mythological figures along with the use of fire and lighting of lamps** behind the screen.
- The **chief puppeteer** is known as '**Pulavan**'.

▪ Musical Instruments Used:

- Ezhupara, Chenda and Maddalam etc.

Regional Names of Shadow Puppetry in India

State	Name
Andhra Pradesh	Tholu bommalata
Karnataka	Togalu gombeyaata
Maharashtra	Charma bahuli natya
Odisha	Ravanachhaya
Kerala	Tholapavakkoothu
Tamil Nadu	Thol bommalata

Source:TH

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