



# 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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